

# THE BANNER OF TRUTH

*“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth”*

Volume 33

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## The Ministry of the Prospect for Us

### The Coming of the Lord

#### Part II

*It has an Essential Role in the Salvation of the People of God*

By Fred O. Blakely

In view of the unalterable certainty of our Lord's return, a most logical question is apparent. What are the intended effects of that prospect upon the believer? Does it have a specific ministry? If so, what is it?

It should here be observed that when the scriptural doctrine of the second coming is truly accepted, it will invariably have some effect upon the individual or the group. It is utterly impossible to, in the fullness of faith, contemplate that event, with its scriptural connotations, without experiencing powerful reactions. Undoubtedly, the reason that so many who profess some degree of mental assent to the promise are not radically affected by it is that they, in reality, do not believe it. As with so many other instances, the profession of the faith fall short of genuineness. No reaction to the promise of our Lord's return, therefore, indicates little or no faith in it.

But with some who actually believe the teaching there is a seriously wrong reaction. Abject fear and foreboding result. Some have been driven to complete distraction, or even insanity, by that kind of application of second-coming doctrine. But obviously this is not the result which God purposes. He “is not the Author of confusion” (I Cor. 14:23). And He “has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Tim. 1:7).

Actually, as John says, “He that feareth is not made perfect in love”; for “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (I Jn. 4:17-18).

Hence, an undeniable conclusion is evident. It is that, as spiritual complacency or slothfulness are not the logical responses to the expectation of Christ's return to earth, so fear and mental derangement are also incongruous. What, then, is the proper reaction to “the promise of His coming”?

According to Scripture, it is threefold. That is, the knowledge that our Lord is coming back again should so affect us as to produce at three results.

They are as follows: 1. Spiritually dissociate us from the world. 2. Make us personally righteous. 3. Create in us an eager anticipation for Jesus' second coming. Let us, therefore, pursue our study along these lines.

**Separation from the World.** In the third chapter of Second Peter, the Apostle designates the believer's separation from the world as the logical and designed reaction to the expectation of Christ's return. He first describes the dissolution of the present heavens and earth, which is to take place at Christ's appearance. I shall presently cite more Scripture in concurrence with Peter's representation of this occurrence as being attendant upon the second coming. It is enough to here simply note that this is apostolic doctrine. “The earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up” the day that Jesus comes, we are informed (II Pet. 3:10).

Then follows the practical application of that prospect, as proclaimed

by Scripture. “Seeing that these things are thus to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness” vv. 11-12).

The Apostle John makes the same application in his first epistle. Anticipating the second coming, when “the world passeth away and the lust thereof,” he calls upon the saints to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” he says (I Jn. 2:15-17).

Paul the Apostle similarly applies the teaching of Jesus' second coming. He exhorts the brethren to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” in their expectation of the “appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:11-14).

**The Response's Logic.** The logic of that designed response to second-coming doctrine is evident. If the present world is to pass away, being “burned up,” when our Lord returns, it obviously is temporal and unworthy of the heart attachment of eternal spirits. Furthermore, it is condemned by God; for certainly what He purposes to consume by fire is refuse.

John, in fact, expressly says that “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (I Jn. 5:19). Paul refers to it as “this present evil world,” and declares that it is God's purpose in Christ to deliver the saints from it (Gal. 1:4).

Therefore, we are told to regard the world as under divine condemnation, and to separate ourselves from it. The prudent person steers clear of a condemned building, knowing that it is dangerous. So ought God's sanctified ones to dissociate themselves from the condemned world. They know that the wrath of God is against it, and have been apprised beforehand that it is destined for destruction at Christ's second coming.

“Remember Lot's wife,” as Jesus calls upon us to do (Lk. 17:20-37). And, by that remembrance, be duly admonished by her experience under similar circumstances.

**Personal Righteousness.** Interwoven with the requirement for separation from the world, of course, is that for personal righteousness, or holiness in Christ, which second-coming doctrine imposes. In fact, as Paul says in Second Corinthians 6:14 --7:1, the required separation has its expression in the development of godly character and life more than in literal withdrawal from the world.

Peter specifically requires this individual righteousness as a reaction to an expectation of Christ's appearing. In addition to the exhortation already cited, verses 13-14 of Second Peter 3 make that application.

The Apostle proclaims the glorious news that the destruction of the present natural order will be followed by revelation of the new and eternal one. “According to His promise [Rev. 21:5], we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” He then calls upon the saints to apply this prospect as follows: “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, give diligence, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless in His sight.”

John follows the same principle of reasoning in First John 3:2-3). “We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is,” he exclaims. As the practical application of that blessed hope, he then remarks, “And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (cf. 2:28).

The previously cited passage from Paul [Tit. 2:11-14] is in close accord with that viewpoint. Not only does it require the repudiation of “worldly lusts” in consequence of Christ's expected return. Positively, it demands that we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” as we cherish that blessed hope.

*(COMING, Continued on Page Four)*

## THE BANNER OF TRUTH

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## The Two Covenants

"No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (Lk. 5:39). The transition from old to new is difficult for many to make because they have become relentlessly accustomed to the old. In almost all of life's situations the preference for that which is old and the disdain of a new thing is excusable. *But not when it comes to God's covenants!* For a man or a woman to taste (cf. Heb. 6:4-6) of the manner and ways of the new covenant, and then, out of preference, to revert back to the *modus operandi* of the old covenant (of course, they still call it the new covenant) is grievously reprehensible! To all such ones, the Apostle would say: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:11)!

The transition from old to new entails a very real translation of the essential person "from the power of darkness" "into the kingdom of" God's "dear Son" (Col. 1:13). And wherever this passage is made by men, new creaturehood most certainly ensues, for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). The change is real, not metaphorical! But it is "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). And let us say at this point that this transition is made wherever men obey the gospel.

Incidentally, just because a man or a group uses primarily the new covenant scriptures (Matthew to Revelation) does not necessarily mean that such ones are living and operating under the new covenant. There is a lot of old-covenant-type religion that comes in the name of the new covenant. Such individuals give lip service to the death of Christ and to His resurrection to the right hand of God, but they live, practically speaking, as though remission of sins and reconciliation to God are types and shadows of things yet to come and not present realities to be received and joyed in by faith. But the situation with which we have to do is this: We "have eternal life" (I Jn. 5:13) and our sins *are* forgiven us for His name's sake (cf. I Jn. 2:12). Thus, men either participate in the new covenant by faith in an accomplished salvation, or they do not have a part in it at all.

There are many in our day who profess to be constituents of the new covenant, but who do not give solid evidence of having made the transition, by faith, from "the oldness of the letter" to the "newness of spirit" (Rom. 7:6) which characterizes the better covenant to which we have come. Such ones are actually living as though they are yet under the old covenant regardless of what they profess. They have not come by faith to Mt. Zion, but are still, for all practical and experiential purposes, at the foot of Mt. Sinai. They give little evidence of possessing that "faith" which "is the substance of things hoped for," and "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). They are primarily citizens of this present world, and, for the most part, are strangers to the one which is to come.

Are we going to excess in making these indictments? The ones to whom we refer do not speak with "great plainness of speech" about "the things which are not seen" and which "are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18). If they were spiritually conversant with "the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18), they could not refrain from speaking about it with great joy and fervency. But they have traded the hope that is set before us for a self-contrived system of orthodoxy. Such ones are sticklers for what they consider to be correct doctrine, but they are strangers to the doctrine of "the world to come" of which the Apostles *continually* spoke (Heb. 2:5).

Such are those, for example, who insist on what they call "the divine pattern of acceptable worship." Their insistence upon this so-called pattern evidences their experiential alienation from the God with whom we have to do. (Conformity to their pattern takes the place of being "transformed by the renewing of" the mind (cf. Rom. 12:1-2) and of putting on the new man.) It also demonstrates their complete estrangement from the very life which the new covenant imparts to men. The law of God is apparently not written "in their hearts" and "in their minds" (cf. Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10), which divine writing involves experiential reconciliation to God, and which is the norm for all new covenant subjects. And like the Pharisees of old, they "search the scriptures; for in them" they "think" they "have eternal life" (Jn. 5:39). But in the same way, they "will not come to" the Savior, that they "might have life" (vs. 40). They come to Him by their religious profession, but not in actuality and not in heart.

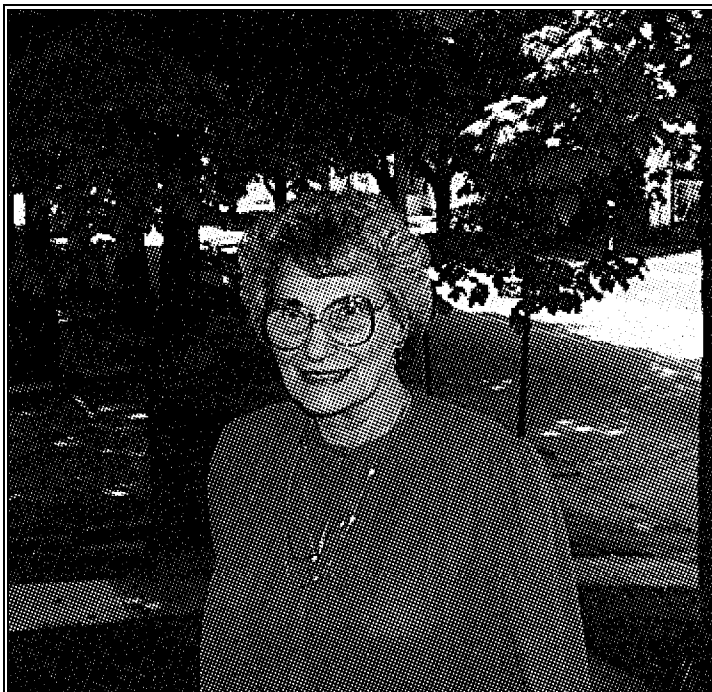
"The two covenants" (Gal. 4:24), with which we have to do, are not only different in their words and content, they are also completely diverse in the purpose and intent for which they were given. "Now we know that what things soever the law (the first covenant) saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). Thus, it was God's purpose in giving the law to make men guilty, to make sin appear to be exceeding sinful unto men, and so to prepare them for the Savior from sin.

Contrastively, "the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:18-19). The new covenant is this "better hope." It is not a new system of law for men to measure up to, for the law of God is now written upon the heart. We keep God's law *because we are accepted of Him*, not in order to be so.

The first and second covenants (Heb. 8:7; 9:1) are also diverse as regards the status of the persons which are under them. In the new covenant, the persons are raised up to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Their citizenship is in heaven, from whence also they look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Phil. 3:20-21). They were "sometimes darkness," but now are they "light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). They "are washed," they "are sanctified," they "are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). This was not the case with those who were under the first covenant.

The new covenant also wonderfully affects the realm of experience for those who are partakers of it. Men are made to *taste* "of the heavenly gift" and the "good word of God" and "the powers of the world to come." By faith, they are made to taste, or experience, both things that are outside of themselves, and things that are outside of natural experience. Men and women in the new covenant are often given to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8). This was not the case with Israel under the law, nor is it the case with those under law today. Rejoicing in God Himself and in Christ Jesus is virtually unheard of in their camps.

## In Memory of Sister Rubye



**Rubye W. Blakely**  
**Born: February 20, 1912**  
**Departed: January 7, 1995**

### Expressions Of Loving Remembrance

*"The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10:7)*

The following expressions were spoken in remembrance of and appreciation for Sister Rubye Blakely on the Lord's day following her death. We include them here for the comfort and encouragement of those who knew both her and Brother Fred.

"Sister Rubye's life and service to Christ were greatly helpful and deeply appreciated by me and my wife, Sister Charleenes. A faithful and loving mother, she "tarried by the stuff" (I Sam. 7:24). But in so doing she managed to glorify God and edify the church. Her children, with many brethren, now rise up and call her blessed." --Dean E. Boelt

"I thank God for Sister Rubye's godly life and example. That life continues to glorify the Father and the Son by the devoted lives of her children. In them she, being dead, yet speaks." --Karen Sankowski

"Both Sister Edith and I have come to love Sister Rubye very dearly over the past twenty-five years or so that we have known her. We thank God for every remembrance of her." --Floyd M. Coffman

"I thank God for Sister Rubye Blakely, now gone to be with Christ. I much enjoyed her ministry of singing in the assembly before she became ill, especially her rendition of the hymns, "How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings" (from Psalm 84) and "Jesus, Rose of Sharon." Such were songs that were from another age, as it were, being uncontaminated by the current-day fleshly religious emphasis." --Albert G. Stoner, Jr.

"Sister Rubye faithfully served with me in the gospel and continually supported me during that sixty year period of gospel preaching. It is my understanding that she will share in any rewards that I receive in that day." --Fred O. Blakely

"Rubye Blakely was the best friend that I ever had." --Helen Montasiewicz, Highland, IN

## More Letters of Comfort

The letters printed here were received by Brother Fred in response to the news of Sister Rubye's departure to be with Christ on January 7th of this year. These are brethren to whom Brother Fred ministered back in the 1950's at Batavia, Illinois. We include these written expressions here for the edification and comfort of our readers. We would also take this opportunity to thank all of you who have written for your thoughtfulness in remembering Brother Fred and the family at this time. A word of thanks is also in order to the *Christian Standard* for printing Sister Rubye's death notice.

### *From the Porters*

Dear Ones in Christ,

Near and dear are the memories we have shared through the years gone by. Sister Rubye has gone home to be with her Lord. We praise God for bestowing upon her the promised peace and serenity she has finally come to know.

We send our love to you as one who has had a great influence in our lives in years gone by. We want to send our thanks to Nelda for her devotion in serving her mother. Not many daughters would be so faithful under similar circumstances.

God bless and keep you all in the hollow of His hand during this time of sorrow. All our love to all of you. We received the Banner of Truth today and enjoy it so much. Our prayers are with you all. --Harry and Marian Porter, San Angelo, TX.

### *From Frank S. Smith*

Dear Fred,

Today's mail brought the Banner for February, with its announcement of Rubye's departure to her promised glory. May that Spirit which sustained you during these last few years of loving care to her in her helplessness, now supply all comfort and peace.

Quite by coincidence, this day I was sorting through a box of old papers and came upon *The Centennial Herald*, your booklet commemorating the Batavia Church's 100th anniversary in 1952. I had pasted in the front cover a copy of the Centennial Program. Rubye sang "Bless This House". The closing hymn was "Faith Of Our Fathers" . . . "we will be true to Thee till death". So be it with us all. --Frank S. Smith, Piney Flats, TN

### *From the Leadabrand*

Dear Fred and Nelda,

We are at peace knowing that Rubye is gone to be with the Lord. What a time you all had and we hope Rubye did not suffer all the time.

Joe and I are in Fort Worth, Texas. The lack of Christian Churches is terrible in Texas. What an opportunity the church misses by eliminating the instrument. I know you know all about that.

We see you are 85. Well, we'll be 82 this year. We love you all and have always appreciated your sermons--especially concerning the Holy Spirit. Love in Christ. --Joe and Betty Leadabrand, Fort Worth, TX

### *From the Dickenson*

Dear Brother Fred,

"I just read in the Banner of Truth of Rubye's passing from this valley of tears into the presence of God. How glorious for her! We shall all see her again, each in our own time. So we do not sorrow as those who do not have hope in Christ. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15). "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). With our love and prayers. --George and Dolores Dickenson, Batavia, IL

**Firstfruit Regeneration.** Godliness, then, is a scriptural fruit of second-coming doctrine. In the consummate regeneration to be revealed at our Lord's appearing, the old order of nature shall "pass away," and the new one be manifested (cf. Rev. 21:1-8). So in the firstfruit experience which believers now have through faith, as similar process is to be accomplished spiritually.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). In view of his expectation of the revelation of the regenerated heavens and earth when Christ shall come, the believer is expected to "give diligence" to perfect holiness "in the fear of God," that he may be ready to "enter in" with Christ to "the marriage" (Mt. 25:10; Rev. 19:6-9).

If we "look for Him," therefore, we are to earnestly seek to "be like Him." Hope, thus, becomes, as S. R. Aldridge observes, "the engine of progress and reformation."

**Second-Coming Expectation.** Finally, Peter also suggests the attitude of the believer that is to result from the knowledge that Jesus is coming again.

In addition to his separation from the world and his development of godly character and life, he should be constantly "looking for and earnestly desiring" that occasion.

Paul also stresses that attitude. "Our citizenship is in heaven," he exclaims, "whence also we wait for . . . the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20-21). He gave thanks that the Corinthians were faithful, "waiting for the coming of our Lord" (I Cor. 1:7; cf. I Th. 1:10; II Th. 3:5).

As has already been pointed out, the expectancy of Christ's return was pronounced in the early church. It, of course, was produced by the Apostle's fervent preaching thereof. Christ Himself has emphasized the need for that attitude by insisting that the church be constantly looking and ready for His return. "What I say unto you, I say unto all: watch," He had summarized (Mk. 13:3-37; cf. Mt. 24:42-25:13; Lk. 21:7-36).

The state in which that attitude contemplates the believer is that of an espoused bride waiting for her husband. That state, of course, was developed in the parable of the virgins (Mt. 25:1-13).

"As a chaste virgin," the saint has been "espoused" to Christ, Paul in forms us (II Cor. 11:2-3). Thus, she is to eagerly hold herself in readiness, marking the time, as it were, until He appears to claim her for His own.

**A Demonstration of the Need.** In describing his attempt to reach the south pole, Ernest Shackleton, British explorer, told a story that illustrates the necessity of watchfulness. He left his weary men on Elephant Island, and promised to return for them, when forced back from his expedition into the Antarctic. He tried to get back to fulfill his promise, but was thwarted by vast ice fields and terrible storms. But he could not rest, knowing that his men trusted and expected him. So he tried again.

It was the wrong time of the year, but--strangely enough--he got nearer the island, and suddenly a channel opened between the ice and the point where he had left his crew. He ran his boat in at the risk of being caught by the churning ice, got all his men aboard, and came out again, just before the ice crashed together. It was all done within half an hour.

When they were safe, he turned to one of the men and said, "Well you were all packed and ready to go." The man replied, "You see, Boss, Wild [the second in command] never gave up hope. When the sea was at all clear of ice, he rolled up his sleeping bag, and said to all hands, "Roll up your sleeping bags, boys. The boss may come today."

"And so it came to pass," said Shackleton, "that we suddenly came out of the fog from a black outlook, and within an hour were all in safety, and homeward bound."

But the rescue was dependent upon the readiness of the men, which had been assured by their watchfulness for Shackleton's coming. Even so, only to them that "look for Him" shall our Lord Jesus appear the second time "unto salvation."

The practical value in the new life of an expectation of Christ's return is in the powerful incentive which it provides. Not only is the believer separated from the world; he is separated unto Christ. He has given up the world, but he is waiting for Jesus. The righteousness that he is enabled by

God to acquire is primarily for Christ's sake--to make him fit for His society. He is kept "unto salvation" to be brought to him "at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:3-13). His joyful expectation thus ministers strength in his general spiritual deportment. We can "abstain from sinful indulgences because of more cherished longings," as Aldridge remarks. "If professors of the faith lived with the great white throne, and the earth and the heavens fleeing away before Him that sits upon it, burning before their inward eye, how could they wallow in the mire of animal indulgence?" Alexander Maclaren well asks. Genuine spirituality, thus, is the antidote to carnality.

A. J. Gordon told of his working one summer away from his home in Boston, and of his children constantly playing in the soil. But when they knew that he was coming home their hands and faces would be shining clean as they met him at the railroad station. One day he told them, "Now, children, I don't know when I may return; it may be in a day or so, or maybe longer." It was a whole week before he returned. But the children met the train every day at his homecoming hour. Filled with expectation, they eagerly looked for him. Mr. Gordon said that this expectancy kept them clean for a whole week.

Christ is certainly coming. Will we be clean and ready for Him when He appears? Our expectancy of Him can, and should, work that ministry for us and in us.

Hence, Paul says "we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:17-27; cf. I Th. 5:1-11). It was because of "the joy that was set before Him" that our Lord was enabled to accomplish His mission (Heb. 12:1-4; cf. 11:24-27). Certainly, as we anticipate that "blessed hope" of our Savior's return from heaven, we, too, shall be bolstered up in our courage and fortitude. Thus, shall we be effectively assisted in our "good fight of faith."

**The Expectation Practical.** It is thus evident that second-coming doctrine is not to be dissociated from practical living in Christ. It is intimately bound up with scriptural faith and its fruits. It is one of the strong constraining and restraining forces with which God has provided His people in order to make them "partakers of the divine Nature" (II Pet. 1:2-4).

He who would delete or minimize this scriptural promise, therefore, is a perverter, not a proclaimer, of the gospel, and has set himself up as wiser than God. In the divine view, faith in the second coming of our Lord is involved in people's salvation as is certainly as belief in His first coming.

Let us, thus, neither add to nor take from God's perfect revelation. Rather, let us wholeheartedly embrace and proclaim it in its divine entirety.

### A Letter From Bill Paul

Dear Brother Blakely,

In a recent issue of the *Christian Standard* I learned of the death of your dear wife. I take this occasion to encourage you to "sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope."

I know you will miss her greatly, but in the intimate fellowship of the Lord, she will not likely miss you. I am sure you take joy in remembering the many years of fellowship you shared in the Lord's work and in her faithful witness to so many, even during her years of declining health.

I am praying that God gives you the strength to carry on, as this is the one thing she would most desire to see. In the love of Christ, *Bill Paul, Seattle, WA*

### In Remembrance of Sister Rubye

"Please accept this donation (\$50.00) to your publication in the memory of Rubye Blakely, the mother of Timothy Blakely." --*Raymond and Carla Robertson, Clackamas, OR*

A contribution of \$25.00 in Sister Rubye's memory was also given to the Banner of truth by Della Stewart, Prescott, AR. Our heartfelt thanks goes to these individuals. --*Editor*

## The Vengeance of Our God

By Michael Blakely

*“Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even  
God with a recompense; He will come and save you”  
(Is. 35:4).*

Vengeance is a part of the gospel that us not heard of much but it needs to be heard more since the day is quickly approaching. Vengeance is one of God's many possessions. “Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,” Oh Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee,” and “power belongeth to God.” Also “unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy” (see Ps. 3:8, Dan. 9:7, Ps. 62:11,12). And along with those Divine possessions is vengeance. It does not belong to man nor even to the holy angels, but “to Me belongeth vengeance and recompense” (Deut. 32:35). Just as God has given His other possessions to man (salvation, righteousness, mercy, power, etc.), He has also promised vengeance. It is, in fact, one of the things we hope for. It is declared in the scriptures along with other great and wondrous blessings.

**The Declaration of the Prophet.** Isaiah declared the good news saying, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God” (Is. 61:1,2). Vengeance is good news to the people of God. In case anyone may think this untrue we only need to be reminded of those souls “under the altar,” who were “slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth” (Rev. 6:9,10)? These faithful souls knew that the Lord is holy and true and therefore expected His righteous judgment. They just didn't know when He would dispense it so they cried out in expectancy.

**The Desire of the Righteous.** The saints desire righteous judgment because they are God's people, and are like Him. “The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth” (Ps. 58:10,11). God's people take comfort in the hope of vengeance because there cannot be righteous judgment without it. “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world” (Rom. 3:5,6)?

The world is Satan's territory for the present time and Satan is the primary target of God's wrath and vengeance. He is longsuffering because He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9). God's people desire this also. We do not delight in the thought of men going to perdition, but we also do not delight in the thought of men neglecting “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3). Satan shall not be allowed offspring in eternity. God has already declared, “never shalt thou be any more” (Ezek. 28:19). God will cast His enemies behind His back and we will see them no more.

The irony is that if men will avail themselves of His grace now, He will cast their sin behind Him in the same way! What a wonderful salvation God has provided for sinful men! This salvation cost Him His only begotten Son. Those that reject Him shall not escape! “He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord” (Heb. 10:28-30).

That is not to foster hatred or bitterness toward our enemies. And they are our enemies because they are God's enemies, but just the opposite is true. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 5:44,45).

Those who serve the devil are indeed our enemies, but we have a blessed gospel to preach to them! Since we are the children of God the “word of reconciliation” has been committed to us (II Cor. 5:19). “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:20). That is because we know of both the blessed gloriousness and the merciless wrath at His coming.

**The Involvement of Redemption's Cost.** We cannot fathom what the total cost was for God to provide our salvation. It cost Him something, an investment, if you will. On that day He will avenge Himself upon His enemies for despising that great cost. And He will also avenge His Son. “Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7). Jesus Christ sacrificed His equality with the Father so that men could become the sons and daughters of God. Those that reject Him shall not escape! They shall be slain with the sword of Him that sits upon the white horse (Rev. 19:20,21). “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

**The Apple of God's Eye.** God will also avenge His people. “For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye” (Zech. 2:8). Though we are made to do hard labor, it is really for our own benefit, “knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (Jas. 1:3). And the persecutions and tribulations that we endure are a “manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” (II Th. 1:4, 5). But then God will also reward the ones who cause His people to suffer, “seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you” (II Th. 1:6). All of this is yet to be fulfilled, so Paul instructed the Roman brethren, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath” (Rom. 12:19). That is, give place to the wrath of God.

**A Rest For the People of God.** But, praise His name, today is the day of mercy! Let us proclaim His mercy and give place for His wrath. Today we suffer, but tomorrow we reign! “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). We may take comfort in the contemplation of the vengeance of God because that is when “the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest” (Job 3:17). No more flesh, no more temptation, no more enemies of God, and no more Satan.

That rest shall be a most complete rest. That is not to say that we will not be doing anything there. After the dead in Christ have been raised, the saints glorified, and the earth destroyed by fire, the first order of business for the people of God will be “to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord” (Ps. 149:7-9). “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world” (I Cor. 6:2)?

--4437 Chatham Drive, Brownsburg, IN 46112

**How to Do it.** “How do I escape those tempting thoughts? It requires more than an act of the will. We will not avoid the wrong thought pattern unless we crowd it out with the right thought pattern. Crowd out the evil with the good. Beautiful guests for the rooms of your mind are listed in Phillipians 4:8. It is the new life which crowds out the old.” --Willie W. White, “What the Bible Says about Suffering,” College Press, pp. 184-185. Used by permission.

“I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly.”

## ***The Preciousness is Mutual***

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Ps. 116:15). “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8). In both of these instances the preciousness of the saints being, at last, in the presence of God and of Christ is enunciated.

In the first we see that it is a precious thing to God for His people to be with Him without the encumbrance of the sinful flesh. In the second, Paul, speaking for himself and in behalf of all those who are reconciled to God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, affirms that the anticipation of this is exceeding precious in their sight as well.

Incidentally, in both cases mentioned here it was *the death* of the saints that was considered to be precious. The advocates of the soul sleeping “persuasion” (Gal. 5:8), however, erroneously affirm that death inducts men into a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection. But David did not say that it was the resurrection of God’s saints that was precious in His sight, but rather the death of them. And Paul did not say that he was “willing rather” to be risen from the grave, and to be present with the Lord, but rather to be “absent from the body” and so to be present with Him.

And from this perspective of preciousness, it is inconceivable that either God or Paul would have attached such a “willing” and loving regard for death if it meant the beginning of an unconscious state. No, and such is not the case. The saints, upon their death, go immediately to be with the Lord. And Paul regarded his death, and we should so regard it as well, as “the time of” his “departure” (II Tim. 4:6), when he would go “to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). --*Editor*

## **God’s Quickening Ministry**

“If the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken you mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11). That is so, since “it is the spirit that quickeneth,” or gives life (Jn. 6:63). Thus, our Lord’s ministry for lost humanity is to give “life unto the world” (Jn. 6:33).

Thus did God so love the world “that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (v. 17).

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God” (v. 18).

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (v. 19). --*Jesse Stoner, Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

**The Walk with God.** “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I Jn. 1:7). One the other hand, “if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (v. 6). That is because “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (v. 5).

Through Christ we have been made to agree with God. His law is written in our heart and mind (Jer. 31:33; cf. II Cor. 3:3).

We praise God that we have now been given “the Mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16). And so, through the Holy Spirit, live and walk with Him, and joy in His blessed fellowship. --*Dean E. Boelt, Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

**But When You Succumb.** No, you will not always be the victor in your striving against sin. You will never reach that hallowed ground in your Christian experience where you are totally immune from temptation. When you slip back from the proud progress which you thought you were attaining, and you again succumb to the wiles of the tempter, don’t be a

quitter. Don’t permit the Devil to mock you to discouragement, for sins multiply in the soil of discouragement. Maybe the Devil won the battle, but you haven’t necessarily lost the war.” --Willie W. White, *What the Bible Says About Suffering*, College Press, 1984, pp. 193, 194. Used by permission.

## **Christ’s Strength Perfected in Weakness**

***By Tina Cobb***

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, messenger of Satan to buffet melest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake, for when I am weak then am I strong” (II Cor. 12:7-10).

Out of our very weakness, the part of us that we fear to be completely useless for His purpose, His strength is able to be perfected. Paul did not boast in his infirmities for the sake of boasting, but so that the power of God would rest on him. He was not ashamed to suffer as a Christian, but rather boasted in his infirmities and glorified God in this manner (cf. I Pet. 4:16).

Tribulations are used by God for our growth and maturing in the kingdom. He allows us to experience tribulation because He knows that this produces endurance, and endurance produces an approved character and hope, and hope does not make ashamed.

Though Christ was crucified in weakness He lives by the power of God. We also are weak in Him but we shall also live by the power of God (II Cor. 13:4). Paul does not have a thorn in the flesh any longer (for he is no longer in the flesh!) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient for him. These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, worked for him more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (II Cor. 13:14).

## **Who is Enthroned by You?**

“Jesus asks us to deny ourselves: self-will, self-love, self-interest, self-sufficiency. Oh, how often the old man Self stands in the way of surrender to the Master’s call! Self-denial must be the crucifixion of self. Self-denial means surrendering our right to choose anything but the will of Christ. Self-denial implies the renunciation of sin. Self-denial dethrones Satan and enthrones the Savior. How well it has been said that in every man’s heart there is a throne and a cross: when self is on the throne, Christ is on the cross; but when self is on the cross, Christ is on the throne.” --Willie W. White, *What the Bible Says About Suffering*, College Press, 1984, pp. 193, 194. Used by permission.

**Your Assistance is Needed.** We are again making an appeal to our readers to help us in the publishing of the Banner of Truth. As we have mentioned before, our desire and purpose is to make known the truth of God as we are given the ability to do so. We are asking you, our readers, to be the judges of the profitability of our labors and then to assist us in the work that God has given to us to do. If any are able to contribute in a regular and consistent manner, that would also be greatly appreciated. And, of course, we would also take this opportunity to thank all of you who have already sent in contributions. --*Editor*

This is a warfare that we are in and we are fighting to the death. --*Dan Powers*

“And they overcame him (the accuser of the brethren) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11).

# The Relation of the "Millennium" to it **The Coming of the Lord**

## Part III

*Whatever Is to Occur in the World Will Do So Before  
Jesus Comes.*

By Fred O. Blakely

In addition to those factors concerning our Lord's return which we have considered, there is the matter of its proper place in what theologians call "eschatology," or the "doctrine of the last things."

Although this phase of the subject, perhaps from one viewpoint, is not as important as those dealing with the certainty of His coming and the scriptural application of the doctrine, still it cannot be said to be immaterial. Indeed, in view of the existence of much confused teaching in this connection, and of the general perplexity on the subject that has resulted, it is apparent that there is ample warrant for devoting much attention to the subject.

And that is my intention in this article. I believe that, inasmuch as God has spoken on the relation of our Lord's return to the grand consummation of earthly history, it is entirely possible for us to understand Him. Furthermore, it is my impression that He intended for us to do so.

Therefore, the very fact that theologians have confused the doctrine should evoke great concern among us all. It ought to constrain us to tireless efforts to ascertain precisely what the Word of God has to say. Then we should go forth as heralds of the truth in opposition to any corruption thereof.

In this connection, Peter's warning should be recalled. He foretold of those who, confronted with some of the more difficult aspects of the second-coming Scriptures, wrest them "to their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-17). He expressly admonished us about being "carried away with the error of the wicked."

It is also in point that Paul spoke so soberly of the eschatological mistake of Hymenaeus and Philetus. They erred "concerning the truth, saying the resurrection is past already," and thereby overthrew "the faith of some" (II Tim. 2:16-18).

I take it, therefore, that the relation of our Lord's coming to such last events as the "millennium," the end of the world, etc., is not irrelevant to faith and duty. Most certainly, it is our duty to insist that, if any person speak of the subject, his expression is subject to appraisal in the light of God's Word.

**The Premillennial View.** Undoubtedly, the most troublesome source in this regard among us is the "premillennialist." That, of course, is the person who insists--characteristically with much dogmatism--that Christ will visibly return before the thousand-year reign referred to in Revelation 20:1-8.

The period is called the "millennium" from a combination of Latin words meaning a thousand years. In addition to the term "premillennialism," the doctrine also is sometimes referred to as "chiliasm," from two Greek words meaning thousand. Hence, its adherents are also called "chiliasts."

"Millenarians" is a title given them, too, because of their belief in a visible reign of Christ during the millennium, as distinguished from the opposing view of that period as a spiritual reign.

**Description of the System.** It is rather difficult to exactly describe the premillennial view. There are several shades and variations of it, and much disagreement between them.

However, it seems generally to insist upon two remaining comings of the Lord, making three earthly advents by Him. One of these would take place at the outset of the millennium; the other sometime near its close.

Premillennialists themselves are widely disagreed as to the consequences especially of the second appearance. One school teaches that

Christ shall come and occupy a visible throne in earthly Jerusalem. And from there He will rule the world for the millennium.

Another contends that the second advent will be attended by the "rapture" of the church, after which the glorified saints will reign with Christ a thousand years, while hovering over the earth.

The "rapture" is a theological term intended to denote the resurrection and catching up of the saints "to meet the Lord in the air" (I Th. 4:13-17). This view has it that the church will be absent from the earth with Christ at least part of the time, but at His "third" revelation--at the end of the world--will return with Him.

**David Brown's Description.** In his excellent book *Christ's Second Coming* (1858; rev. 1953), David Brown gives a compact definition of the premillennial system.

It insists, says he, "that the fleshly and sublunary state is not to terminate with the second coming of Christ, but to be then set up in new form; when, with His glorified saints, the Redeemer will reign in Person on the throne of David at Jerusalem for a thousand years, over a world of men yet in the flesh, eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage under this mysterious sway" (p. 6).

"This is Premillennialism," Brown continues; "that is, the expectation of a thousand-year reign upon earth after the second coming of Christ.

"In the above statement, I have expressed only the fundamental principle of the system, to which nearly all expectants of the premillennial advent would subscribe, keeping clear of the points on which they are divided.

"I have said they expect a reign upon the earth of Christ and His saints; but whether actually upon the earth, or only hovering above it in the air, and whether always or only at times--is by no means agreed."

The "common element," or "essence of the system," he describes as "the expectation of a mortal and sublunary state after the second coming--of a glorified state of humanity, as constituting the upper and lower departments of one and the same millennial kingdom" (pp. 6-7).

**Its Baneful Nature.** Some may think it of small consequence whether this system be true or false, Brown remarks in regard to the premillennial theory. "But no one who intelligently surveys its nature and bearings can be of that opinion.

"Premillennialism is no barren speculation--useless though true, and innocuous though false. It is a school of Scripture interpretation. It impinges upon and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith. And, when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not until it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of one's theology, and the whole tone of his spiritual character, constructing, I had almost said, a world of its own; so that, holding the same faith, and cherishing the same fundamental hopes as other Christians, he yet see things through a medium of his own, and finds everything instinct with the life which his doctrine has generated within him.

"Once insert the premillennial wedge into the text of Scripture, and a loosening process will begin, the extent of which will depend upon the energy and determination with which it is driven in" (pp. 8, 72).

After thoroughly exposing and refuting this erroneous system in his 456-page treatment, Brown concludes with this statement as to its baneful and harmful effects:

"It proceeds upon crude and arbitrary principles of interpretation, while it shrinks from carrying out even these to their legitimate results. As a system, it wants coherence, and is palpably defective, making no provision for some of the most important events which are to occur in the history of our race. And its bearing in some of the most precious doctrines of God's Word are painful and perilous.

"It is because I saw in it elements which at once fascinate the carnal mind and distract the spiritual that I thought it of consequence to sift it. And one of the least of my motives was the desire to rescue the 'blessed hope' of our Savior's appearing from the erroneous and repulsive circumstances with which this doctrine invests it, and which have had the effect of frightening away the church from an expectation which nothing else

*(Millennium, Continued on Page Eight)*

can compensate the loss of.

There is a range of truth connected with it which necessarily sinks out of its scriptural position and influence when the coming of Christ is put out of its due place.

I refer to the resurrection as a coordinate of the church's hope, and to all the truths associated with it, and in which there is a power to stir and to elevate, which nothing else substituted for it can possess" (pp. 454-55).

**Its Negation of the Gospel.** In addition to the injurious results of Premillennialism already listed, there is another that deserves emphasis. The system's practical result is to make the preaching of the gospel of "none effect."

The Scriptures portray the gospel as God's power for the redemption of the race. The Premillennial notion, however, takes another view of that subject.

**Its Appraisal of the Gospel.** According to A. Plummer, it insists that "the gospel is meant to be a failure, that the great work of winning the globe for Christ will never be done by any missionary effort, but will be brought about by the coming of the Lord.

"Its [the gospel's] power has been tried for eighteen hundred years, and has never yet fully converted one nation, one city, one town, nor even one village," says Joseph Tyso, (*Defense of the Personal Reign of Christ*, 1841, pp. 41, 42). "Yet some Christians are vainly supposing that it will, by gradual and accelerated progression, convert the world."

"That the world will be converted is evident from many Scriptures. But they ascribe it principally to other causes, and not entirely to the preaching of the gospel."

George Ogilvy, *Popular Objections to the Premillennial Advent Considered*, 1847, pp. 216, 217, says, "The Christian . . . finds that the kingdom and the universal church are to be established, not by gradual conversion, or by conversion more or less rapid under this dispensation, but by the personal advent of our Lord Himself, and by the events that accompany it."

Says J.W. Brooks, *Elements of Prophetic Interpretation*, pp. 227, 228: "As regards . . . the kingdom of Christ, which is the millennial kingdom . . . it is to be ushered in by desolating judgments . . . the universal prevalence of religion thereafter to be enjoyed is not to be effected by any increased impetus given by the present means of evangelizing the nations, but by a stupendous display of divine wrath upon all the apostate and ungodly."

**The Response to This.** Of such evaluations of the blessed gospel of Christ, which Scripture specifically designates as "the power of God" for the salvation of the world (Rom. 1:16-17), Plummer has a fitting remark.

"We regard it as a most lamentably successful temptation of the devil to lure the church of God away from throwing all her energy to the task of preaching the gospel to every creature."

Brown offers this comment on the subject (op. cit., 299, 303): "The Spirit in the hand of Christ, and the Word in the hand of the Spirit, as they are the present Agency for converting sinners and perfecting saints, and advancing the Redeemer's kingdom in the world--so They are all that we are taught to ascribe the glories of the latter day to. And quite enough.

"That these spiritual glories are not now irradiating the world--that they have not long ago chased away the darkness with which the usurping god of this world has been permitted to cover it--is owing to no defect in the present resources of the church, and of the economy under which it is placed. The premillennial theory paralyzes missionary effort by paralyzing missionary expectation."

**The Restoration View.** That is also the attitude toward premillennialism in general that was taken by the early leader in the Restoration Movement.

In his splendid article on the Millennium, in *Lard's Quarterly*, Vol. 3 (1886), pp. 276-290), James Henshall well stated that attitude. "If the coming spoken of at Revelation 20:4-5 is a literal coming and not a figurative one, it follows unavoidably that the Savior has failed in His great work, and Satan has triumphed over Him.

"The personal reign theory is the natural ally of the physical agency

in conversion, of creedmongers and waning sects, of those who make a man a machine and deny his liberty, of all who say the Word of God is a dead letter, and deny all moral causes.

"It seems strange to me that any who believe in the omnipotence of truth, in the power of the Word of God should give heart-room to the withering influence of the personal reign theory."

The astonishing fact in regard to Premillennialism, apart from its departure from Scripture, is its apparently widespread increase, especially within the Restoration fellowship. It, of course, has held sway for centuries in the older denominational bodies. Along with some other fanciful theories, it was taught by some of the early "church fathers." But traditionally it has not been dominant in Restoration circles.

The early leaders, as was observed, generally repudiated the erroneous doctrine. Indeed, they frequently clashed with it, as they went everywhere proclaiming "the ancient order of things."

## How the Apostles Died

All of the apostles were insulted by the enemies of their Master. They were called to seal their doctrines with their blood, and nobly did they bear the trial. Schumacher says according to traditional statements the following was the fate of the apostles:

MATTHEW suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword, at a distant city of Ethiopia.

MARK expired at Alexandria, after having been cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.

LUKE was hanged upon an olive tree in the classic land of Greece.

JOHN was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward abandoned at Patmos.

PETER was crucified at Rome, with his head downward.

JAMES THE LESS was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the Temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.

BARTHOLOMEW was flayed alive.

ANDREW was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died.

THOMAS was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel, in East Indies.

JUDE was shot to death with arrows.

MATTHIAS was first stoned and then beheaded.

BARNABAS of the Gentiles was stoned to death by the Jews at Salonica.

PAUL, after various tortures and persecutions, was at length beheaded at Rome by the Emperor Nero. --Slightly revised by the Banner of Truth from *Pulpit Helps*, July 1986, p. 21

## Building For Eternity

In our present lives, we are building for eternity. Let us, therefore, be diligent in our living for Christ. Let us, as God would have us do, sacrifice our love for the present evil world, replacing it with love for Him and the things of eternity.

If Christ is now our life, we shall see and live with Him in the world to come. When He shall appear in glory, with all things having been made new, then shall we also "appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

In the firstfruit sense even now, "all things are become new" for those who have received and are living in the risen and glorified Son (II Cor. 5:17). --Dean E. Boelt

**Pleasing God.** "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6). That is, simply because we both come to and fellowship with God by and through that faith. And such fellowship is necessary for us to please God, inasmuch as that is why He made man--to have fellowship with Him. --Dan Powers

"Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (Jas. 2:1).

## **It is Time to be Spiritually Awake!**

# **Knowing The Time**

By **Floyd M. Coffman**

*“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14).*

We live in a time that is unparalleled to any other time in history. It is a time of high tech advancements, but unfortunately the advancements are not always to our advantage. In this day we have a multitude of voices which are vying for our attention, and they are all calling us away from God. They are all making appeal to our lower natures and thus are distracting us from “the true riches” (Lk. 16:11).

In spite of these apparent disadvantages, we have been given to live in the time of the open heavens (cf. Mal. 3:10; Jn. 1:51), and if we use our time wisely and avail ourselves of the means which God has provided, He will give us grace to overcome this present evil world. As it is written, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:2). Thus, now is the time to be readying ourselves for eternity.

**The Uniqueness of this Time.** This is a very unique time in which we have been given to live. It appears that the coming of the Lord could be very near. “The signs of the times” (Mt. 16:13) are all pointing to an imminent return of the Savior. We will just name a few of them: the love of many is waxing cold because of abounding iniquity (cf. Mt. 24:12; see also Rom. 1:27-28; II Tim. 3:1-4). Sodomy and baby killing have increased to an unprecedented measure. Earthly calamities (earthquakes, floods, etc.) have become increasingly prevalent. And thus to live in this time is unique, because we may be some of the ones who shall “go without dying” (as the hymnwriter expressed it), and who “are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord” (I Th. 4:15). And in view of this prospect, let us redeem the time, because the days are evil!

Even though our old man is subject to time and is governed by time, our spirits have been regenerated and have been already given to taste of the powers of the world to come. We have been raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places. And we, that are in Christ, presently “have eternal life” (I Jn. 5:13).

**Time the Great Tester.** Time is the great tester of men. Jesus said, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Lk. 18:8). It was said of Abraham, that *after he had patiently endured*, he received the promise. And again it is written, “we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Heb. 3:14). The Lord Jesus said in another place, “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Lk. 21:19), and again, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mt. 24:13).

Time can be our friend or our enemy, depending upon how we use it. This can be seen in the parable of the sower (Mk. 4:16-20) and the parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1-13). Time was the friend of the seed which fell on the good soil and of the wise virgins. It proved to be the enemy, however, of all the other seeds and of the five foolish virgins. And now, more than ever, it is time for us to be awake and alert!

In the ages to come, we shall no more be governed by time as we are now. Faith shall then be turned to sight and we shall know, even as we are known (I Cor. 13:12) while eternity rolls her ceaseless cycles on. There in that world, “the former (things) shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isa. 65:17). And this is precisely what we have been waiting for, that is, the end of time! We will never have to ask again what time it is.

For there will be no more time, and neither can they die any more. What a blessed prospect that awaits those that are in Christ Jesus!

We must ask ourselves, “do we know the time?” If we do not, then we are deficient (cf. Lk. 12:56). But we do know the time if we are living by faith. And by faith we understand that “the time is short” (I Cor. 7:29). Let us then see that we walk circumspectly, not as fools, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. And again, let us “walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5). The time which has been allotted to us must be redeemed, because it is short. And one of the incentives for redeeming the time is knowing the time.

**On the Avoidance of Sleep.** “It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” This is not the time to be asleep or indifferent. Soon He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. And we have come too far to give up in the race now. But unless we continue to the end, all of our running will have been in vain.

Consider this: when we are asleep physically, we are at our most vulnerable point. We are defenseless. And spiritually, only as our heart and mind are filled with heavenly things is there any control over the mind. The time when Satan attacks the mind is when men are spiritually asleep. And it is very possible to be awake physically and at the same time be asleep spiritually. It is up to each one of us to remain awake and alert spiritually, in order that our hearts and our minds may be safely kept.

It is necessary for us to sleep in order to renew and refurbish the natural body, but those who have the mind of the Spirit will remain spiritually awake. We must keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection (I Cor. 9:27), so that our spirits may be alert. And we must for our very life’s sake remain spiritually awake. A spiritually minded person thinks and acts like God, and God is not asleep. As it is written, “Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4).

**Light and Darkness.** If we do not walk in the light, darkness will come upon us. And the only way that we can cast off the works of darkness is by walking in the light. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I Jn. 1:7). We have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Thus we do not have to be associated with darkness in any way. We were at one time darkness, but now are we light in the Lord (cf. Eph. 5:8). And there will be no darkness in that blessed realm to which the redeemed are going, for “the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5).

To those who are presently in darkness, it will not go well with them in the judgment, if they continue in that state (cf. II Pet. 2:17; Jude 6-13). And those who persist in walking in darkness shall finally be cast into “outer darkness”, where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth (cf. Mt. 13:50; 25:30).

**In Conclusion.** Let us then give diligent heed to this admonition of the Apostle. Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. God is faithful, and His grace is sufficient to enable us to overcome this present evil world. By putting off the works of darkness, and putting on Christ we have fellowship with Him and the communion of the Holy Spirit which will enable us to make it safely to glory. --*Slightly adapted for the Banner of Truth from a sermon preached by Brother Coffman at this assembly.*

Let us seek to acquire more of the knowledge of God with the accompanying grace and peace. --*Fred O. Blakely*

“I know that I am of God, and the whole world lieth in iniquity.” That knowledge is available to all that are in Christ. --*Fred O. Blakely*

Jesus said, “I have chosen you out of the world” (Jn. 15:19). There is a lot involved here. It means that the ones chosen do not think like the world nor act like it. --*Fred O. Blakely*

“The face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (I Pet. 3:12).

# Acceptable Service To God

By Robert Cobb

We who have called upon the name of the Lord are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is quite a blessed condition! We have been brought close to the throne of God Himself. We can fellowship with the Creator of the universe. Seeing these things in a doctrinal way is a beginning, but it is not the end of itself. God wants our affection and He wants us.

To yield yourself to your God is the greatest privilege of all ages. The angels do it tirelessly, and without distraction. We, on the other hand, are constantly beset with "things" that would take away our hearts' affection from Him. This world has a sure end; it is soon to be destroyed. God has served adequate notice of this to the sons of men through the testimony of His Word, but still many will be caught unawares when this present evil world is destroyed by fire. Those who use the time which remains to offer themselves unto the service of their God will be amply rewarded in that world which is soon to be revealed.

God doesn't need our crumbs and partial service, nor will He accept them. It is our reasonable service to give Him our entire life. Every breath should be breathed unto our God and the reason for this is because we were sinners, destined to die and be separated from Him. But God who is rich in mercy, loved us and gave His Son to die for our sins in our place. Now ask yourself, "Does this sound like a God that is a tyrant, and One who has set Himself to harm us?"

Men by nature cannot see the true and living God because He is a Spirit, and must be perceived by the Spirit through faith. Everything that God has done has been for the benefit of His creation. God wants us to be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the depth and length of His purpose in Christ. God is great and greatly to be praised. If man will but turn aside and consider the great salvation that God Himself has procured for them, then they will want him.

The perception of God to the individual is essential in order to prompt worship. Now we see God by faith, so we can see that when men do not live by faith they cannot reason properly. The unbelieving heart is hardened to the truth. It will not believe the gospel and fancies that it is but a mere story concocted by the strong to bind the weak minds of feeble men. When in fact it is exactly the opposite! Those who have believed have been delivered from them that live in error. The god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of men that believe not. Satan is interested in keeping men blind to the right understanding of God.

The remedy to this situation is to preach the truth, for in preaching God is seen for who He really is. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). It is God who is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. And in preaching we lift up Christ as our Advocate, the One who bore away from the presence of God all the sin of the world. In other words, Christ, by His atoning death for sins, took away every reason that God could possibly find to be angry with you. Now we stand without fault before Him and magnify the great salvation wrought out for us by the conquering King of Kings. We are presently bidden to come boldly to God's throne because we are accepted in Christ.

People who hold false views of God also have a retarded service of Him, if they have any at all. In order to worship God acceptably we must see him as he is. Then we will be able to respond to Him intelligently. God has made a way that we can know Him and has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit to show us the things that are freely given us of God. But we must be ready to pay the price for this knowledge.

Does it sound strange that there is a cost involved in knowing God? Christ said except a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow after him, he can in no way be His disciple. In the age we live in this is indeed one of the highest of all costs. The loss of self for something that cannot be seen by the eye of the flesh. Christ has not asked us to bear our own sins as He has already done that. God was in Christ reconciling the

world unto Himself, not imputing their sins unto them. And now, since that has been accomplished, we have received "the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12), but we must take advantage of the power and use it to God's glory. In this way we are workers together with God, and all along the way to heaven God is happy with us, He is pleased to give us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Let us strive to bring this understanding to men as we meet and talk with them. Babylon has portrayed our God as being a mean tyrant who is just waiting for us to make a mistake so he can punish us. We who have known the "Father of mercies" (II Cor. 1:3) can use this knowledge of Him to make Him known. We have a blessed gospel to preach. It contains the message of mercy and longsuffering of God in the gracious gift of His Son. We have the message to proclaim of Jesus Christ, who cared not for His own person but willingly went to the cross for us, and took our place in His death in order that we might have life. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit strives against our old nature and prompts us to walk in the knowledge of eternal realities.

Put these things all together and you will see somewhat of the purpose of God in Christ Jesus. It is a purpose that only a great God could design. Soon Jesus will return and truth will be clearly seen by the eyes of every person that ever lived. Then we will no longer be walking by faith, but by sight. Then there will not be one who is ignorant of the greatness of God. Everybody will know who God is. Everyone will worship Him as Lord. God is not willing that even one person should perish and be separated from Him on that great day. However, God is just and the Justifier of all them, and only them, that come unto Him by Jesus.

But there are some who will not believe the gospel. God made them in His image and they worshiped the image more than the Creator. For them there will be only the remembrance for all eternity of the great opportunities that were missed. They considered Christ to not be worthy of their time and devotion. For all eternity they will consider Him, but never be able to know Him. They will look unto the glories of heaven, but they will never be able to have and know them. They will have bodies that cannot sin, and minds that want nothing more than to sin, but they will be unable to fulfill the sinful desires..

This situation highlights the mercy of God. He knew well our condition of lostness, and He made a way for many sons to come unto Him and be with Him forever. Now this is a great God whom we have to declare! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

## *The Refreshing Waters Renewal*

On July 25-27 (Tuesday through Thursday) of this year the sixth annual REFRESHING WATERS RENEWAL is to be held in Hornet, MO, which is next to Joplin. The theme for this year's Renewal will be "THE BLOOD OF CHRIST". There will be several messages spoken by men from around the country focusing on this all important topic.

Here is a list of the subjects that will be ministered there. "The Blood of the Covenant," "Sanctified by the Blood of Christ," "Christ Entered the Holiest by His Blood," "Redemption through the Blood," "The Church, Purchased by the Blood," "Washed from our Sins by the Blood," "The Communion of the Blood of Christ," "The Purging of the Conscience By the Blood," "We Enter the Holiest through the Blood," "Peace through the Blood of the Cross," "Propitiation by the Blood through Faith," "Justified by the Blood of Christ," and "Brought Near by the Blood."

In addition to the messages, there will also be some discussions which will give opportunity for all to participate. We encourage our readers to plan to be in attendance there if they are able. For more information you may write to Given Blakely at: 406 Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801. His telephone number is 417-782-3063.

For those unable to attend this year's Renewal, video and audio tapes will be available by Brother Robert Cobb.

## **Let Us Consider and Examine Ourselves!**

# **Some Table Manners**

By Robert Cobb

We who are in Christ have the greatest opportunity of all Adam's race. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. God is making His appeal to sinners and to those who are strangers of the cross through those who have been changed and made new by the blood that was spilt on that cross, the blood of His Son. Along the way to that blessed home of the saints there are most certainly trials and tribulations. We who have forsaken the world as our home have a yearning in our members to depart from this world and to be clothed upon with "our house which is from heaven" (II Cor. 5:2).

God is not only aware of this groaning but He has made provision for the saints to enable them to make this journey to glory successfully. The Scriptures say that God has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3). And this He most surely has done. But even more than this, God has given us to eat with his Son at the table of remembrance. It is the Lord's table! Here, weary pilgrims and strangers come to refresh their spirits and sup with their Lord. Let us now look more closely at this great provision.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show (or proclaim) the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). The Lord's death is of none effect to the individual until it is proclaimed and received. We who have seen somewhat of the glory of God have done so because the death of Jesus was proclaimed to us. Someone preached Christ and Him crucified. This is revealed in Scripture to be the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it (cf. Rom. 1:16). When we come to this table we are, in fact, saying that we affirm with the Scriptures that we believe that it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on that cross, taking upon Himself the responsibility for the sins of the whole world in His body, which Christ Himself compared to the bread which is eaten at this table.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Cor. 11:27). This is marvellous thought that God and Christ have gone to such lengths to retrieve men from sin, and yet there will be some that draw back from this redemption. And there are yet others who say that there is no way that men can be worthy of God. We must ask, however, what saith the scriptures regarding these matters?

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11:28). As we examine ourselves, if we are indeed honest, we cannot help but see the great need for a Savior. Christ's ministry in putting away sins must appear larger to us than our sin. For when we look into our hearts, we find another law there. It is one that wars against our spirit and brings us into captivity. This conflict within us makes the remembrance of sins having been put away by Christ very needful and relevant.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5).

"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD" (Lam. 3:40). If we examine ourselves and find that we need to repent of sin when we are at the Lord's table, let us quickly do it! It is Christ who died and put away sin. It is He who now stands in the presence of God for us. He is our Advocate, and the covering for the sins of the world. He stands ready to forgive, and ready to supply the grace and peace that we need, if we will come boldly to the throne of grace.

If we examine ourselves and see that we have fallen short of His righteousness, and if we have grown cold, lukewarm, and complacent in the walk to glory, let us repent! Satan doesn't want us to see this at the Lord's table, but this is the table of our Friend. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I Jn. 1:9).

This is our Lord's table. Consider Jesus' atonement for our sins. His atonement is as effective in saving men from their sins as the curse was in placing men under the bondage of sin. The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is the remedy for all those under "the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13).

What about the sinless perfection that some speak of? We must examine ourselves, but not to see if we have done everything perfectly. We already know that this is not so. God is already aware of this fact as well and has made provision for this in the new covenant (cf. Jer. 31:34).

"But examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (II Cor. 13:5). Do you still need Jesus as much as when you first entered into the kingdom? Is He still your all in all? Are you still dying to the old man daily? Do you still want to be with the Lord forever?

What is the end of the matter? What shall be proper attitude for men to have at this table of remembrance? Hear the words of the Apostle. "And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11:28). "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor. 11:31).

If we do not eat of this bread and drink of this cup, then we are rejecting the sacrifice of Christ. And for those who reject Him, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Another consideration is this: if we eat of this bread unworthily, we are eating damnation to ourselves. It is essential that we maintain a good conscience toward God. We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is He who came to accomplish salvationally everything that we could not, so that we could come to God. And in view of this, let a man or a woman eat of that bread, and drink of that cup (I Cor. 11:28).

The saints of God have been given the great privilege of walking in the Spirit. This time at the Lord's table should be the apex of that walking. We must then live and walk in Spirit and consider that Christ is present there with us at the table, fellowshiping with us in this consideration of what He has accomplished for us on the cross.

## ***Saved By Right Preaching***

By Robert Cobb

It is because of the joy that is set before us in Christ that we are able to live in conformity to His will. Thus, the place of constraint given by Scripture to the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God (II Pet. 1:4).

That being the case, the subject of emphasis for our preaching is apparent. It should be with us as it was with the Apostles and the early church: the prospect of Heaven that we have in Christ, and the eternal glory and joy that awaits us there.

It is to the extent of our faith in and spiritual union with the Heaven-enthroned Lord that we can overcome the present evil world, and live acceptably to Him.

That being the situation, the proper highlight of the church's preaching is apparent. It should major on Heaven and on heavenly things. It is as we have due respect unto "the recompense of the reward," as was so with Moses in his day (Heb. 11:26), that we can run the race that is set before us, and obtain the victor's crown. In other words, we must "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14:4).

The Lord Jesus had as His crown of rejoicing the blessed prospect of becoming the Savior of the world. In the contemplation of that, He "endure the cross, despising the shame," and is now enthroned in Heaven (Heb. 12:2).

It is quite true that we have our adversary the Devil to contend with. But, as we resist him "steadfast in the faith," he will flee from us (Jas. 4:7; I Pet. 5:9). On the other hand, as it is written, "Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you" (Jas. 4:8).

Satan responds to our proper response to him by fleeing from us. God responds to our due response to Him by drawing near to us.

Let us, by God's grace, make full use of this way that He has provided for us to overcome our adversary the Devil.

# God's Will For The Church

Scripture Selections by Fred O. Blakely

*"This is the will of God, even your sanctification"  
(I Th. 4:3).*

Christ "loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-26).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness [i.e. sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18; cf. v. 16).

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).

In and through the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, we are to be "built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22; cf. vv. 19-21).

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven" (Mt. 5:14-15).

"He that abideth in Me the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be My disciples" --by much fruitbearing, that is (Jn. 15:5-8).

"If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (v. 6).

Let us, therefore, give the necessary diligence, brethren, to abide and flourish in the blessed Saviour. So shall "be neither barren nor unfruitful" in our relationship to Him (II Pet. 1:10).

Thus, shall "an entrance" be ministered unto us "abundantly" into "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (v. 11).

That glorious "end" of our faith in and devotion to Him will be worth far more than it will cost us to realize it (I Pet. 1:9).

## Five Loaves and Two Fishes

By Karen Cobb

We ought to be ready to distribute of our substance for the work of the Lord, and He will bless the increase (cf. Mt. 14:15-21; Lk. 9:12-17).

Jesus was often moved with compassion on the multitudes. They were like sheep having no shepherd. And He still is this way today (Mt. 9:36-38).

It is truly important to pray that the eyes and ears of men's understanding be opened. By faith we believe God will bless the work of our hands and save the people. By faith we can feed the souls of men being enervated by the joy set before us. Laboring together with God, we may "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts 26:18; see also Isa. 35:5; 29:18, 19; 42:7, 16). This is something that was not accessible to men in other ages, but it "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10; see also Lk. 24:45, 47; Eph. 1:13, 17).

Our Lord has given the church a responsibility to feed the flock. That is, to lead others to Christ by spreading the truth of the gospel and also to feed those in Christ with more understanding of the truth through His holy word. Some men try to feed God's people with worldly wisdom and not the true bread. That is why the majority of the churches today are lukewarm. God was always concerned when his flock was not fed by those to whom He gave the responsibility (cf. Num. 27:17; see also Ezek. 34; Jn. 21:16).

When we are obedient to the gospel He will bless our lives and our work and those saints that have need and the church as it has need. He will supply those things which are needful for the journey to heaven.

Jesus left the riches of eternal glory to come down to man and to take on Himself the body of flesh in order to accomplish our salvation. For this cause now we have an eternal hope of glory laid up for us in heaven (see II Cor. 8:9). So now let us give of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and to our brethren in love. And let them give of themselves to the Savior and to us in brotherly kindness and we shall be all knit together in love, as He commanded us to be (see II Cor. 8:14, 15; II Cor. 9:6-8; Prov. 11:24; Ps. 112:9; Isa. 55:10, 11; Hos. 10:12).

For this cause there is much prayer rising up to heaven into the ears of the Almighty God with thanksgivings unto Him (II Cor. 9:11-13). "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:3; See also Eph. 2:18; II Th. 3:1).

If we have been nourished up on the good word of God, then it is time for us to "feed the flock of God" as the Apostles commanded.

Jesus told his disciples to go and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20) One of the far-reaching effects that this teaching, discipling, and baptizing had was "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Rom. 10:15-18).

Preaching the word of God will appear as foolishness to the lost, unless God opens their eyes (I Cor. 1:18, 21, 24, 25) But--bless His Name--we have received grace and mercy for obedience to the faith. Obedience to the faith opens up the way to heaven. THE END

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly *above all that we ask or think*, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). We do not want to sell ourselves short as we are able to ask and think very large. --Fred O. Blakely

Our manifestation as the sons of God shall come when we are gathered together with Him. --Robert Cobb

There is too much pulpitiing in the churches with man's wisdom. --Fred O. Blakely

The natural mind is the one that we were all born with, and it is at enmity with God. --Fred O. Blakely

The will of the Lord for every man is that they sin not. --Fred O. Blakely

Christ is the Savior *from* sin, *not* the Savior in sin. --Fred O. Blakely

We can make it through the appointed suffering if we have and keep the eternal view. In considering what will be then, we can overcome now. --Robert Cobb

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18).

# The Ministry of Our Calling

By Dan Powers

“As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (I Cor. 12:12).

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (I Cor. 12:4-6). Verses 9 and 10 specify some of the various endowments that are bestowed by the Spirit. Thus, He divides to every man “severally as He will” (v. 11).

It is necessary that we know and recognize that principle of God’s kingdom. That is required, if we are to keep “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” as we are exhorted by the Apostle to do (Eph. 4:3).

“We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not His brother abideth in death” (I Jn. 3:14). Thus, love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10).

In the church, we are “laborers together with God” (I Cor. 3:9). As was so in the days of old, they “helped everyone his neighbor; and everyone said to his neighbor, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smote the anvil, saying, it is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved” (Is. 41:6-7).

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (v. 10).

The things that are “not seen” with the natural eye are the most important ones (II Cor. 4:18). We come together in the assembly to clarify our view of and our hold upon those abiding realities.

To do so is to build one another up “in the most holy faith,” as we are exhorted to do, and do it with diligence and perseverance. As it is written, “Whatsoever they hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Eccl. 9:10).

And let us do it “heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:23-24).

As we are again exhorted by the Apostle: “Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). --*Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

**A Cheerful Giver.** I praise God that, as it was promised, we have been made “willing” in the day of His power (Ps. 110:3). We can now serve Him as He desires us to do, with a “ready mind,” and not “grudgingly nor of necessity” (II Cor. 9:7). That is because the Lord “loveth a cheerful” and a liberal “giver.” --*Dan Powers*

**The Table of Remembrance.** We come to the table of remembrance on the Lord’s day to proclaim and remember an accomplished redemption. “It is finished,” asserted the Savior as He expired on the cross for the world’s sins (Jn. 19:30). The Lord Jesus, thus has made “an end of sins,” and brought in “everlasting righteousness” for all who receive and cleave to Him (Dan. 9:24). Fully relying on that blessed accomplishment, let us cleave to and serve the Savior in singleness of mind and heart. --*Albert G. Stoner, Jr., Noted and Recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

Let us seek to comfort one another with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. That was Paul’s policy (II Cor. 1:3-4). And it is a good one for us. --*Rebecca McCormick*

All of life can be one of devotion to God. --*Fred O. Blakely*

First fruit regeneration is essential to and in order to consummate regeneration. --*Fred O. Blakely*

# Regarding the Word’s Increase

In each of the following instances, the increase of the word of God was preceded by varying kinds of circumstances. “And the word of God increased” (Acts 6:7). This increase came about after things were done decently in order, namely, the appointing of deacons to care for the Grecian widows.

“But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24). This multiplying of the word occurred after the Lord smote Herod and he was eaten of worms so that he died.

“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region” (Acts 13:49). The word of God began to be proclaimed abroad after it was all but completely rejected by one class of people (the Jews) and wholeheartedly accepted by another (the Gentiles).

“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” (Acts 19:20). After the seven sons of Sceva, exorcists, were exposed for who they were, and after the people at Ephesus burned their idolatrous books, the word of God began to grow and prevail.

Let us be watchful then and seize on the occasions that are at hand and pray the word of the Lord may be multiplied once again. --*Dan Powers*

## The Service of Christ

By George Brewer

I am a believer in and a follower of Christ because of who and what He is, and what He has done for me, is doing now, and will yet do, as I continue to cleave to and serve Him.

I can say with Philip, I “have found Him of whom Moses, in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph,” and the Son of God (Jn. 1:44-45; cf. Lk. 24:44-45).

I praise Him, for as God was with Abraham, He is my “Shield” and “exceeding great Reward” (Gen. 15:1). He is also the Savior of the world for all who will receive and cleave to Him with purpose of heart.

The blessings which Christ bestows are forever. When we are in Heaven, and the present heavens and earth shall have passed away, He shall abide. That is because He is “the same, yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” He promised (Mt. 28:18-20).

When heaven and earth shall have passed away, He shall continue. And--praise God!--we with Him.

In lively awareness of His Presence with us now by the Spirit, let us continue to live and labor for our dear Savior and Lord. That is because we know that such living “is not in vain” (I Cor. 25:58). --*Noted and Recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

As you do all things unto God, it sanctifies them and rescues the common things of life from dullness and dryness. --*Fred O. Blakely*

The two witnesses (Rev. 11) were more effective after they were overcome. This is a great principle of Scripture. --*Given O. Blakely*

The Father is on the initiative to seek you to worship Him. --*Robert Cobb*

In Christ the veil is taken out of the way, and we behold Him “with open face”. --*Dan Powers*

We glory in infirmities because they drive us to Christ. --*Fred O. Blakely*

Sanctification is based upon the work of reconciliation. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10). --*Fred O. Blakely*

## Legalism and the Assembly

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, *as the manner of some is*; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25). While it is understood that from time to time there arise things which are beyond our control that take us away from the gatherings of the saints such as illness and work, the following remarks are directed towards situations that are well within our control, and towards individuals that are “otherwise minded” (Phil. 3:15).

Why is it that places of Christian assembly are generally well attended on the Lord’s Day morning but during the rest of the week the gatherings have a shamefully low attendance? Or to ask this question another way, what is it that compels the ones who only come on the Lord’s Day morning to come when they do? There have even been some that are of this persuasion who, defending their actions, have affirmed, “The only time when we *really have to* attend is on the Lord’s Day morning.”

And what is the cause of the mass exodus on the part of many from the Lord’s Day morning service to wander aimlessly around in the wilderness of this world for the entire week, and not to return again until the next Lord’s Day morning? It appears that such ones have bought from the old serpent a legalistic view of salvation whereby they reason within themselves that they have performed their adequate religious duty by a minimal attendance upon the things of God. And perhaps such persons feel that they are in compliance with the Apostolic injunction mentioned above by their regular once-a-week attendance. But this word of the Apostle was not spoken from Mt. Sinai, but rather from Mt. Zion. It is addressing people who supposedly really want to enter into the world to come at any and all cost (cf. Mt. 13:44).

But the neglectful individuals, of whom we speak, are deceived in this matter as they are attempting to live before God on the basis of their doing, and *thus they are not living by faith*. They have not learned that living in this present evil world has a decisive and unavoidable eroding effect upon faith, and that faith needs to be regularly nourished and built up, or else it will fail (cf. Lk. 22:32). They have not learned that the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (cf. Rev. 13:4; 16:13-16) have determined to overthrow their faith, and will be successful in doing so, unless they maintain that faith by a regular and frequent recourse to the means which God has provided and ordained for that purpose.

The Judaizers of the twentieth century have subtly left their distinctive mark in the hearts of men just as they did in the first century. They are the ones who have introduced the damnable thought of assembly attendance and devotion to the things of God on a merely “have to” or “ought to” basis, instead of on a “desperately need to” and “want to” basis. The “old serpent” (Rev. 12:9) has even contrived an “if and when I feel like it” mindset with regard to the assembly of the saints which is custom made for the casual.

It will be recalled that the early church, under the direction of the Apostles, continued “*daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house” (Acts 2:46). And the Apostles with the other brethren were “*daily* in the temple, and in every house,” where “they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (5:42). It is also written that “so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number *daily*” (16:5). “And the Lord added to the church *daily* such as should be saved” (2:47). It would be difficult for this sort of thing to happen again today because of the minimal and only occasional involvement of most religious devotees with the things of God and of His kingdom. But let those of us who love God’s kingdom pray that this may happen again.

There is much talk in our day in many circles about restoring the “New Testament church”. It seems that a good starting point in this restorative process would be the restitution of the love and the zeal for assembling with those of like precious faith and that for the right reasons. May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ open the blinded eyes of those that are otherwise minded in this connection. --*Gleaned and expanded from a discussion at one of our Friday night meetings.*

## Tapes Now Available

Audio and video cassette tapes are now available for the 5th annual Refreshing Waters Renewal, held in Joplin, Missouri this past July. The subject of this year’s renewal was that of “Faith.” The messages of this Renewal were titled as follows: *Defining Faith, The Obedience of Faith, The Necessity of Faith to Please God, The Relationship of Faith to Works, Being Full of Faith, The Law, or Principle of Faith, The Righteousness of Faith, The Relationship of Faith to Grace, The Shield of Faith, The Good Fight of Faith, The Full Assurance of Faith, and The Spirit of Faith*. In addition, there were also discussions and testimonials that have been recorded and are being made available.

Robert Cobb, of Wheatfield, Indiana, has taken the responsibility for the taping and recording of these gatherings. In addition tapes of the preaching festival on the Book of Revelation (September 18th at Independence Hill Christian Church) are available. In the month of October Brother Bob also recorded some special meetings that were being held by Given Blakely in the Joplin area. In November and December Brother Bob has also been compiling audio tapes on the book of Revelation which were preached by Brother Given in the 70’s and 80’s.

You may contact Brother Cobb by letter or by telephone in order to obtain either video or audio cassette tapes of any of these meetings and messages. He and his staff stand ready to serve you. His address is: *Robert Cobb, 11092 N. 550 West, Wheatfield, IN, 46392*. His telephone number is: *219-987-3049*.

**Editor’s Note:** Brother Robert Cobb is to be commended for his unflagging zeal in energetically laboring to publish abroad the Word of God by whatever means are available. (He is in charge of the tape ministry at this assembly.) He regularly spends and has spent a considerable amount of time recording both video and audio tapes of the sermons preached at this and other assemblies. These are sent out each week to individuals throughout the United States and also to some foreign countries as well.

He has also gathered and compiled four bound sets of audio tapes, each set containing 32 messages on the book of the Revelation preached by Given O. Blakely.

Brother Bob and his father, brother Charles Cobb have largely subsidized this tape ministry, so that tapes could be made available to anyone who desires them. They now, however, stand in need of assistance for the continuation and expansion of this kingdom work. If you would desire to help defray some of the costs involved here, you may make checks available to: Tapes of Truth, 11092 N. 550 West, Wheatfield, IN 46392.

**Requests to be Put on List.** “I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 as a donation. Will you please put my name on the mailing list. Thanking you, Yours In Christ our Lord, *Ahmed Hameed, Seattle, WA*

Right now we are judicially complete, but not experientially so. There in that world we shall be wholly complete. --*Fred O. Blakely*

When you’ve got both hands on the plow, you’re leaning into the load, and thus are reckoned to be “fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk. 9:62). --*Dan Powers*

**The Secret Things.** “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). Whatever God has elaborated on in His Word is yours to know and understand, and whatever He hasn’t elaborated on is His to conceal. --*Given O. Blakely*

Our spirits are presently growing and being enlarged to match our new bodies. --*Jesse Stoner*

# Holding Fast The Head

By Gene Hutchcraft

*“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow” (Col. 2:18-19, NIV).*

The warning is clear, yet it is hard to imagine. Why would one give up the Chosen One of God, the One on whom God has placed His seal of approval? He has brought us “every spiritual blessing”. By Him we have “eternal salvation” for He always lives to intercede before the Father by the power of His indestructible life. God saw the suffering of His soul and was satisfied. Many have suffered terribly but for no benefit before God. Jesus’ blood speaks to God on the behalf of believers, and no one else’s blood does (cf. Heb. 12:24). He is the One and Only sent by the Father who has come down from heaven to reveal the Father to us. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known (cf. Jn. 1:18). “No one has ever gone into heaven except the One who came from heaven—the Son of man” (Jn. 3:13).

Satan is very cunning. Paul warns us of this. He schemes to deceive the elect by masquerading as an angel of light. His ministers portray themselves as servants of the light (cf. II Cor. 11:14-15). The warning from our text is just as pertinent today, and maybe more so than it was when first written. Satan’s deception has become ever more subtle through the ages. Seldom does he attack us up front, attempting to forcefully sever us from Jesus. He patiently works within the ranks of professing believers to cool our love for Jesus by distracting us to lesser matters. Humility is admirable and important in the kingdom. Jesus Himself exhibited it being “lowly and gentle, humble in heart”. The enemy often turns our focus from Jesus Himself to the characteristics He displayed. By distracting our attention we lose connection to the only One who will work this in our lives by faith. There are no fleshly means to acquire it ourselves. We give the enemy an advantage when we are not joined to Jesus, who is our source of strength for the inner man. Hold fast to the Head! He will supply every spiritual blessing with enlightened eyes to see them.

Angels have an important role in the Kingdom. “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14) This thrills the soul to consider these powerful beings who are commanded by God to care for us. We don’t know all the details regarding them and it would be unprofitable speculation to elaborate very much. Yet, Scripture gives us a record of them bringing messages from the presence of God Himself to Zacharias, Mary, John, and Paul. One was sent to release Peter from Herod’s dungeon. The Old Testament contains many incidents of their service to God and His people. They were and are mighty, and the flesh is no match for their strength and wisdom. Considering that this is the case, it is a point of marvel that some, even to this day, elevate angels to a place Scripture does not give them. Angels never encouraged worship of themselves. As a matter of fact they refused it. John received a gentle rebuke by one in the Revelation. “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” (Rev 22:8-9 ). Anyone who advocates placing them in a position other than ministers to the heirs of salvation do you great disservice.

Jesus alone is Head over the body. He gives gifts of ministry to

members of the body as he deems necessary, but He relinquishes His place of preeminence to no one, except the Father. Each believer has access to God through Him. We have access to Jesus because He was made like us, and that was in order to make us like Him. He brings many sons to glory before the Father. He ministers at the right hand of the Father even now supplying for His body what is needed. In the process He is bringing us through this present evil world to himself. Let no one persuade you of a method or procedures of approaching Him or the Father. Come to Him by faith. “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36), “and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37). --304 Woodland Pl., Carl Junction, MO, 64834-9542.

## Primary and Secondary Importance

This “present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) is slated for destruction by fire (cf. II Pet. 3:7, 10) and is presently, by the will of God, under the domain of its prince (Jn. 16:11), Satan, and of “the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Eph. 6:12). It is also, for the present, the realm of the curse (cf. Rev. 22:3).

Also to be considered here is the fact that God is getting ready to reveal a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth only righteousness (II Pet. 3:13). It is called elsewhere “the world to come” (Heb. 2:5). These combined circumstances make the primary issues that confront men and women to be that of good and evil (cf. Ps. 97:10), righteousness and iniquity (cf. Heb. 1:9), truth and the lie (cf. I Jn. 2:21). They must ever regard it to be so if they are to escape unharmed out of this present world, and arrive safely in the one that is to come. It also means that all other issues must take a place of secondariness or even irrelevancy.

Men and women, who are of *this world*, give priority to a host of other things simply because they do not believe “the record that God gave of His Son” (I Jn. 5:10-12). Let us ever choose the good and refuse that which is evil and pray always that we may “be accounted worthy to obtain *that world*” (Lk. 20:35). --Editor

**The Creation of Man.** “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Ps. 8:4-6). God put more into the creation of man than He did into the rest of creation. --Floyd M. Coffman

We are spiritually united with Christ. Our Head is now in heaven. -  
-Fred O. Blakely

Essentially we, that are in Christ, belong to the future more than to the present. --Fred O. Blakely

To reckon does not mean to pretend that it is so. We reckon upon reality. --Given O. Blakely

Our peace has to be in those things that are eternal. --Dan Powers

Everything here that we have is in a bag full of holes. --Dan Powers

This is a warfare that we are in and we are fighting to the death. --  
Dan Powers

If you don’t put on the whole armor of God, there is no way that you will make it out of this world spiritually alive. --Dan Powers

The people who are the closest to God do the most for God. --Fred  
O. Blakely

In being “labourers together with God” there is a blending of divine energy with human energy. --Fred O. Blakely

**Independence Hill Christian Church**  
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Nonprofit Org.  
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## An Invitation to Visitors

For those of our readers who are travelling through northwest Indiana, we invite you to visit us at our place of assembly. We would very much desire to meet you and to be comforted by the mutual faith, both yours and ours. The types of materials that appear in *the Banner of Truth* are but samplings of the kinds of things that are commonly preached and taught in our assembly. We welcome you in the name of the Lord Jesus!

Our regular meeting times are as follows:

*Lord's Day*, Bible School - 9:30 a.m.

*Lord's Day*, Morning Service - 10:30 a.m.

*Lord's Day*, Evening Service - 6:30 p.m.

*Midweek Service* (open discussion of a topic of

Scripture and time of prayer) Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

INDEPENDENCE HILL CHRISTIAN CHURCH is located at 2230 W. 78th Avenue (two blocks north of Route 30 and one block west of Rt. 55[Taft] in Merrillville, Indiana). Our building has a cream-colored stucco finish. The phone numbers are 219-793-9318 (leave message on answering machine at place of assembly, if no one is present) and 219-769-7048 (Editor's home). You may call us for further information.

Every other Sunday we have a carry-in dinner immediately after the morning service. Visitors are cordially invited to join us as we eat together with gladness and singleness of heart.

**The Table of Recognition.** As we come to the Lord's table on the first day of the week, it is a blessed thing to know that, as it is written, we are spiritually "complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10).

Like Moses in his departure from Egypt, we have forsaken this world and its prince, the Devil, not fearing his wrath (Heb. 11:27). That is so that we may now spiritually live and reign with Christ. And, in the eternal world to come, may live and reign with Him forever. --*Floyd M. Coffman*

"In Christ," we "know no man after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16). Having ourselves passed from death unto life in Him, we now consider people as God regards them. That is to be "spiritually-minded"; and that, as it is written, is "life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). --*Robert Cobb*

Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). Thus in Him, "there is no sin" (I Jn. 3:6). At the Lord's table in the weekly assembly of the church, we come to commemorate our freedom from sin, as we eat of His sacrificed body and blood. Let us, by grace, thus discerningly participate in the weekly feast. --*Floyd M. Coffman*

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together" (Ps. 34:3). Let us have the praise of God continually in our heart and upon our lips. for, as it is written, "praise is comely for the upright" (Ps. 33:1). It is glorifying to God and edifying of us and of those before whom it is offered. --*Dean E. Boelt*

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:14). In the same way that little children are absolutely dependent upon their parents, those in the kingdom of God are likewise dependent upon their heavenly Father. --*Dan Powers*

## Miscellaneous Observations and Reflections

If someone who professes the faith does not have the living hope, then his faith is deficient. --*Fred O. Blakely*

There is no excuse for coming short of heaven once the race is begun, because we have an Advocate with the Father. --*Fred O. Blakely*

There is a fight involved in keeping the faith. --*Floyd Coffman*

We are in a state of warfare. We are under pressure here, and it's not going to let up. --*Fred O. Blakely*

The more perceptive of God you are by faith, the more you will rejoice. --*Given O. Blakely*

We need a lot of love and compassion, and God is love. --*Fred O. Blakely*

All of the opposition shall eventually be incarcerated in the lake of fire. --*Fred O. Blakely*

Being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is a big proviso. --*Fred O. Blakely*

The faith life involves venturing out into the unknown and staking your life on God's commitment. --*Fred O. Blakely*

There came a time when the early disciples forgot about fishing for fish (cf. Mk. 1:16-17) and went after men. --*George Brewer*

The natural man and the mind of the flesh have a spiritually blinding effect upon us when they are permitted to have the ascendancy. --*Tim McCulfor*

If your religion does not clarify the things of God to the people around you, it is a great handicap. --*Fred O. Blakely*

With regard to the mind of Christ, give it full sway in your life, and it will get you in trouble here, but it will also get you into heaven. --*Fred O. Blakely*

Everyone in the body of Christ and in the warfare of faith does not have the same function. --*Rebecca McCormick*

If you are at a distance from the throne, you are also powerless before the throne. --*Dan Powers*

The trial of your faith often intertwines with the trial of the faith of the other brethren as well. --*Dan Powers*

The resurrection power does not strengthen the natural man within us at all. It strengthens the spiritual man. --*Dean E. Boelt*