

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

THE PROTECTION OF GOD

Those that are in covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ are assured of His Divine and omnipotent protection. They are comforted in Scripture by these words: ". . . neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus OUR Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). Sheltered in the hand of Omnipotence, we are assured that "no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"; simply because "He is greater than all" (John 10:27-29). Our deliverance encompasses the whole of our existence; "Who delivered us from so great a death, and DOTD deliver; in whom we trust that He will YET deliver us" (II Cor. 1:10). The providence of God moves in behalf of the adopted children, thus making "all things work together for the good to them that love the Lord, who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). None are so able to accuse them, condemn them, assail them, or separate them (Rom. 8:28-39). Their cares are taken to the Lord and cast at His feet, for "He careth for them" (I Pet. 5:7). He has veritably pledged Himself to the support of His people, to maintain their cause, and to fight their battles. Emboldened with this knowledge "we may boldly say; the Lord is my helper; I shall not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5). Such comfort this is to those who are bereft of any natural strength, who "commit their cause" unto the Lord (Job 5:8).

Satan, our adversary, walks about, however, as a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). While the Lord is pledged upon His own word to "maintain their cause" (Psa. 140:12), yet fear doth enter their hearts often and they almost despair while realizing their own weakness and frailty, while at the same time considering the greatness of the power of their foe. It is good, therefore, that words of comfort be ministered in this area often, assuring the sheep that "he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and THAT WICKED ONE TOUCHETH HIM NOT" (I John 5:18). There are at least three areas of attack that Satan utilizes; each of which is sufficient in its own right to discourage the young and feeble. He, the great "accuser of the brethren" will attempt to assail you, as he did Job, before the throne of God. Likewise, he will assail your own heart, heaping upon it condemnation for misdemeanors that you have unwillingly committed through weakness. Too, there are a thousand outside forces that he will press upon you, designed to slowly sap you of your spiritual strength and cause you to settle down in complacency in this world, and cease to wage a war

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The Word of Truth

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against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). Now, the Lord has provided, through His grace, protection in all three areas; and how we praise and thank His name for that provision.

Before the Throne of God, there is protection; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate WITH THE FATHER; Jesus Christ the Righteous (One)" (I John 2:1). Comforting that is, for it assures us that no one can "lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it is Christ that died!" (Rom. 8:31-33). Jesus is there to plead for the sheep, to apply the efficacy of His sacrifice in their behalf, and so thwarts Satan before the throne when he comes to "present himself with the sons of God" (Job 1). Secondly, the Lord provides protection against the assaults within; He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ hath the witness in himself" (I John 3:10): "And the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). When Satan tears at your heart with vicious tugs of self condemnation, and it condemns you, you are assured "God is greater than your heart" (I Jno. 3:20-21). He is able, through the Spirit, to override the condemning heart, overcome with Satan's sure testimony of the insipid, yet powerful, evil proclivities of the old man whom you thought dead, yet who lives at those inopportune times. Satan cannot, therefore, gain the ascendancy of power in the throne of the heart protected by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, those outside forces (evil angels, spiritual wickedness in high places; circumstances designed to take your life, etc.) are not sufficient to arrest your salvation and wrest you from the hand of your Savior. He has provided protection in this area also; "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, AND DELIVERETH HIM" (Psa. 34:7). These are "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for they who are the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:13). They are greater in power than men, and can overthrow evil powers of the highest order (Dan. 4). Many have been the deliverances that they have wrought in your behalf which have been unnoticed, unseen, yet true and effectual. Only eternity will testify completely of the ten thousands of deliverances that have been wrought in our behalf; before the Throne, within ourselves, and from without. Nought shall separate the

sheep; they are safe, and "underneath are the Everlasting arms" (Duet. 33:27). Take heart then brother, sister; "look to the hills from whence cometh your help." The Lord is on the Throne, and He is reigning. All is well with thy salvation. Commit thy soul in faithfulness to Him, and in all thy ways acknowledge Him; He shall direct thy paths (Prov. 3:6). Praise God!

APPROVED MINISTERS

The Apostle Paul, chosen of the Lord as the "preacher and teacher of the Gentiles" (II Tim. 1:11; Gal. 2:2) revealed to the Corinthians seven areas in which his ministry was approved of God. These are spheres in which men of God must seek approval today also. I list them for you, showing that to stand for the Lord requires approval that does not come easy, but rather by the "reason of use" of those spiritual faculties (which have been graciously granted, to equip you for God's work) even amidst the most trying circumstances. May the Lord place such laborers in His vineyard in our time.

These are listed in II Cor. 6:4-10.

(1) **Experience:** much patience, affliction, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults. (2) **Activity:** Labors, watchings, fastings. (3) **Character:** pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, Holy Ghost, love unfeigned. (4) **Connection with God:** Word of Truth, power of God, armour of righteousness. (5) **Reputation:** Honor, dishonor, evil report, good report. (6) **Attitudes Toward His Ministry:** Deceivers, yet true; unknown, yet known. (7) **Personal Aspect:** Dying, yet alive; chastened, but not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things.

All of these things, of course, do not have to be experienced to fit one for the ministry of God. The emphasis Paul is making, is that His conduct and faith in all of these areas were manifested to be from the Lord; thus approving his ministry. Whatever the circumstances were, whether comfortable or adverse, the apostle's demeanor portrayed the work of grace within his heart. His response to these things—workings from within and without—showed him to be a fit and blessed minister. Such ought to be the area in which churches today seek qualifications for their ministers and servants. Degrees of learning, polished personalities, abilities—these did not even merit the mentioning of the apostle. Surely a truth to see here!

I find that my most meditative days come when my mind is saturated with the Word of God and joyful praises. Surely to hide this Word in our hearts is a token of grace and a key to victory.

* * *

When you become acutely aware of the filthiness of the world that lies about you, by faith the new man rejoices the more in anticipation of the glory of God.

* * *

God does not always ask reasonable things; but when He does not, He always supplies the faith for us to rise above reason and see as He sees, also empowering us to perform His will.

THE RAVAGES OF SIN

"Wherefore, as by ONE man sin entered into the world, and death BY sin; and so death passed upon ALL men, for that all have sinned." —Romans 5:12

There was a time when "sin entered the world". It was not a time of great distance from creation — it "entered" during the very beginning of this world. There, amidst the beauties of Eden's garden, with man and woman in a perfect moral state, having transgressed no law, and walking with the Lord Himself, man was deceived and overcome by the arch-temptor. He was thrust into a life of disobedience and rebellion against the very God that created him. That day when Adam and Eve were ejected from the garden, mankind embarked upon a course which adequately fulfilled the proverb; "The way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15). As if the separation from intimacy with the Living God was not enough, there came in the wake of that harshly driven wedge, fruitage that causes the heart to shudder and quake. Like a mighty blight upon the crop of mankind, sin has brought every mortal to the grave, with only two exceptions — Enoch and Elijah (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:15; II Kgs. 2:1-12). Death has swallowed every man, good and bad, holy and unholy, saint and sinner, obedient and disobedient! Believers and unbelievers alike have suffered from the ravages of sin; health has been blighted, sight lost, hearing impaired, limbs immobilized. Not only did these surface matters begin to dominate, but man's nature became so degenerate, so completely "dead in trespasses and sins" that he lost his appetite for the Living God: he did not seek Him, hear Him, or see Him! Further, sin has so perverted the confraternity of men that they have risen up in rebellion against one another. We hear of wars and rumors of wars, conflicts, tumults, and social agitation. Graves and tombstones clutter the hill-sides of every segment of the globe. Starving and diseased bodies walk the dark areas of the earth, and an alarming ignorance of reality binds the hearts of men everywhere! All of these things are commentaries on the enormity of the unchecked sweep of sin through the offspring of Adam. **Men have become hateful and hating one another because of sin.** Wicked competition and ruthlessness characterizes man's quest for selfish aims — and all of this because of sin. It is true, that Satan has "deceived the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). There is not a continent, not a country, not a city, not a family, not an individual, in which the ravages of sin is not perceptible to those enlightened by faith. It is true of every mortal; "a deceived heart hath turned him aside" (Isa. 44:20). From the fall of man until this day "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9). It is true of every single accountable person outside of Christ that he does "evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (II Chron. 12:14).

The understanding has been affected, the heart has been marred, the affections have been wrested from the Living God, ambition has been perverted, and man's desires have all been turned

inward. His "iniquities like the wind have carried him away," and he has turned to his own way (Isa. 64:6). The path which man has chosen because of his perverted and deceived heart has thrust him into a peaceless life; "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. **There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God**" (Isa. 57:20-21). If man tends to complain because of the bitter lot of life, it must be told him; "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee" (Jer. 4:18). If he laments that good things do not come his way, then the Word of the Lord declares; "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jer. 5:25). Our race has "sown to the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7). It is true that "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity! ye have eaten the fruit of lies" (Hos. 10:13). You see, we have all been ravaged by sin — violently it has cast us to the earth and made us grovel in the dust of vanity. It has had no mercy upon us, no ministry for good, no reward for effort. Truly, **"The way of the transgressor is hard"**!

The extreme effects of sin are seen in the consequences that it often entails upon the children of those that live in it. For some, it is true, this introduces some theological difficulties, but the Word of God is too plain on this subject. Those that refuse to live above sin, and to appropriate the grace of God in relentless combat against the influence of sin, are not only sowing a wretched harvest for themselves, but often even for their children. Sin has no compunctions about who it ravages, be it children of the offenders or the offenders themselves. Hear the Word of the Lord; "I the Lord Thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers **upon the children** unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Ex. 20:5); ". . . and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them" (Lev. 26:39); "And **YOUR CHILDREN** shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear **YOUR** whoredoms" (Num. 14:33); "God layeth up his iniquity **for his children**" (Job 21:19); "The **HOUSE** of the wicked shall be overthrown" (Prov. 14:11); "Thou . . . recompensest the iniquity of the fathers **into the bosom of their children** after them" (Jer. 32:18); "Our fathers have sinned, and we have borne their iniquities" (Lam. 5:7). I would suppose that the classic demonstration of this is Adam himself. How his posterity have suffered because of his sin; ". . . By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all men**:" (Rom. 5:12); ". . . through the offence of **ONE**, many be dead"; ". . . "For the judgement was by one unto condemnation" For by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. . ." (5:15-20).

What a heritage sinners leave for their children. Often their offspring are left bereft of the general knowledge of God and good and evil, which would keep them from at least the deep and scarring sins of immorality; they are pushed upon the sea of life ignorant of right and wrong, heaven and hell, incentive or warning. Too, many of them inherit the temptations associated with

poverty, while others face the stiff assault of riches without understanding that "the love of money is the root of all evil". There are orphans and widows, wanderers, unclean, and ignorant children that owe a large part of their plight to the sin of their parents. Sin is no respecter of persons — it ravages father and son, mother and daughter! How we ought to set ourselves against it, fight zealously against our natural inclinations toward it. We gravitate toward the earth, and even in the energy of sacrifice and committal to the Lord the fight is difficult enough.

Think of the many fruits of sin — the results of sinning! Is it not true that "He that sinneth against **Me wrongeth his own soul**" (Prov. 8:36). In the very beginning, sin cost man his place in the garden, his access to the tree of life, his fellowship with the Living God, eternal life, and a sense of innocence. Was that short moment wherein the forbidden fruit was craved and eaten worth this fruitage? Would not Adam and Eve been glad to relive that moment of temptation, and to turn aside from the Temptor? **Sin is never worth the price that is associated with it.** Coveting the wedge of gold, the Babylonish garment, and the pieces of silver cost Achan and his family their lives. Criticizing her brother Moses brought a case of leprosy to Miriam. The servant of the prophet Elisha — Gehazi — because of a covetous heart contracted leprosy not only upon himself, but upon all of his posterity! Refusing to enter the promised land when they were told, cost the Israelites not only an entrance into that land, but their very lives. After deliverance from Egypt with a "high hand", **they were robbed by their own sin of the right of entering into the promised land.** Was sin worth it? The wicked often "fall into their own nets" (Psa. 141:10). Iniquity marks one before God; it stamps him indelibly, as it were; "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me" (Jer. 2:22). Sin steels the heart against God, constraining one to ignore and even despise the gift of His only Begotten Son. It hardens one to the Word of God, so that it is placed aside and considered a dull and uninteresting thing. Sin shuts one's eyes to the judgement, and blinds one to the lake of fire that awaits all of the impenitent. It moves one to hate man that is made in the image of God, and finally compels one to live within a world that is no larger in circumference than his own lusts. Is there a man, a woman, a child that will admit that this price is worth the "pleasures of sin for a season".

Corrupt society, disease, fear, contamination of mind and body — all of these are the results of sin." Sin cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, and plunged the entire human family into degradation! Sin caused the dispersion of people and the confounding of their languages at the tower of Babel. Sin brought the mighty deluge upon the earth, wherein all flesh died saving Noah and the seven that were with him. Sin brought reproach upon David, that "sweet Psalmist of Israel", constrained Peter to deny Christ; Demas to forsake Paul, having loved more this present world; and Achan to covet condemned arti-

cles to the judgement of himself and his house. Make no mistake about it — indulgence in sin carries a penalty. It makes little difference whether one is old or young, he cannot sin with impunity. It is true; "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity" (Prov. 22:8). As the Word testifies, "In the transgression of the evil man there is a snare" (Prov. 29:6). There, lurking within the very recesses of the condemned action, the cursed thought and deed, there is a snare which will bring men down to perdition. None are wise enough to escape the snare.

If they take fire into their bosom, they will surely be burned (Prov. 6:27). It is also said that "the way of the transgressor is hard" — and so it is (Prov. 13:15). Where is the transgressor that will not admit to this? The drunkard knows of the hangover; the adulterer of a plaguing conscience; the thief of the fear of being caught. There is a certain natural uneasiness that accompanies sin and transgression. True, the conscience can become "seared", and the heart can become impervious to the warning of a plagued heart — but no willful sinner ever embarked upon a life of indulgence without having to overcome the condemnation of his own conscience — an inward testimony ordained by the Living God. The way of the transgressor is hard! It takes deliberate and defiant action to become a sinner; deliberate ignorance of certain hindrances, be they great or small, that are introduced into every man's life.

Think of the woman at the well of Jacob which had to confront the fact that she had "had five husbands" (Jno. 4:17), or the woman "taken in adultery" that had to stand before Jesus (Jno. 8:4); or Peter facing the Lord Jesus' look after he had denied Him three times (Lk. 22:61-62). No soul can adequately paint the humiliation of one confronted with his own sin. It is as though sin ravages to such an extent that there is no more strength left in the bones. One cries out with Peter; "Depart from me O Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). Hear these anguished cries of those that have been ravaged by sin; "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13); "Behold, I am vile" (Job 40:4); "My strength faileth because of mine iniquity" (Psa. 31:10); "Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled" (Lam. 1:20); "Men and brethren, what shall we do" (Acts 2:37).

What good reason is there to ever submit to such a destroying thing as sin? Why does the soul engage in a quest for misery, both in this life and in the one to come. I beseech you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the mercy of God, to "awake unto righteousness and **sin not**" (I Cor. 15:34). The fruits of sin are not worthy of indulgence; the penalty is too great. Let us have "respect unto the recompense of the reward" and follow Moses, who "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Indulgence is never worth the price! "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" — Matt. 16:26).

"ACCORDING TO" OR DIVINE CAUSES

Behind all effects there are causes! The effect may not be viewed as abstract from the cause without the loss of understanding, and the obscuring of reason. In the natural sphere the law of cause and effect may be viewed with some degree of profit; but to transfer such vision into the spiritual sphere far exceeds achievements that may be attained in the realm of the seen. Much faulty theology may be corrected when guided by the Omnipotent hand through the counsels of eternity and through the depth of God's Word, thus enabled to see the cause for our salvation and all things pertaining thereunto. It is here that we touch upon the exercise of God's Sovereignty in the behalf of those things "pertaining to life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3). When viewed aright, the shackles of tradition weaken and fall off as we begin to be brought by grace to ascribe "salvation, and glory, and honor and power, unto the Lord our God" (Rev. 19:1). **What effects there are in the scope of redemption have been brought about by the Lord.** Man's feeble efforts have been obviated in respect to the appropriation of "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). The redemption that we have "obtained" is "eternal" (Heb. 9:12), and therefore must be **completely** wrought out by Him who alone is capable of working anything eternal. When man is pictured as working, it is because he has been "ordained unto good works before, that he should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). **Rather than the activities of man being the cause of God's beneficence toward him, they are the effect of that same beneficence channeled to us through that one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.** Because of an almost total misapprehension of the case, there have arisen endless haranguings concerning the place of man's efforts in the matter of salvation. Much of the "dickering" that takes place over this subject is done among those who themselves are woefully ignorant of "the righteousness of God", and consequently have "gone about to establish a righteousness of their own" (Rom. 10:3). Such are they that have followed "deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22), and "not having submitted themselves to the righteousness of God" stand before Him in their own miserable and "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6), contaminated at their very hearts and minds, which have not been "created in the likeness of Him who created them in all true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24). Bereft of the "mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16) these stand as "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18), not having been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). They have not "crucified the flesh together with the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24), and consequently have no recourse but to vaunt the efforts of man, and the supposed achievements of mortals. Not being acquainted personally with the God who has declared "righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 54:17), they have "gone about to establish their own righteousness"; i.e., seeking to ascribe the cause of God's moving to the stimulating and achievements of man. Thus they speak often of doing, but are actually found doing very little. They love to climb on Mount Sinai, and get them to their prince Legality; but somehow they have, as it were, robbed themselves of the blessing. They have not wrestled with the Lord until He

blessed them (Gen. 32:24-26), but rather have sought with diligent effort to bless the Lord with their own doing. Such benighted people need desperately to know the cause behind the effectual uniting of God and man (I Cor. 6:17). The preparation for, initiation into, and participation in the work of God, is conditioned upon what God does — not what you do. **Your actions are an effect, not a cause.** Once this matter is clearly seen, a way will be made for the spirit of rejoicing in your heart.

I seek to deal here with a single phrase in Scripture which is used to denote cause; "ACCORDING TO". This is a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from higher to lower; through, on account of. When, then, the word is used, it stands between two thoughts (1) the effect which is under consideration; (2) the cause which brought the given effect about. I will deal with this matter from a three-fold point of view showing that our entire salvation, past, present and future, is due to the Divine work, and not our own; that we have been initiated into, and continue in, this "eternal redemption" proffered through and maintained by Jesus Christ, only by the free grace and action of Almighty God; that all glory and honor for the achievements of new lives must be ascribed unto the Lord, and that no flesh can possibly glory in His sight.

The Preparation and Prelude to Participation

By this I mean that certain preparation was made in order that we might fellowship with the Lord, and that the enticement of our own persons to consider that fellowship was wholly of the Lord. No man or group of men may be credited with such wonderful work. There was a certain preparation made, in the which we were "chosen". The Scriptures declare; "Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, ACCORDING TO the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). The word "predestinate" literally means to "predetermine, decide beforehand" (Thayer). The object of this predetermined choice was "US", not a plan; "US", not a mode; "US", not a method! He pre-selected the redeemed — specifically — to be adopted unto His children by Christ Jesus. The cause behind this was not His foresight of their acceptance of the Lord, but rather it was made in accordance with "HIS WILL." Pleased, as it were, with His own choice and will, He proceeded in accordance with that, irrespective of other circumstances. Our God hath "done whatsoever He hath pleased in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psa. 135:5, 6). It is not difficult for the Lord to facilitate the accomplishment of His own desires. If He confronts stubborn will, then we are to understand that "thy people shall be WILLING IN THE DAY OF THY POWER" (Psa. 110:3). It is a small thing with the Lord to "allure them into the wilderness that He may speak comfortably to them" (Hosea 2:14), thereby "drawing them with the bands of love and the cords of a man" (Hosea 11:4). The question is posed in Scripture, and veritably answered by its own assertion; "Who hath resisted the will of God" (Rom. 9:19).

An example of this pre-selection of God,

stimulated by His own good pleasure and will, is to be found in the selection of Jacob over Esau, although contrary to the very tradition established by God Himself. As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). The choice of Jacob was manifested to his mother Rebecca before his birth or that of his twin and older brother, Esau. No works had been wrought, and both stood on an equal level so far as merit was concerned; except for one factor, and that was the cause of all choices in the Kingdom of God — the "ELECTION" of God; "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, THAT THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION MIGHT STAND, not of works, but of Him that calleth" (Rom. 9:11). God's purpose and will, then, were the sole causes for Jacob's choice. To attribute it to any other factor is to fly squarely in the face of the Almighty, and that is to place oneself in a position where only eternal death can ensue. The cause was "ELECTION" — "according to election." That obviates the choice, achievement, and merit of man! This same truth may be seen, furthermore, in connection with the nation of Israel, which still retains a remnant of people before God, thus preserving that nation like salt before the God that called them. That remnant is called "a remnant ACCORDING TO the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). Their choice of God, and their present sustenance by Him, and maintenance within the net of the Kingdom, is in accord with God's election. **That is the preparation which causes men to be acceptable in the sight of God.** The "Election of grace"; i.e., the arbitrary choice of God made aside from any meritorious achievement on the part of the recipient. Do not fight that truth; to do so is to fight against the Lord! His own election, His choice — yea arbitrary choice — is the cause of the retention of the remnant; not their achievement, not their merit, not their works, not their desire, not earthly efforts expended by others in their behalf; but **THE ELECTION OF GRACE!** Ah, blessed truth! It exalts the Lord and abases man; that is why the sophists fight against it. But they flail at this truth with but paper wings which shall be beat into dust and scattered over the mouth of hell together with all other dogmas and teachings which deprive God of His own Sovereign right to "do with His own whatsoever He would" (Matt. 20:15). I ask you that are honest before the Lord; "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the **SAME LUMP** to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" (Rom. 9:21). Indeed, and what does compel Him to make them thus but His own will and good pleasure. He "works all things ACCORDING TO the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). **God was not motivated by your choice; your choice was motivated by God's election!** Praise His holy name. "Blessed is that man **WHOM THE LORD CHOOSETH AND CAUSETH TO APPROACH UNTO HIM**" (Psa. 65:4). The preparation, then, for our participation, was made in accordance with the pure will, purpose, and good pleasure of the Lord. He was prompted by nothing but this, and to make any-

thing else the case is to extract the "teeth" right out of our redemption, and make it but a feeble effort, left in the hands of the very creature who bartered his soul away for a morsel of fruit.

But the glorious prelude to that participation — our **CALLING** — was also prompted by God's own will; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, who are **THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE**" (Rom. 8:28). There is no meritorious achievement, then, that prompted God to issue that effectual call to us, whereby we were enabled to see salvation accomplished and offered in the Person of Jesus Christ! The call wasn't predicated by qualification, but by God's own determination! Praise His name! God purposed it, and therefore called us! "God, who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, **BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE**, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). The cause was God's purpose, the means was His grace; thus making a way for the "elect" (Matt. 24:22; Mk. 13:20, 22, 27; Lk. 18:7; Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12; Tit. 1:1; I Pet. 1:2), apart from achievement, apart from merit, apart from inherent goodness, to be saved! Both the purpose and grace originate with God, "The Beginning" (Rev. 1:8) — "purpose" and "grace", glorious sisters in redemption! **Our involvement, then, in the matter of Salvation, is an effect of itself.** The cause behind it is to be found "from the beginning" in the secret council chambers of God. Blessed, holy truth! Praise be to God, who hath facilitated nought but His own good pleasure and will, and whose "gifts and callings are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29).

The Participation Initiated

But, there is the matter of our conversion, rebirth, recreation, unto sanctification and fellowship with our Father who is in heaven. This, of course, all began with a personal knowledge of God's will concerning salvation; a providential acquaintance with the work of Christ, effectual to "all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22). This knowledge, or introduction to the good pleasure and will of God, was brought about in accordance with His own will — again the cause! "Having **MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO His good pleasure, WHICH HE HATH PURPOSE IN HIMSELF**" (Eph. 1:9). Is that not a marvelous thing, that God willed at all to introduce us to the very counsel of His own will? Praise His holy name, and may we ascribe "salvation . . . to our God, and to the Lamb that is on the Throne." **Your knowledge of redemption, if you possess it, is God-caused!** Again, salvation itself, was experienced in accord with the Sovereign will of God; "Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, **ACCORDING TO the will of God and our Father**" (Gal. 1:4). Again, the grace, or mercy of God enters into the matter of our salvation, being an effectual cause; "God . . . not by works of righteousness which we have done, but **ACCORDING TO His own mercy He saved us. . .**" (Titus 3:5). Were we, then, saved because we

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THERE MUST BE ALSO HERESIES AMONG YOU

“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” —I Cor. 11:19

There are certain essentials in the Kingdom of God which are not pleasant — not enjoyable; but they are essential and necessary in order to the fulfillment of the purposes of God. The very presence of these things proves that our Father's ways are “unsearchable, and His judgements past finding out” (Rom. 11:33). God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9), and for those that are in the high and holy way of holiness (Isa. 35:8), this is evident. It is the source of marvel and wonder to our hearts, and we stand in awe at His inscrutable ways and judgements. Surely He is above all others, and there is no other God but Him. It seems to me that this is vital to the spirit of worship that is to pervade our hearts. We must cease from trying to understand everything — from giving ourselves over to carnal analyses of things which satisfy our idle curiosity, but do not acknowledge the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God. **Understanding, for us mortals, has its terminal point; and where it ends, worship, adoration, and homage must begin!** In the matter of heresies, for example, we have a subject that transcends our comprehension — especially as it relates to the will of God.

The Situation At Corinth

While many of our religious peers have chosen Corinth as the church to emulate, we stand among those that see it as a warning, not an example; as an evidence of the hold which carnality can have upon the church — not as a laudatory example of spirituality. Corinth was plagued with divisions, dissensions, and religious schisms. The presence of them was a heartbreak to the Apostle, for they evidenced a lapse back into the natural order. “. . . there are contentions among you” (I Cor. 1:10); “For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (3:3); “. . . I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it” (11:18). The heart of the Apostle is here exposed in the words “partly believe it”. It is as though he did not desire to release his heart to fully embrace this report. It was an evil report — one that constituted a weight upon his soul, adding to that which came upon him daily, even “the care of all the churches” (II Cor. 11:28). For the body of Christ to be divided is a lamentable thing. It cannot be justified — it evidences carnality of the worst order. The center of the problem was evidenced during the time when the Corinthians were supposedly remembering the Lord Jesus Christ at His table. There, at that time of spiritual rejuvenation, when the memory should summon holy and sanctifying thoughts — when the contemplation of the Lord Jesus and His vicarious sacrifice is to be pre-eminent — the Corinthians lapsed into a state of inconsideration and division. Forgetting their brethren that were poorer, they separated into little groups. The situation is aptly described by these words; “one is hungry, and another is drunken” (I Cor. 11:21).

Now, what can such inconsiderations mean? What do they indicate? Why are they found in the very presence of those that have embraced the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly, such things were not commendable — in fact, Paul states; “Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse” (v. 17). Whatever, therefore, we say about these things, nothing is to be so construed as to make anyone suppose for a single moment that these things are proper of themselves — or that they are commendable, or even excuseable!

What Are Heresies?

The word “Heresies” literally means “That which is chosen, a chosen course of thought and action; hence, one's chosen opinion.” More specifically, in regards to our text, it speaks of “a body of men separating themselves, from others and following their own tenets”, It is a “sect or a party”. This does not speak of a holy separation — not one which is evidenced in the godly separating from the ungodly. This, rather, speaks of an inclination to personal and unfounded opinions that is so strong that a wedge is driven between the opinionated and those that do not hold to the same view. Further, it also speaks of a sort of exclusiveness that can develop, where believers cluster together in little groups to the exclusion of others for whom Christ died.

The source of such division is the “flesh” — the fallen nature that remains under the total dominion of Satan. This is the meaning of that segment of fleshly sins in Galatians 5:20: “. . . variance . . . strife, seditions, heresies. . .” So serious is this matter of divisions, that we are expressly told to “Mark them which cause divisions . . . and avoid them . . .” (Rom. 16:17). Heresy roots in self-seeking; in the exaltation of self and the derogation of any that are of the contrary part. We are careful at this point to say that we are speaking not of a stand for revealed truth. These are matters that are separate from revelation — they find their source in men's minds and imaginations, not in the revelation of the will of God. They are built upon the very things that ought to be “cast down”, because they exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (II Cor. 10:5).

Why Do Heresies Exist?

Herein is a strange thing? Why are heresies permitted to exist among the very saints of the Most High God? Why are they not rooted out by the Living God like leprosy or a canker. Why must they eat at the vitals of the church? If Habakkuk marvelled that God could tolerate the slacking of the law in Israel, wondering why He permitted the prophet to behold “iniquity” and “grievance” (Hab. 1:2-4), much more do those whose hearts are broken because of the presence of factionism wonder before the Living God — at least, until, they go into the “sanctuary” — then they understand their latter end (Psa. 73:17). First, the Holy Spirit witnesses through the Apostle that “There MUST be also heresies among you. . .” Let us stand in awe at the pronouncement! There “MUST be”! Who can hear it? Who can receive it? There “MUST BE”!

There are several things that become at once evident by this assertion of truth:

1. That in heresies, there is a Divine purpose — hidden though it may be for a while.
2. That there is a certain benefit to be derived from this wickedness; something that evidently cannot be proficiently revealed through other more pleasant and palatable means.
3. That we have set before us a matter that necessitates revelation — something that is not evident.
4. That as much as we desire to keep the fellowship of the saints pure and holy, there do arise those occasions when there must, by Divine decree, come into our presence a phenomenon which will break the very hearts that it benefits.

Let us take a moment here to look into the word "Must" — it speaks of a kingdom-law, if I may use that term. This is a principle by which the kingdom of God operates — a higher law, if you please. Now, we have enunciated to us in the Word several such laws — "MUSTS" of the Kingdom. As we view them, let them develop for us a concept which will assist in the understanding of the passage set before us.

Have we forgotten such phrases as "Ye **MUST** be born again" (Jno. 3:7); "They that worship Him **MUST** worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jno. 4:24); "We **MUST** through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22) "For there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we **MUST** be saved" (Acts 4:12); "For we **MUST** all appear before the judgement seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10); "... but new wine **MUST** be put into new bottles" (Mark 2:22).

Now, in all of these "MUSTS" there is no room for deviation. Being "born again", for example, is not something which only a segment of men must experience — **everyone** must if they are to enter the kingdom of God. If there be any that desire to worship the Lord, they **MUST** worship Him within the recesses of their own spirit, and in truth or reality. Those entering the Kingdom of God must come through means of tribulation, whereby the chaff of the soul is beaten out and they are made fit for the presence of the Lord. Too, everyone must appear before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad. There is no room for opinion here!

"**MUST**", then, speaks of necessity — **necessity as the Living God judges necessity!** It is something placed upon men by Divine purpose. It does not **need** to make sense to be true — but in the Lord it **does** make sense! It is not an area for speculation, it is an area of revelation. The word **MUST** stands between the approved and the unapproved; between the saved and the lost; between life and death. The **MUST** separates those that are born again and those that are not; those that worship in spirit and truth, and those that do not; those that enter the Kingdom and those that do not; those that are saved and those that are not; those that are able to give a satisfactory account and those that are not! It is a big word, and indicates a large separation. Actually, the word manifests a gulf so vast, so wide,

that no reconciliation is possible for mortals on the opposite sides of the gulf.

Now, let us behold our text with these things in mind. There is a Divine purpose to be served by heresies, sad and contemptible though they be. They are unsavory, but not purposeless; tasteless, but not worthless!! They are not to be sought, they are to be discerned!! "That they which are approved may be made manifest among you". "WHAT A THOUGHT." There are those that are "APPROVED" — and there are those that are NOT approved. Externally, all may look alike. There may have been mutual sacrifices made, similar achievements made, a certain spiritual culture developed. But notwithstanding these things, we are faced with this undeniable truth; some are approved of God, and some are not! Such knowledge ought to cause us to serve the Lord with "fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12; II Cor. 7:15; I Cor. 2:3; Psa. 2:11).

"They which are approved"

We see here that there is a **necessity** for Divine approval! Without it, we are of all men most miserable. To think that it is possible to live a life of which the Living God does not approve is a dreadful and sobering thought — but it is the truth. Further, we see here that **Divine approval is not as evident as some may suppose**. It needs to be revealed — indeed, revealed in ways that are unpleasant. God often sets in the midst that which He personally detests in order that the real separation among men may be made known. Those that are approved before Him will gravitate to the truth, those that are not approved will gravitate to "heresies"! **The purpose of this revelation is not to inform God, but to inform men**. It is man that stands in need of further insight. It is men that are deceived concerning the profession of their fellows.

Observe — the approval of God is what is pre-eminent. He does not reveal which church is the "right church", so to speak! But He reveals which of the sons of men have met with His Divine approval! By so doing He has exalted **Himself**, not the institution!

Make no mistake about this, it is necessary to have God's approval — His real and unvarnished approval. We read where our blessed Lord Jesus was "approved of God" (Acts 2:22), and had He not been He would not have been able to carry out this wonderful redemption of which we have been made partakers! We further read of one "Apelles", which was "approved in Christ" (Rom. 16:10) — a most glorious commendation! O, that men would seek to be known as those that are "approved in Christ"! What greater honor can there be?

Later, when the Corinthians had received Paul's instruction concerning the handling of one fornicator within their midst, he commended their conduct in these words; "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (II Cor. 7:10). The point of that declaration is that **their response evidenced the rightness of their hearts**. The Lord's approval speaks of that sort of thing — of the **evidence** of one's acceptance with the Lord. It speaks of he whom the Lord "commendeth" (II Cor. 10:18). Every child of God is to labor to "show himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" — a workman

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TELEVISION AND BRAINWASHING

By Bro. Richard Ebler

When we think of brainwashing, we in America perhaps think of Communist propaganda or some such thing. But how many of us realize that all of us are constantly being molded by the influences we have chosen to surround ourselves with?

Of all the influences in our society, certainly television has to be one of the most powerful. The vivid colors, moving figures, alluring music, snappy commercials, suspense, laughter, scenes of wealth, cleverness, violence, and sex are like powerful magnets that draw people into a sort of addiction to its siren charm.

Television is undoubtedly one of Satan's chief weapons used for the purpose of brainwashing people and molding the "Man of tomorrow." A steady diet of violence not only feeds the irrational sinful appetite to view and delight in destruction, but it also encourages imitative behavior among the young and hardens the heart into passive acceptance of real violence as though it were a casual, normal occurrence. A steady diet of sex over the T.V. set will not only feed the irrational sinful appetite to dwell upon that subject, but it will also stimulate base desires to imitate acts of immorality. After a few hours of being molded and conditioned by the network mind-manipulators, these things seem very "normal" and "socially acceptable." A joke and a hearty laugh seem to sanctify the most vile of all thoughts.

These things are so obvious that even the worldlings with a little common sense can detect and discern such matters. Thus the American Medical Association and the P.T.A. have come out openly against some of these things.

However, those of us who live in close communion with the holy God of the Bible ought to be able to detect more subtle levels of sin than those who are unregenerate. For example, the prayers offered to the "elders" (Greek gods) on a certain popular children's program are teaching the practice of idolatry. A prayer for wisdom and strength and deliverance is immediately answered on the screen. Then thanksgiving is offered to the false gods. Such things are unspeakably abominable to the only true God who has revealed himself abundantly in the Christ of the Bible. While all of this is being shown on television, we find thousands of Americans worshipping literal idols introduced to this country by the Krishna sect.

Satan has coordinated both attacks. First the public mind is conditioned through the channels of television. Then the actual outward literal temptation is launched.

The same procedure has been followed in the area of promoting witchcraft. First the masses were subtly prepared by several years of laughing at the comedy series featuring a lovely, modern, female witch. Then to our astonishment we began reading in the newspapers of covens of witches springing up all over the country. We learned that their headquarters was in California. Satan worship and weird rituals were reported as having occurred in the countryside at night. Such things would have seemed incredible twenty years ago.

What shall we say then to these things? Certainly the Christian ought to be aware of the

TRAITS OF CHRIST'S THOUGHT-LIFE

By Bro. Richard Ebler

There never has been a man to walk the face of this earth who was perfect except the Lord Jesus Christ. He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He had the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). He perfectly fulfilled the moral law (Matt. 5:17). He always did those things that pleased the Father in heaven (John 8:29).

In view of these things, it becomes us to thoroughly ponder this God-man in order to more intelligently worship Him and to strengthen our faith in Him. As we behold His glory we shall, in our measure, be changed into the same image "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

One of the principles that can be universally applied to every man is the following: ". . . as he thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). A man's thoughts are an index to his character because they lie close to the very core of his being. This is true of every man.

Another principle that can be used at this point is given to us by our Lord Himself: "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt 12:34). In a limited sense we can say that every man has a window to his heart through which others can look. It is his mouth. It can be said of him as it was of Peter: ". . . thy speech betrayeth thee . . ." (Matt. 26:73).

A man's thoughts are more numerous than the hairs of his head and strong men have long ones. Christ's intellect was no doubt of the very highest quality and continuously swarmed with many profound meditations. Only part of them are revealed in the pages of Scripture, but enough is revealed to give us some idea of the general drift of His thought-life. Certain major themes keep recurring. Here are some of them.

1. His thoughts were often filled with the Scriptures. He must have memorized much and meditated much upon the profound implications of every word from God. (Incidentally, we might observe at this point that in Christ's time there was no printing press invented yet which would make cheap copies of the Bible available to every home.) In spite of handicaps working as a carpenter (without the benefit of a unionized eight-hour day) and the responsibility of supporting a widowed mother, He became very learned in the Scriptures. For example, He was able to read, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,

evil influences of television and to severely restrict what he allows to come into his home and into the minds of his children. Our personalities, beliefs, thought patterns, behavior, attitudes, views, etc. are being shaped and molded every day by the things we see, hear, think, and feel. Let us fill our hearts and minds with good and wholesome thoughts from the Holy Scriptures and from taped sermons. Let us feed our hearts upon prayer and hymns of faith that lift and elevate the soul. Let us commune with God and not with the rulers of the darkness of this world. As the world grows more wicked, let us strengthen ourselves in our most holy faith, putting on the "whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13).

and the God of Jacob" (Matt. 22:31, 32) and then to conclude that this statement clearly implied that there **would** be a resurrection of the dead.

It will be recalled that even at the tender age of twelve Jesus tarried in the temple in order to converse with the doctors of the law concerning the things contained in Scriptures. We can be sure that this was not the first time that He had occupied Himself with God's book. The doctors were amazed at his understanding (Luke 2:47).

Jesus' whole life was a fulfilling of the Scripture in order to authenticate the fact that He was indeed the true Messiah, the Son of God and Son of Man. This was **one** of the big reasons why it was necessary for Him to thoroughly understand the Scriptures.

Jesus was able to correctly apply the Scripture to every situation that confronted Him. That was precisely how He overcame the temptations in the wilderness. Three times He quoted "It is written . . ." and refuted the wrong application of Satan's text in the process. When He was confronted by His enemies with the fact that He allowed His disciples to pluck corn and eat it on the sabbath day, He at once referred to the Scripture where David ate the shewbread (Matt. 12:1-8). When He heard the children in the temple crying, "Hosanna to the son of David," He immediately quoted the Scripture which says, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. 21:15, 16). Examples could be easily multiplied, but it is enough to notice that Christ's thoughts were habitually upon the Scriptures.

2. Christ was God-centered in His thinking. He often spoke of His heavenly Father. "The **Father** loveth the Son . . ." (John 3:35). "For the **Father** judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the **Father**" (John 5:22, 23). ". . . I am not alone, but I and the **Father** that sent me" (John 8:16). In the book of **John** alone the Father is mentioned over sixty times by the Lord Jesus and this is usually in reference to His own relationship to the Father.

3. Jesus was very spiritually minded and heavenly minded, yet He often drew upon carnal and earthly terminology in order to express spiritual realities. He said to His disciples, "Take heed and beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees . . ." (Matt. 16:6), when He was really speaking of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees. He told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), when speaking of a spiritual birth. He talked to the woman at the well about living water. He often spoke in lengthy parables to the Jews when He spoke with them about their religious degeneracy and failure to live up to their privileges. These things evidence that in his thought-life He habitually made the quick transition from the earthly to the heavenly, allowing the lower to remind Him of the higher and using the lower as a means of expression when trying to communicate with those who were earth-bound. It is my studied opinion that He had spent time thinking and creating those parables previous to the time that He uttered them publicly. At any rate they certainly do give us an insight into the way His mind worked; or rather, the way He habitually used His mind in culturing

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a godly thought-life.

4. Jesus had a way of sticking with the basic issues and not emphasizing trivia. He often spoke of the importance of having faith in God. He spoke often of His death, burial, and resurrection. He spoke often of the Day of Judgment and of His Second Coming. He spoke often of heaven and hell. He spoke often against hypocrisy. He spoke often of obedience to the commandments, of love, forgiveness, fruit-bearing, and stewardship. He spoke often of the eternal purpose of God and the glory of God. He spoke often of suffering for righteousness. He spoke often of the kingdom of God. He spoke of tradition making the word of God of none effect. He spoke often of false prophets and spiritual watchfulness. He spoke often of the Holy Spirit and of truth. He spoke often of eternity. These were the things that seemed to be on His mind much of the time. They were the sort of things His Father commanded Him to speak of.

The last question which we shall raise in this article is this: How far is our own thought-life conformed to the image of Christ? Does our preaching have the same emphasis as His? What shall we say to these things?

SPEAKING TOGETHER OF THE LORD— NEEDFUL

Carnality appears to be most prevalent among those who frequently absent themselves from mutual fellowship with the brethren. The reasoning processes, relative to spiritual things, slowly deteriorate, and gross misapprehensions multiply at alarming rates when fellowship becomes infrequent. A critical eye grows in relation to "the brotherhood", whom we are to love (I Pet. 2:17), and disgust about irrelevant things intensifies. Love grows cold, and sins pull and tug at the soul becomes virtually irresistible. It is an error of the foulest sort which states that one can live unto the Lord as well alone as with the brethren. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. 10:25) is not merely an exhortation to boost church attendance; **is is a gracious provision of the Lord whereby the soul may stay alive and receptive to eternal things.** In Malachi's day, "They that feared the Lord spake often one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3:16). If the Lord thinks so highly of those who frequently gather together to muse upon the things of the Lord, and to think upon His very name, then what is to be said of those who disdain such a fellowship. They are "gone aside; the wind hath carried them away." They have followed their own course, and it shall lead them to destruction. We have no patience with those who rebel against the fellowship that the Lord enjoys. They are not wiser than the Lord; and yet the land is filled with them. Pious religious people, who feel that they have risen above the plain of fellowship with brothers in the Lord. Their own lives are characterized by slothfulness and retardedness in the Kingdom of God, which is sufficient evidence that they are "of their father the Devil."

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

“. . . . and they marvelled at His answers”

—Luke 20:26

In a day when academic juvenility parades itself as scholarly, the significance of answers may easily be underestimated. Plagued, as it were, with sophistry at its height, we find people asking questions that bear little resemblance to the more serious and sober questions of bygone days. How often men haggle over questions concerning tooth-paste, deodorant, hair spray, and make-up; batting averages and football ground-gaining records. We are daily confronted with critical issues concerning breakfast cereals, sweeteners, and polyester versus cotton. Alas, it is a day of trivia, when it seems people have lost the art of asking questions!! Perhaps we have here a reason why so few significant answers are being given — because there are so few critical questions being asked!

When was the last time you heard anyone ask (without being prompted), “What must I do to be saved?”, or “What shall we do?”, or “Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?”, or, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” Those questions almost fall into the category of “relics” and intellectual antiques! Modern evangelism gives the answers before the questions are asked, and have men and women on their knees or in a baptistry before the issues are even realized. Further, it is lamentably true that the wisdom and spiritual insight of most religious leaders is so hidden that very few serious interrogations are ever provoked. In times of old, holy men provoked serious and weighty questions by their very presence; and it is our desire and prayer that the Lord will raise up such men today, whose very **presence** will summon forth questions and interrogations concerning the **real** issues of life. It does not seem too far out of line to this editor to observe that there is such a small difference between the world and the supposed “men of the cloth”, that it rarely occurs to the populus in general that any questions even **need** to be asked. Earnest inquiries concerning the “things of the Spirit of God” will be directed toward those who evidence some degree of familiarity with the Lord and with the “truth as it is in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 4:20ff).

Further, it ought to be observed that issues that seem very critical at times, are really not the foundational issues. Matters concerning marriage, the home, the school, occupations, education, etc. — while they may seem to be the very hub of life at a given point, are really not the hub at all. Our lives really do not hang upon the nail of our marriage, or our home, or our occupation, or our education — even though our reason may tell us that it does. **The real issue of life concerns our relationship to the Living God** — matters that concern our sin, our renunciation of sin, and our receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ — believing on Him. **Whether or not we are compatible with the world to come — that is the real issue.** Whether or not our sins dominate over us — that is the issue! Whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His Saviorhood and Kingship is recognized by us — that is the issue. Everything else is secondary. A man may (unpleasant as it may be) live with a broken home, broken health, social ostracization, and virtual illiteracy if he is in the

Lord Jesus Christ. But he may not lead a truly profitable life outside of the Lord Jesus, regardless of his social standing, his domestic superiority, his pleasantries in the home, or his academic achievement! The point of all of this is to draw to our attention that the senseless questions that are being asked of religious people today only evidence a senseless theology that has been perpetrated upon the public.

Responsibilities In Answering Questions

Answering questions involves several responsibilities — particularly if the Lord is to be honored as He should. I have taken the time to gather here a few rudimentary points on this matter. These are things which are evident to the honest heart, and yet there is a necessity to set them before our minds continually.

1. **Some degree of assessment concerning the seriousness of the questioner.** We are not to answer a fool according to his folly, “lest thou also be like unto him” (Prov. 26:4). God’s messengers are not to waste their time answering questions that have been asked by the insincere — at least, they are not to answer them according to the folly of the asker! There are some questions that are asked to “tempt” (Matt. 22:35), and we ought to strive diligently to be discerning of such questions, lest we dishonor the Lord with our answers. There is no place for naivety in this matter, but for godly wisdom.
2. **A spiritual diagnosis of the relevancy of the question.** Some questions are asked by very sincere hearts — but they are not relevant. For instance, one young man asked the Lord to speak to his brother, that he divide the inheritance with him — some family dissension taking place in the house. The question seemed honest enough — and even fair enough. One had apparently been wronged in the matter of family distribution. But the Lord Jesus judged the question to be irrelevant! “And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?” (Lk. 12:13-14). In fact, our Lord’s further elaboration indicates that the individual making the request was a covetous man — or at least one in danger of being caught up in covetousness (v. 15).
3. **Consideration of the broader truths that may be touched by an answer to the question.** An example is provided in the very question mentioned above. The broader issue that was touched by the question of dividing the inheritance was covetousness — and, indeed, our Lord addressed Himself to that weightier matter!
4. **Contemplation of whether the answer to be given will provoke to godliness or ungodliness, zeal or sloth, interest or indolence!** To answer mere idle curiosity is not the wisest course, to say the least. Our answer is not to be merely academic or intellectual. It may satisfy the mind, but not the heart. Our Lord’s answers to the woman at the well (in John the fourth chapter) particularly evidence this facet of wisdom. It is true that **answers are a form of stewardship**, for they may very well thrust one into a direction that leads away from God as well as to Him! For example, the question “Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar” could not, in this view of things, be answered with a sim-

ple "yes" or "no". The answer "Render therefore the things unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's had the unique ministry of directing us properly (Matt. 22:21).

5. **It is also true that due consideration ought to be given to any other individuals that may be in hearing distance.** Thus did our Lord Jesus on several occasions address the multitudes when answers were sought of Him from a single individual (Matt. 19:16-26). Answers should do the most good, and often occasions for the instruction of many arise from the interrogation of a single person. God's children ought to be swift to recognize such.

These several elements will become obvious as we review some of the questions directed to our Lord Jesus Christ, together with His response to them. Most of us are ready to admit that we are faulty in our ability to answer questions: it may be that sitting at the feet of Jesus will assist us in being more proficient in this oft neglected stewardship.

QUESTION #1: "Moses in the law commanded that such be stoned: but what sayest Thou?" — John 8:5

The occasion here involved a "woman taken in adultery, in the very act" (Jno. 8:3). The "scribes and Pharisees brought" this "woman" to Jesus and "set her in the midst" — a most humiliating experience, doubtless. With pious tones they announced, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act" (v. 4). One cannot help but marvel at the coordination of the "act" with their presence! Notwithstanding this somewhat interesting detail, the question seemed valid enough intellectually, and it certainly could be said to be theologically relevant. This could very well involve the breakdown of the social moral code. After all, if permitted to pass unnoticed and unchecked, a social trend of alarming effect could begin. The Holy Spirit, however, adds a word here which illuminates the entire situation: "This they said tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him" (v. 6). It was **not**, then, a serious question — it was a trap. There was really no genuine interest in the establishment of right and wrong, no real establishment of the definitive nature of the law being sought! There was neither concern for the woman before them, or for the welfare of society about them! The scribes and Pharisees were overcome by one heinous desire: to "accuse" Jesus, thereby mitigating His influence and removing the danger of losing their own disciples. Well, what will the Lord answer? He might well reply: "Indeed, Moses wrote the truth! Adulteresses must not be permitted to live!" Or, "I am not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them", Or "Let us hear more of this matter — just what were the circumstances?" or, "I know your hearts — you are not honest in this matter." But instead, He answers not a word! Rather, He "stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground as though He heard them not" (v. 6b). What He wrote we do not know; and, indeed, that is not even the point. The thing to be seen here is that **the question was unworthy of any answer at all!** In fact, the Savior never did address Himself to the ques-

tion. When they "continued asking Him", He finally lifted up Himself and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." So convicting was this directive that the woman's accusers went out one by one. He then counselled the woman to "go and sin no more" (v. 11).

Immediately following the incident, Jesus addressed Himself to those about Him saying, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (v. 12). The impact of this assertion becomes evident against the background of the adulterous woman. Here was a case where extinction of life was sought. Our Lord said that His ministry was to turn men from darkness to light, from death to life, from sin to righteousness.

You see then, how our Lord accomplished several things in His Divine reaction to this question:

1. He did not dignify a tempting interrogation with an answer.
2. He saw to it that all of the sinners were convicted of their sin, and not merely the one that had been singled out.
3. He instructed the multitudes about Him that they might learn from the incident.
4. He exalted mercy by pardoning the condemned.
5. He directed the sinner to refrain from sinning.

Note that He never did answer the question — but the worth of His reaction cannot be adequately measured to this day!

QUESTION #2: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" — Mark 10:2

Here we have a question that certainly addresses itself to the interest of those demanding "relevant issues". If ever there was a day when this question was relevant, it is today! How did our Lord Jesus answer it?

Firstly, the question was set forth by the Pharisees (v. 29), men that had something more than a cursory knowledge of the Scriptures. In fact, their peers considered them authorities in the Word, and even our Lord Jesus declared that they "sat in Moses' seat". While we do have strong reason to suspect the nobility of their intentions, we may learn much from our Lord's answer.

Our Savior responds with a question; "What did Moses command **you**?" Immediately He puts them on the answering initiative, as though to say, "Are you saying that there is not sufficient guidance in this matter already?", or "Have you diligently used the means available to you?" In fact, the Lord's response itself both exposes their questionable motives, and rebukes their religious professionalism. "What did Moses command **YOU**" — that casts them back to **available revelation**, as though to say, "What is that in thine hand?" or "To the law and to the testimony". Observe, at this point, that Jesus did not ask what Moses thought about **divorce**, but what Moses "**COMMANDED YOU**". See also that it was a personal matter — "commanded **YOU**." It is at once evident that their tempting question (for they asked it "tempting Him") was not evidence of an earnest quest for the truth. Consequently, it did not deal with the real issue. It is true that **dishonesty forces men to deal with secondaries, and to live on the periphery of life!**

The point that the Pharisees had missed (due to their hardness of heart) was that the issue with Moses was **maintaining** the marriage, not dissolving it! Moses' commandment dealt with the marriage — not the divorce: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). The Pharisees, however, are to be partially commended for an element of honesty in their reply to Jesus' question; "Moses **SUFFERED** to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away" (v. 4) . . . Duet. 24:1-3. Our Lord did not, however, ask what Moses "suffered", but what Moses had "**commanded**". At once our Savior exposes their degeneracy by saying; "For the hardness of your heart he wrote this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (v. 5-9). It becomes plain to this writer that the Lord has grace and truth to maintain the marriage, and that **deliberate effort** is to be put forth to this end. Men, however, seek reasons to dissolve rather than solidify, thereby manifesting their sinful nature.

Again, note that our Lord did not answer their question as they had desired. They were seeking what they thought to be an opinion — but what they did not take into account was this: that our Lord spoke only what was in the Father's mind. He did not "speak of Himself", or offer to men casual opinions about the customs and desires of men. He addressed Himself to the truth! O, that this were more prevalent in our day among those who profess to be His followers; that men were being told what the Lord said — what, as it were, "Moses commanded".

Too, observe that our Lord was not at all hesitant to point out hard hearts; "For the hardness of YOUR HEART he wrote YOU this precept"! **No doubt that precept saved the life of many a wife that was despised in the eyes of her husband, for it was written because of the "hardness" of husbands' hearts!** Stoning might have been thought to be an alternative were not this precept written — and thus we see, even in this precept, a token of the mercy of our God.

Our Lord also points out that this was not the will of the Lord — that is, this was not His desire for men. **It was not in the category of a commandment, because it did not express the ultimate objective for men.** Matthew adds some insight to this narrative in his account; "They say unto Him, Why did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement and to put her away?" He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart **SUFFERED** (not commanded) you to put away your wives; but from the beginning **IT HATH NOT BEEN SO**" (Matt. 19:7-8). The idea here is that this action had not been ordained "from the beginning"—i.e., it simply was not in the ultimate purpose of God. This is declared in the Lord's use of the word "suffer", which, in this instance, means to "allow", or "permit". It was the **will** of the Lord that was pre-eminent in the mind of our Lord, not the **allowances** that He made because of the hardness of

men's hearts. If men really desire to know the will of the Lord, they must not inquire concerning what He permits, nor seek to justify themselves in their actions! The wisdom of our Lord in dealing with this question, then, is evident, and therein is couched many a lesson which we ought to take into our hearts.

QUESTION #3: Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" — Mark 10:17

The one asking the question here cannot but force himself upon our attention. There is something about the man that tantalizes the interest. He is described as one that "came **running**, and **kneeled** to Him, and **asked** Him. Good Master. . . ." Certainly these are actions which address themselves to the heart of the Lord. Running to Him; kneeling to Him; asking Him! Indeed, many a soul there is that has not even accomplished one of these things, or two, to say nothing of all three. Surely these will evoke a favorable response from our Lord. Hear the answer of the Savior; "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God!" Yes, these are the words of the Lord Jesus! They might seem abrupt to those not acquainted with the ways of the Lord, but they were spoken in view of the Divine perception of the case. Firstly, this was a ruler (Lk. 18:18), and yet he "laid aside the gravity and grandeur of a ruler" when He came running to Jesus. This evidenced a degree of humility that is certainly absent among many of our contemporary rulers. He bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus, revealing his recognition of greatness in Him. His address to the Lord seemed on the surface to be weighty, and even serious; "Good master"! Eternal life was the subject in question, and he was concerned about how to obtain it. How many of us have craved for such inquiries — yet, would we have handled it in the same manner as our Lord?

The answer of the Savior indicates that He perceived the failure of the young ruler to recognize the Lord of glory. The ruler saw Him as good — he saw Him as a teacher ("Master" — but not as the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.") **Compliments to the Savior are of little worth without the recognition of His true character — the Son of the Living God!** Further, the failure of this young man to perceive our Lord Jesus as did Simeon (Lk. 2), or Peter (Mt. 16) constrains the Lord to send him to the Law — that schoolmaster which is designed to lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24): "Thou knowest the commandments . . ."; ". . . but if thou wouldest enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt. 19:17). That the Lord Jesus is speaking of the commandments contained in the table of the Law is evident by His elaboration on the matter; "Do not kill, do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother" (Mk. 10:19). As I read these words I cannot help but marvel how little they are used in our day. It would be considered a mark of heresy to give such an answer to one inquiring concerning inheriting eternal life today — and yet who can deny that there are multitudes in the same valley of decision as this rich young ruler. They have not been convinced of the real Lordship or Saviorhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They

entertain an interest in eternal life — but that interest is not strong enough, not persuasive enough to their own spirits to constrain them to follow the Lord withersoever He goeth. “KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS”! That is an answer that needs to be shouted in the ears of many a casual seeker! and yet, there is hardly an honest soul amongst us that will not confess that this answer is rarely if ever given.

That this answer probed the heart of this young man is evident from the sequel of events that followed. He answered; “Which”? (Mt. 19:18); as though there were some commandments that especially needed to be obeyed while others could be left undone. Or, perhaps, that there were some exalted commandments; obedience to which would constitute an especial recommendation for eternal life. Now, what does the Savior answer? “And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal! Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt. 19:18-19). Here we have enunciated four prohibitive commandments, and two positive ones; five commandments from the tables of the Law, and one summary commandment. **The purpose was not information, but conviction;** it was to point out that there are very definite things that **disqualify** men for eternal life—things for which Divine mercy must be sought. But this was missed by the ruler; “All these things have I observed from my youth up” (Lk. 18:21). The young man was not speaking a deliberate lie here, but the **lack of his perception** was evidenced. He had not kept the commandments any more than any of the other sons of men. The Law, after all, was given in order that “every mouth might be **stopped** and all the world become **guilty** before God” (Rom. 3:19). But the law did **not** do its work within this man’s conscience. Does the Lord elaborate upon the Law? Does he argue with the interrogator, stating that he does not understand the law, and that he has in fact broken what he thought he had kept? Emphatically no! Instead, he probes deeper into his heart, giving him **apparent** credit for a good job on the commandments; “If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come, follow me” (Mt. 19:21). Well, surely this commandment will be obeyed — for the young man was seeking eternal life . . . **or was he?** It is written; “But when he heard these things, he became exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich” (Lk. 18:23). Mark records; “**But his countenance fell at the saying,** and he went away very sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions” (Mk. 10:22). His quest for eternal life had apparently ended — **it simply cost too much!** It was nice to think of eternal life — to even approach the matter with a degree of sobriety and seeming honesty. But when the truth of what was involved was registered upon his conscience by the answer of the Lord, he left off his quest and returned to his riches. Without sounding trite, it is my conviction that all who labor for the Lord ought to seek grace to answer men so as to expose their hearts — so as to set forth the real issues involved in eternal life; the real clash of this present evil world with the

world to come. There is far too much avoiding of the subject today in an effort to pacify those that appear to be interested when, in fact, they are not!

Exploiting this occasion to the fullest, our Lord “Looked round about, and saith to His disciples, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God” (Mk. 10:23). Matthew records, “Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 19:23). Our Lord was not angry, so to speak, with the young man, for Mark says this of our Lord: “And Jesus looking upon him **loved him**” (Mk. 10:21). There was **some effort** beheld in this ruler — but **not enough**. There was some honesty, some searching — yea, enough to even provoke the love of the Lord; but there was not enough to keep him following Jesus. Did the Lord Jesus mitigate his answer; did He water it down in order to pacify this young inquirer? Again, a firm “NO” must be registered. We must not permit our feelings to inhibit the relating of the truth, **even though it may mean the loss of the inquirer.**

Too, see how the Lord instructed His disciples further on this matter, using the question and the rich young ruler as examples of an exceeding difficult thing. It is as though He were saying; “The Kingdom of God is wonderful, but the riches of this world exercise such a strong pull upon the hearts of men that it becomes exceeding difficult for those that possess them to enter into the Kingdom of God. It has even been demonstrated before you in this very young man that has just left our presence with sorrow in his heart.”

You may learn from this that **truth is the important matter;** it is this commodity that is to be bought and sold not (Prov. 23:23). No compromise is to be made concerning the truth — no holding back of the truth — no veiling of it! While the servant of God is not to “strive” (II Tim. 2:24), he is not to withhold the truth, or varnish it with subtilty, or “handle the word of God deceitfully” (II Cor. 4:2). If knowing the truth constitutes real freedom (and it certainly does — Jno. 8:32, 36), then it is absolutely primary that the truth be communicated, else men are restricted and bound in spiritual slavery.

QUESTION #4: “Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?” — Matt. 27:13

The place is Jerusalem, in “the hall of judgment” (Jno. 18:28). The Lord Jesus is standing before “Pontius Pilate the governor” (Mt. 27:2). “All the chief priests and elders of the people” have taken “counsel against Jesus to put Him to death”, and have “bound him”, “led Him away”, and brought him before Pilate. They are eager for His death; anxious, as it were, to cut His cords from them, and break the bands asunder (Psa. 2:3). So conspicuous was their evil intention, that even Pilate discerned that “for envy they had delivered Him” (Mt. 27:18). It is written that “the chief priests accused Him of many things” (Mk. 15:3), saying such things as; “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place” (Lk. 23:5). They **also** charged Him with being an “evildoer” (Jno. 18:30). What will the Lord’s response be to these things? Pilate himself “marvelled greatly” at the response of the Savior (Mt. 27:14).

Did our Lord rise in defense of Himself? Did He declare that these were all blatant lies? No! The Word of the Lord declared; "And He gave him (Pilate) no answer, not even to one word . . ." (Mt. 27:14a). Thereby were the Scriptures fulfilled which were written of old; "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7). He truly did "not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (Isa. 42:2).

You see, there are times when silence is the only proper response to questions. Our Lord did not "answer the fool according to his folly" (Prov. 26:4). That silence which characterized our Lord during this critical hour has ministered to many of our spirits over the years. It has assisted in checking our own impetuosity, and has often rebuked our hasty tongues. It has set before us a noble mark which often seems far more distant from us than we would have it to be. In other words, **the effects which this silence has wrought is testimony to its absolute propriety and righteousness.**

Now, we should not fail to inspect our own hearts — our own responses to the questions that have been directed to us. Is there not room for improvement in this area? Ought not the servants of the Lord to seek to emulate their Lord and Savior in this matter of answering questions. The time has come for the church to be aggressive in this area, no longer timorous and faltering. Ignorance is not becoming for "the King's daughter" (Psa. 45:13). Let us all be encouraged to seek wisdom from the Lord to be spiritually proficient and wise in this matter of **ANSWERING QUESTIONS.**

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SPIRITUAL AFFINITY WITH GOD

The effectual fusion of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God is portrayed many places in Scripture. Truly, we are "of His bone and of His flesh" (Eph. 5:30), and "joined to the Lord", we become with Him "one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). It is then that we speak of the Lord as being associated with us personally, and of the benefits we are deriving from such a wonderful and intimate fellowship. The 23rd Psalm affords a very prolific view of this truth. Extracting all words save those bearing reference to the Person of God and the recipient of grace, we get a lovely picture of the fusion of God and man through grace. Here is how it reads: "..... Lord my I He me He me He my He I I Thou Me Thy Thy me Thou me my Thou my my me my I Lord."

It is a marvelous token of God's grace that man may so speak of his Lord in such intimate association with himself. We bid you in Jesus' name to avail yourself of this spiritual affinity with our Father that has been accomplished by Christ. You too may speak of His work in your behalf; of His leading, succouring, provision, strength, comfort, joy, goodness and mercy in your behalf. Christ has made the way, through His death and resurrection, for you to experience joyfully the reality of being "joined to the Lord."

"According To" or Divine Causes

(From page 6)

did something? God forbid, it was because **God willed it!** We were "born, not of blood, nor of the WILL of the flesh, nor of the WILL of man, **BUT OF GOD**" (John 1:13). **The responses that we had, the subjection to ordinances given by the Lord, were or continue to be holy, because they were effects of God's own will and work.** We are drawn into submission to the will of God by the will of God itself. Like a mighty magnet it tugs at the soul of the elect, bringing them into the full purpose and will of God, and mysteriously bringing them to such a point as their heart is bent toward God, **willing and ready to submit to those instructive ordinances which He Himself has ordained to display lessons of grace!** Hallelujah! You see, the begetting, or conception by the Spirit (we are "born of the water and the SPIRIT" — Jno. 3:5) is according to God's mercy; not our works; not our responses; not our efforts; but in accordance with God's mercy — it was the cause; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which **ACCORDING TO HIS ABUNDANT MERCY** hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3). **Mercy overlooks what man is;** therefore there is no qualification inherently in man, else there would be no need to overlook his merit. The cause of your begetting is **MERCY!** Praise God for it, and be not forgetful! Our very acceptance before the Lord has been in accordance with Divine mercy and grace; "to the praise of His grace wherein He hath **MADE** us accepted in the Beloved, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, **ACCORDING** to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:6, 7). The very thought of "rich grace" is exhilarating to the soul! It speaks of grace that will abound more than sin hath abounded (Rom. 5:20). Our initiation into the purpose of God, therefore, was caused by God, not us!

Here is the glory of it all; we continue to participate in the purpose and will of the Lord, even said to "stand" in it (Col. 4:12). **The spiritual blessings which you derive now are but the projection of that eternal purpose of God into your very life.** The cause behind it all is the choice that God made "before the foundation of the world"; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, **ACCORDING** as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:3, 4). Where, then, is merit? Where is boasting? Verily, "it is excluded" (Rom. 3:27). If you would know why you are experiencing the spiritual blessings of God, high on this "mount Zion, the city of the living God" (Heb. 12:22-25), then the Lord would point you back through time before the foundation of the world was laid; before there was a sea, or land, or a firmament of the heavens; before there was man or beast; before there was sun or moon — and there, before it all, He shows you the choice that He made in accordance with His own "good pleasure". There He says; "Here is why I bless

you; here is why I care for you, succour you, feed you, strengthen you, uphold you, teach you: it is because I have chosen you as my signet and have "set my love upon you. You are an elected person; thousands about you have been subjected to the same truths as you, yet have not come to 'a knowledge of the truth' because they have not been chosen; consequently, they are not blessed. But you, weary pilgrim, you I have chosen for Myself, to set you before me holy and pure, and without blame in my only begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I bless you for that reason, because you're mine; I have purchased you with my blood, and you are not your own. Therefore, glorify thou me!"

Is it need that you now consider? We all have needs, and they are met and supplied by the Lord. Hear the cause behind their remedy: "And my God shall supply all of your needs ACCORDING to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). The cause is the riches of God's glory; i.e., **the fulness of God's personal manifestation, which shall bring with it a rich supply of all that you need!** To know God, and to behold Him "in the face of Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 4:6) is to have that more abundant life, yea, eternal life" (John 17:3). Those things that "pertain unto life and godliness are all supplied by the Lord, His power being the cause behind their introduction to us; "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. ACCORDING as His DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:2, 3). Whatever you need, in whatever area of life it be, whether temporal needs, or things that apply unto the great sphere of godliness, the cause which enables the possession of them is the Divine power! **You may not, therefore, muster up your own resources;** you are to appropriate them by faith from the God of Heaven through Jesus Christ. The inheritance that we possess has been secured in accordance with God's purpose; "In whom (Jesus Christ) we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated ACCORDING TO the purpose of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His OWN WILL" (Eph. 1:11). When the inheritance is secured in reality, and we are made to dwell in the presence of God forever, we shall find that the eternal cause behind our appropriation of that inheritance was the purpose of God. **Our faithfulness, diligent efforts, and lack of weariness in well doing shall be but a manifestation of God's purpose. The cause moves upon us to conform to the will of God, and were it not for that mighty display of God's power, we should be found outside of the will of God as for eternity, never able to approach unto Him whom no man hath seen, nor can see!**

These are Divine causes! They reveal unto us the way in which the Lord works — in accordance with His own will. He never violates it, and it is always the cause for personal participation in redemption. **It is God's work that establishes us, and not our own;** "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood

of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21). May the Lord give you the eyes of understanding, that you may be able to see His own will and purpose and that this purpose might compel you to trust with all your heart unto Him with whom you have to do. You shall stand before this God in the end, and He shall judge you in the Son righteously. May God give you to see that only those that have been caught by Him according to His own good pleasure, in His will, shall be at last given that "salvation which shall be revealed" (I Pet. 1:5). Do not look to yourself for the stimulus, but look to the Lord — and be saved, all ye ends of the earth (Isa. 45:22).

There Must Be Also Heresies Among You

(From page 8)

that is "approved of God" (II Tim. 2:15). Without that approval, all work is vain, pointless, empty!

We do have in the Kingdom of God this matter of being accepted with the Lord. It is true that in the general redemptive sense, we have been "made acceptable in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6) — but we speak now of the evidence of that acceptance. No professed believer — however supposedly advanced he may be — has the right to assume in this area. His approval before God rests (so far as men are concerned) upon **evidence**. The desire of every true servant of the Lord is like that of Araunah: "The Lord thy God accept thee" (II Sam. 24:23). Think of it, dear reader — if the Lord thy God does not accept thee, what hope can you possibly have? You see, we are speaking of a critical matter, indeed!

The Lord spoke to His ancient people Israel in words like these; "I will accept you with your sweet savour. . ." (Ezek. 20:41); "I will accept you, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 43:27). The Apostle spoke of offering our bodies a "living sacrifice, holy, ACCEPTABLE unto God. . ." (Rom. 12:1), and again; "For he that in these things serveth Christ is ACCEPTABLE to God. . ." (Rom. 14:18), and again; ". . . let us have grace, whereby we may serve God ACCEPTABLY. . ." (Heb. 12:28). We cannot forget the words of Peter at the house of Cornelius; "But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is ACCEPTED with Him" (Acts 10:35).

We have, then, established this portion of God's character — He approves and disapproves of men! He approved of Moses; He disapproved of Korah. He approved of Daniel. He disapproved of Nebuchadnezzar. He approved of Peter, He disapproved of Herod. **There are some within the visible church which meet with His approval, and some which do not! That is a fact of the kingdom which confronts us in our text.**

"They which are approved might me manifest among you"

We learn from this that Divine sanctions are evidenced, oftentimes, in trial. Quite frankly, there were times when some of us would have pre-

ferred that this not be the case, but we have learned that the "Judge of all the earth will do right" (Gen. 18:25). **No assembly, however blessed, is exempt from the entrance of heresies** — factions, divisions, sects. We do not want it this way, and we will do all within our power to keep them from coming in — but the word of the Lord is true; "For there **MUST** be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest"! As a general rule, we might say this: **Wherever there is a mixture of approved and unapproved, there must needs be heresies!**

The Lord will cause dissension to erupt in order that those whose hearts are not circumcised may gather to their own people. He uses Satan in this program, because He Himself cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (Js. 1:13). None are strong enough, enlightened enough, discerning enough, to guarantee that this infiltration of heresies will not take place! "There **must** be heresies among you that they which are approved may be manifest among you!" It is as though the Spirit were saying; "Not all among you are of the truth; therefore when heresies and divisions arise among you, those that are not of the truth will embrace error, and those that are approved will prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

You will remember that the presence of our Lord wrought division when He was upon earth; "So there was a division among the people **because of Him**" (Jno. 7:43); "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them" (Jno. 9:16); "There was a division therefore again among the Jews **for these sayings**" (Jno. 10:19). You see, those divisions — heresies, if you please — **must** needs be in order that "they which were approved might be made manifest." Remember our Lord's sayings; ". . . the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (Jno. 10:4-5). The **sound** of heresy may not be stopped by the sheep; the presence of division may not be effectually thwarted — but they will not be overcome by it. They will flee from that which is not the truth, thereby making themselves manifest.

**"They went out from us
but they were not of us. . . ."**

There were even heresies among those that accompanied with the Apostles; "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that **THEY MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST** that there were not all of us" (I Jno. 2:19). Indeed, here we have a classic demonstration of the text; "There must be heresies among you that they which are approved may be manifest among you"! Unpleasant — yes! "But necessary." Tares seem to creep in everywhere — Satan is active in his diabolical work. He seeks to disseminate right in the very presence of apostles, if possible, "damnable heresies" (II Pet. 2:1). He will even bring them in "privily", and none will know until "many have followed

their pernicious ways". But though we grieve over those many, and would not have them to follow those damnable heresies, yet we confess that "There must be heresies among us that they which are approved may be made manifest." Why is it that some grasp the sin and degradation that is set before them. Why? In order that they might be made manifest! Place the blame where you will, but those who embrace heresy, who segment and split the body of Christ, who believe a lie, are being made manifest before our very eyes — that they are **NOT** approved of God.

On the other hand, take those that believe the truth, that embrace it and delight in it also are being made manifest, that they are approved of God. Their personality may not measure up to your expectation, but they are approved of God. Their talents and ability may seem to come short of the more professionalized people, but they are approved of God! They may require some polish — but they are approved! How we ought to thank the Lord for the truth, and for men's embracement of the same. It is therein that their hearts are made known. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (I Thess. 1:4-5). **They were made manifest by their response to the Gospel!**

But let us mention some more minute matters — matters which reveal the hearts of men. Say a false report is raised concerning one of God's children . . . a report that is uncomely. Those that are not approved will take it in eagerly, those that are approved of God will "think no evil". Paul was called a "pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who also hath gone about to profane the temple" (Acts 24:5-6). Now, those that were approved of God would not receive such testimony, for it was not the truth; on the other hand, it was necessary that this heresy be introduced in order that they which were approved might be made manifest. The same principle prevailed in the matter of Korah and his insurrection against Moses — there must be heresies that they which are approved might be made manifest.

Now children of God, you may expect this to arise — yea, it must arise! We have seen it in doctrinal matters; in matters of love, in matters of report. There have been all manner of false teachings introduced into the church in order to subvert the hearers — from Satan's viewpoint. But from the higher vantage point, "There must be heresies among you that they which are approved might be manifest among you."

Heresies do not weaken the true church — they but serve to show up the bricks that have been laid with untempered mortar! They shine the light upon the saints as they reject such heresies and cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. May the Lord grant that you may be such as takes his side by the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Truth, and by His servants. The issue is great! It is the issue of whether or not **you** have been approved of the Living God.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH AT 78th AND INDEPENDENCE STREET

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His Name: make known His deeds among the people." —Psalms 105:1

God is so great, and His wonderful works are so magnanimous, that our lives are to be spent extolling Him, speaking of Him, singing to Him, living for Him, existing in a lively consciousness of Him. To promote such activity is the purpose of "the church of the Living God" (I Timothy 3:15). Christ died "to bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18) in order that we might personally experience Divine Life, and be conformed to the Image of Deity (II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:29). There is, therefore, no more honorable activity than fervent aspirations to please the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is to this sort of life that we summon and call you; i.e., to a life of realization of the presence and good pleasure of the Lord — to a life of discernment and understanding of the Most High. It is an exciting life because here things are ever new, ever pulsating with freshness from Heaven. Furthermore, you do need this, not only for this world, but infinitely more for the "world to come" (Hebrews 2:5).

The purpose of this article is to introduce you to THE CHURCH AT 78th AND INDEPENDENCE STREET, in Independence Hill. Particularly because we have a special interest in the things already mentioned, we have come to your community. Although we are new to you, we do not desire to long remain so, but want you to know who we are, and why we are here. Because there are already several churches in Independence Hill, it may seem rather presumptuous to introduce another one. However, the Lord has given us something to say that is fresh and vital, different and unlike the emphasis of most denominations. While we do not make any claim to have a monopoly on the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:20-21), the union that we have been given to sustain with the Lord by Grace has eventuated in some wonderful insight which we want to share with you. Were it not for the distinctiveness of the message that we bear, we would not exist. Too, we claim no other message than "the Apostle's doctrine" (Acts 2:42), and find a great delight in all of the Word of God. But, we are not so naive as to be ignorant of the fact that this is not a new claim. Many assert their devotion to the Bible, claiming their peculiar faithfulness to the written Word. In the last analysis, what is introduced in this pamphlet will have to be verified by your personal and honest appraisal of the situation. But, praise the Lord, we joyfully submit to the evaluation of any heart — whether honest or dishonest, knowing that the things of which we speak are true and precious.

WHAT WE ARE NOT

People have tried to identify us; to place a name-tag on us. "What kind of church are you?", ask some, perplexed by the name "The Church at 78th and Independence." It therefore becomes necessary for us to relate what we are not. **We are not a denomination.** Now we know that this affirmation is made by many groups, some truthfully, and some otherwise. With us, this is not a mere creed or formal statement — it is a reality.

We are not fenced in at all, either theologically or in matters of fellowship. Our understanding, as illuminated by the Holy Spirit, has **not** reached its limits, nor do we seek to build a fence around some pet religious theories or hobby horses. Our peculiarity does not lie in the fact that we believe a few different or novel things. God forbid! With us, the question is not "**What** do you believe?", but rather "**Whom** do you believe?" That is what matters. Our heavenly Father has spoken on many things, and we have come apart from other religious systems because we insist on maintaining the right to believe whatever God has said — whether it is conventional or not; whether it conforms to tradition or not; whether it brings humiliation or not!

We do not seek unity with any group or any individual that restrains our liberty to believe God (or to believe the Bible — the whole Bible). Nor, indeed, do we give any countenance to any belief that does not afford us the privilege and joy of believing God, especially when He speaks contrary to human notions. We are not interested in merely perpetuating our own group, or of making a name for ourselves. Thus have we chosen the impersonal name, "The Church at 78th and Independence." It denotes a gathering of people at this location — a people that have one supreme interest in mind; to prepare to dwell with the Lord forever.

We are not a social club. It is not our purpose to provide a mere gathering point for purely social interests. We do not want to meet together as neighbors, but as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; not as people interested in the renovation of the community, but as individuals that seek personal perfection by faith. While we do intend to provide various activities for the young, our fundamental interest shall be Godward, not manward. We have already learned that the only true benefit is found in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. While many provisions are made by various organizations for the pleasure and entertainment of people that have no interest in eternity, but we are not interested in such works. To placate the conscience of sinners is not our work, but rather to make them aware of the real nature of the case, and to introduce, in a living way, the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

WHAT WE ARE

We are a group of believers — those to whom the Lord Jesus Christ is real and precious. We have walked together for several years while located in another place, and have learned during that time somewhat of what it means to walk by faith. During our previous years together, our Precious Lord has taught us to know ourselves and has unveiled something of the greatness of His wonderful Person. Our lives have been affected by our Lord, and they are open books to be read by all. We are not perfect, we possess many deficiencies for those who care to look for them. However, they are as loathsome to us (and more so) as they are to anyone else, and we desire to quickly be rid of them. We cannot and will not justify or condone our sin — we hate it. Nor, indeed, do we intend to settle down in it. We have found that life in Christ is exhilarating and exciting to the spirit — that it is challenging and adventuresome to the heart. We are not bored with our religion, so to speak. We do not hate to

come to church nor to hear the Word of God and sing the songs of Zion. Our gatherings are bright spots in our lives — not merely because we are attracted to one another, but because of the strengthening of our faith during such times.

We hold no formal affiliation with any religious organization. Any work that is holy, that is godly, and that comports with the purposes and will of the Lord God receives our commendation. We are firstly and foremostly interested in the glory of God, and only as an endeavor bears upon that do we acknowledge it as valid. If men desire to know how to classify us, let them first behold our manner of life, and our manner of teaching and preaching — then let them decide for themselves. Our only desire in this respect is to be identified with Christ. By the grace of God, we have nothing to hide, and claim the promise; “He that believeth on me shall not be ashamed.” (Rom. 9:33). Glorious Savior, indeed, He is! We want to see Him more, know Him more, fellowship with Him more. We find that He is wonderfully sufficient, and that we do not need to be identified with any man-made systems. We invite you to this sort of fellowship; free from the encumbrances that come from submission to men and their creeds.

Our purpose is to become oriented for heaven. We confess with the faithful of old that here we “have no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13:14). We gladly confess that we are “strangers and pilgrims in the earth” (Heb. 13:13). — not merely by profession, but in reality. The grace of God has given us a longing for our Lord and a distaste for the tinsel and delusion of this world. We joyfully accept anything and everything that helps us onward to heaven, but we are pledged to oppose and vigorously deny all that inhibits or interferes with this heavenly trek.

Our gatherings serve the objectives that have been stated above. We seek to comfort one another in the faith, to encourage one another to live unto the Lord and rejoice in Christ Jesus, while having no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). We seek to provide an environment where no seeker of the Lord is restricted; where brethren are at perfect liberty to believe what the Lord says. Our services are not always conventional, but they are enlivening to the heart that is in quest of God. We aspire to give only what we have received, knowing that the Lord is fully able, and gloriously inclined, to give us “more grace.” We do invite you to come and try the spiritual menu God has given us — if you enjoy it, you are welcome; if you do not, you are certainly under no obligation. Provision is made in our meetings for questions, and for comments, for testimonials and for witnessing. If the Lord gives you something to say, you are welcome to say it.

GATHERINGS PROVIDED FOR BELIEVERS AND INQUIRERS

It is our custom to meet often — more frequently than some religious fellowships. However, we have found that our faith needs the sort of upbuilding that is provided by regular gathering with those of “like precious faith.” The Lord’s Day, of course, is honored by the gathering of the faithful. Classes are provided for children and adults wherein the Word of God is taught in order to the perfection of the hearers. Tuesday night we gather for mutual edification and a special prayer service. Friday night we again gather to hear the

Word of the Lord and to sing the songs of Zion.

Every third Thursday, the men of the congregation gather for a special meeting in which the things of God are discussed at length. We encourage all present to share their faith. These are high times in the Lord for us all. Every fourth Thursday the women also gather for a special meeting. They too discuss the things of God, and seek to build one another up in the most holy faith. Special one-week meetings are held five times a year in which particular topics are expounded and encouragement given to fight the good fight of faith. All of these meetings, together with other varied gatherings, are open to any who have an appetite for these things.

I have written long about these things in order that you might know us better. But in the last analysis, you must come and see. We will speak to you no more about ourselves; that is not the burden of our message. To speak of the Lord, to interpret your experience of faith by the Word of God; to show you the blessedness of being in Christ Jesus; to encourage you to “cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart” — that is our aim. We are eager to become acquainted with you, and for you to become acquainted with us — but infinitely more than this, we are eager for you to come to know the Lord in a fuller measure along with us; to come and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ with us. If you have an appetite for the things of the Spirit of God, we have something for you; but if you have no such appetite, then, without shame, we do confess that we have nothing for you at all.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU

We are not merely inviting you to **THE CHURCH AT 78TH and INDEPENDENCE**, although that is part of our purpose. But, above that, and infinitely more important, we are imploring and beseeching you to come into an intimate affiliation with God, and with His Son, Christ Jesus. Here is the real distinctiveness of the “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father” (James 1:27); and it is that there is an actual and effectual unity wrought by grace between God and man. Wonderful meditation! Here is the word of the Lord: “He that is joined to the Lord is **one** spirit” (I Cor. 6:17); i.e., there is a real fusion of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. The outcome of this is the transformation of our whole being. Our thoughts are renovated — renewed — so that we think after God instead of after man. We are found to be in agreement with Him; we no more struggle against His Law, against His precepts, against His will. We find that we are “willing in the day of His power” (Psalms 110:3); joyful experience. We become, in Christ Jesus, “partakers of the Divine Nature” (II Peter 1:4), or, as it is put elsewhere, “partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14). Being in the Lord, or being “saved”, as some are wont to put it, is not a mere creedal or church experience. It is not a matter of joining a community congregation and learning a new set of beliefs, or of being sold on the Bible like a customer is sold on a vacuum cleaner. There is a real heart change, a real experience of grace within. Paul put it this way; “If **any man** be in Christ, He is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new”

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(II Cor. 5:17). Quite frankly, the main interest that we have is to assist all believers in beholding how all things **have** become new. It is so refreshing, so energizing to behold the "Truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21), that we are eager for all to see as we do — and even more.

We do not bring a message of what can be, or what should be, to you. It is a message of what **has been**; of what has been wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ in your personal behalf. If you have the eyes to see it, the understanding to grasp it, your spirit will rejoice in the Lord as did Mary's of old (Luke 1:47). "The works were **finished** from the foundation of the world" asserts the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 4:3, and faith can rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory when it apprehends that truth! Christ has truthfully made "an end of sins", has "made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24). "God was in Christ **RECONCILING** the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (I Cor. 5:19) — that is Gospel. It is the "Gospel of **YOUR** salvation" (Ephesians 1:13). Everything **has been** done that needed to be done for your fellowship with God. The covenant with Christ Jesus to "take away your sins" has been accomplished, and the peace has been made between God and you. It is only the experience of it by faith that is ours now — and a blessed experience it is to know that you are "one Spirit" with God.

Our ministry at 78th and Independence is to assist people to live in an awareness of what the Lord **has done**. To aid them in coming out of themselves into the "faith of Christ" (Phil. 3:9). It becomes unnecessary, at this point, to relate to knowledgeable saints that freedom from our own imaginations is a glorious freedom indeed. Those that are informed in the things of God know this already. But for those that are not fully acquainted with such things, the word of the Lord states: "Trust in the Lord with **all** of your heart, and **lean not to your own understanding**; in **all** of thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). Our natural eyes are not capable of beholding things as they really are; only faith can do that. However, as we hear the true "Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), there comes a certain liberation from our own vain thoughts and imaginations. We learn by faith to reckon upon the truth rather than upon appearance. In short, God is the great Worker, and He calls upon us to be the believers. In believing we find God undertaking our cases and directing our paths. It is toward this sort of awareness that we direct our labors.

And now we urge you to come and be blessed with us. God has already blessed our hearts, and

is continuing to do so. There are great facets of the truth that are being opened to us that can be yours too. Of course, the test of any true religion is its effect upon its adherents, and we most joyfully submit to that test, knowing that "The Judge of all the earth shall do right."

We have several men with us that are able to speak to you about eternal things. If you so desire, we would be glad to come and relate to you the wonderful Grace of God. You may contact me at my home; 7903 Hendricks place; telephone 769-5935.

With this I leave you, praying that our Father which is in heaven will give you understanding in all things, and direct your heart into the patient waiting for Christ, granting you to be strong in faith, giving glory to God (Romans 4:20).

PUNGENT POINTS

Regeneration is generation all over again with a new and fresh principle of workmanship. It is the act of being born again; of being regenerated by the Spirit of God. It results in being born into a new family with new relationships. Man is made completely new — so much so that "old things pass away, behold all things become new" (II Cor. 5:14). Regeneration is not a mere overt act; it is a Divine process whereby God forms us spiritually into His own image.

* * *

In scripture, the word "abomination" is generally applied to an empty and meaningless religious exercise (Ex. 8:26; Lev. 7:18; 11:41; Deut. 7:25; 24:4). A religious exercise that is only overt, with no heart-participation is abominable to the Lord of Heaven. The sacrifices of God are a humble and a contrite spirit (Psa. 51:17). Our services, if not impregnated with heartfelt worship and joy in the adoration of the Lord shall only incur His wrath. With so much current emphasis upon form and ritual, it is important to remember this truth.

* * *

The less you fellowship with the brethren, the more critical you shall become of them. I find that the greatest causes of dissension come from those who frequent the fellowship the least. By all reason (human) it appears to be the other way around. The philosophy of the world teaches us the familiarity breeds criticism; but in the spiritual economy, this is not so! One's own lethargy and indifference will be sought to be excused and justified by drawing attention to the supposed failings of those that have not adopted the same course. We must incessantly pray for deliverance from such earthly wisdom and ways!

* * *

If we do not begin the day with the Lord, I fear we shall find it a most difficult thing indeed to end it with Him.

* * *

The schools of men would have us believe that they can prepare a person sufficiently for what they call "Christian service." This is based upon the presumption that they are endowed by God for the fulfillment of this ministry — a conclusion that seems almost wholly unwarranted.