

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

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

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The Refutation of Premillennialism

The Coming of the Lord

Part IV

By Fred O. Blakely

Again, James Henshall speaks to the point. “The leading spirits in the present reformation [the Restoration Movement] have never believed in a personal reign of Christ upon this earth for a thousand years. They have always contended for a figurative or spiritual reign.

“In this there can be no mistake, for I have been laboring in this cause, and have been on terms of intimacy with the leading minds since 1829. For years it has been among us of an eccentric tendency in the mind of any man who drifted out of the main current of thought into the eddies of speculation, to go round with the driftwood and trash of anti-progress spirit.” “We have generally accepted it as a sign of disappointment in whosoever turned to the dogma of a personal reign, as the plunging and floundering of a spirit who has had Pisgah in his eye, but who has become befogged in the swamps beneath.”

But in recent years there seems to have been a swing in sentiment toward Premillennialism. Today an exponent of the Apostles’ doctrine often is required to denounce and expose it among his congregational brethren.

The Present Intent. That is what I propose to do here, withal “in the spirit of meekness.” I do not seek to impugn the motives of these brethren, or to disfellowship them in Christ. I am, in fact, persuaded that many good and sincere brethren hold that view. But I am equally confident that they are wrong.

My intention in this part of our study is to disclose their error, and to call upon them to abandon the untenable position in favor of the truth.

My Purpose Twofold. The plan that I shall follow in accomplishing that objective perhaps is unique. I do not propose to enter into all the ramifications of the subject of Millennialism--“Pre” or “Post”. For a comprehensive treatment of that subject I refer the reader to Brown’s excellent book.

Rather, I have adopted an abbreviated procedure. It is one which I am persuaded will effectively undermine the whole foundation of Premillennialism, and permit the truth of Scripture to stand forth unclouded.

It is: 1. To establish two fundamental facts in connection with Christ’s return. 2. To remove any logical objections to the inevitable conclusions by consideration of the misinterpreted Scriptures upon which Premillennialism rests.

The facts to be established are: (a) Christ shall make only one more return to earth; and (b) that coming shall be accompanied by the destruction of the world and the consummation of all earthly affairs.

It can readily be shown that if these assertions can be shown to be substantiated by Scripture, Premillennialism cannot stand. The essential postulate of its several schools of thought are two more comings of the Lord. One of these comings is said to antedate the world’s destruction by at least a thousand years.

Let us, therefore, hasten to the inquiry.

Christ Shall Return But Once. One of the necessary premises of Premillennialism, as I have said, is that Christ shall come two more times.

“We need to ever keep in mind that there will be a second coming and a third coming of Christ,” one of its exponents has written. That assertion, of course is representative of their position. Without that assumption they have not a single leg to stand on.

It, of course, is a distinction without a difference when some prefer to speak of the two expected comings as “phases” of the second coming. If Christ is coming twice more, then there actually shall have been three advents, whether we regard the last one as a “phase,” or a full-fledged appearance.

But the devastating query I have for them at this point is, Where did they get their information of a third coming of the Lord? Of course, I am familiar with the oft-repeated assertion of a “coming for His saints” and a “coming with His saints.” But that distinction, as applied by Millennialists, is based on sheer inference--illogically and unscripturally drawn--nothing more. With that inference I shall deal more fully later.

I also have given considerable attention to the argument for two remaining comings which is based on a distinction between the Greek words *parousia* and *apokolupsis*, used in connection with Christ’s return. I likewise find this reasoning unavailing.

Whereas the former word is claimed to “clearly distinguish” His first appearance “for His saints,” I find it adduced in the interpretation of such passages as Matthew 24. There the reference is unmistakably to the manifestation of the Lord at the end of the world, which Premillennialists, of course, insist is denoted by the latter term.

In reality, the translators appear to have done a satisfactory job in handling the words, according to competent scholarship. The latter term simply denotes an unveiling or revelation as it is translated in Scripture. And that is but another view of the second coming. At that time our Lord Jesus, who is now hidden from the world, will be manifested, or unveiled, to all men.

No Scripture for a Third Coming. Back, then, to the query: Who said there were to be three comings of Christ? Why, the Millennialists, of course--and no one else. Someone conceived the theory which necessitated three appearances, and, quite naturally, it did not take long to “read” them into Scripture.

But, actually, there is not a single direct assertion of a third literal coming within the entire Bible--from Genesis to Revelation. Why, to hear Premillennialist talk of a “third coming,” and build their fanciful theories upon it, one would think that the Scriptures were filled with references to such an appearance of Christ. But, I repeat for emphasis, there is not a solitary declaration in all of Scripture directly proclaiming such an event.

If our friends will be perfectly honest with us, they must admit that any notion of a third coming they have is derived from inferences they have drawn from Scripture, or from some other source. I challenge them to produce one inspired word expressly teaching such a doctrine.

To begin with, then, it must be conceded that there is no clear cut “thus saith the Lord” for a third coming, and consequently none for Premillennialism. Already, therefore, the millennial view has been reduced to the level of human opinion.

The Exclusion of a Third Appearance. But the case against Premillennialism is much stronger than that. Not only do the Scriptures fail to specifically mention a third appearance of our Lord; in dealing of the subject of His return, the language used is of such nature as to unmistakably exclude such a manifestation.

Of the scores of references, only one explicitly makes an ordinal des-

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Take Heed Unto Thyself

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (I Tim. 4:16). “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Cor. 9:27: cf. Ps. 51:11). And let us not attempt to soften the word “castaway” by substituting the word “disqualified” as it rendered that way in other translations. For if we are “disqualified in the race to heaven,” “what doth it profit,” as James would say?

In all of our championing of the truth let us be certain that the truth has *first* had its saving and sanctifying effect upon our own hearts. This was the downfall of the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7). They had “tried them which” said “they” were “apostles, and” were not, and had “found them liars” (2:2). Though they had a measure of success in trying others, yet when it came time for them to be tried, they failed the test.

We must ask ourselves what grievous thing happened during the decades of time which had elapsed between the writing of Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians and this word which was spoken to this same church by the Savior from the right hand of God! Some of the most glorious present and future prospects for the saints of God were held out to the Ephesian brethren by the Apostle Paul. And yet in the Revelation, we find this same assembly to be in certain jeopardy of failing to realize the very things which the great Apostle to the Gentiles had written to them of.

In the first of the letters to the seven churches the Lord Jesus, in spite of their apparent zeal for the truth, severely upbraided the Ephesian church, saying, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (2:4). Thus we see that all of the accomplishments and energies, for which they were commended by the Savior, were greatly overshadowed by the neglect of this one thing.

They had failed in their fulfillment of the first and the great com-

mandment. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt. 22:37-38). Or as John succinctly expressed it, “And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment” (I Jn. 3:23). And to fail in this most basic requirement of love for God is to fail in everything, as He regards it.

Moreover, regarding those who have a fervent ardor for preaching the word of God to men, it should be said to such ones, even as the Lord Jesus did to the Pharisees, this (the preaching) “ought ye to” do, but “not to leave the other (the preeminent devotion to the Father and the Son) undone” (Mt. 23:23). And perhaps we should say at this point that there is a real jeopardy that is involved here for all, and a temptation that can easily beset the best of men. It is subtly possible for men to “make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but” yet for the “inward part” to be “full of ravening and wickedness” (Lk. 11:39).

What then shall be our recourse for avoiding this perilous condition, or for recovering ourselves from it, as the case may require? Let us see that we continually “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25), as enjoined upon us by the Apostle Paul. There is blessedness and also divine safety that is ours as we so walk. As a corollary to this enjoined walking, it is essential that we “let the word of Christ dwell in” us “richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16).

Let us “be” “therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (I Pet. 4:7), as Peter exhorted. And as he said in another place, let us “give diligence to make” our “calling and election sure: for if” we “do these things,” we “shall never fall” (II Pet. 1:10).

And let us ever commit ourselves to Him “that is able to keep” us “from falling, and to present” us “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).

In a word, the things that we are called upon to do, in order to avoid falling away, or being cast away from God’s presence, call for much effort on our part, but they are all things that yield an exceedingly delightful end and final result, for they all involve drawing near to the God of our salvation. --Editor

The Blessing of Justification

In and by Christ, we are “justified by faith, without the deeds of the law,” says the Scripture (Gal. 2:16, ASV).

In that state of justification, we “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (II Cor. 4:18).

With sin having been “put away” by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:26), the way to God has been opened up to us. We can now “draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:21-22).

The justification is by grace through faith. That is so that “the promise” of eternal redemption “might be sure to all the seed” (Rom. 4:16).

We thus love, and were drawn to God “because He first loved us,” as it is written (I Jn. 4:19).

In recognition of that fact, let us praise God for the faith we have received, and glorify Him by a good stewardship of it. That is the response He desires from us, and the one by which we can show our deep gratitude for what He has done for us, and glorify God upon earth. --Floyd M. Coffman, Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely

God’s Relation to His Children. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). We need to fully recognize the high privilege and weighty responsibility thereby involved. Let us, therefore, walk as the “children of light” and blessing, as we are urged to do (Eph. 5:8). Through Christ we are blood related to both Him and the Father. That is because we have been adopted into the divine family. --Dan Powers

Our Response to Grace

We must turn from the idols and false philosophies of this world, and wholeheartedly embrace and serve the Lord Jesus. That is God's requirement of us, as our response to what He and the Son have done, are now doing, and will yet do for us.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching" (Lk. 12:35-37).

"In such and hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:44). Unless you are always ready for His return, you are not ready for it. That readiness, of course, involves, and requires personal relation to Him, and active service for Him, as one is able and has opportunity to serve.

In view of these circumstances, let us be good stewards of "the manifold grace of God" (I Pet. 4:10). --Dean E. Boelt

The Two Comings of Christ. "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26, 28).

Faith, in the New Covenant era, has a simultaneous regard to both comings of Christ. It is only as our faith lays hold of what was accomplished at Christ's first coming, namely the putting away of sins by the sacrifice of Himself, that we are enabled to look with joyous anticipation to His second coming. Without being clothed, by faith, in the provision made for us in the first coming of Christ, we could only have fear and trepidation as we considered the prospect of His second appearing.

Much of what is called *fundamentalism* today has respect, to some degree, to Christ's first coming, but either neglects, or garbles the understanding of, His second appearing in its teaching emphasis. This is a master stroke of the old serpent, for it is essential for the people of God to have a loving and unobscured regard for both comings of the Savior, if they are to be duly prepared to meet the Bridegroom. --Gleaned from a Mens' Fellowship discussion at this assembly.

The Old Man and Its Deeds "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

In many religious circles, where the matter of sin is addressed at least to some degree, the emphasis seems to be that of not indulging in certain sins, which are often itemized in a creedal statement. This is good, and we certainly do not despise this altogether. It is certainly the will of God that we "sin not" (I Jn. 2:1). However, oftentimes what men call sin is not the same as what God calls sin, and this is not good.

Also in many instances there appears to be ignorance of a fundamental reality as pertaining to the gospel. It is that of new creatureship. "Therefore 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).

We, that are in Christ, acquiesce in this new creatureship by putting off the old man *with its deeds*, and by attentively putting on the new man. The old man, itself, must be put off by us with its sinful deeds, *not just the deeds themselves*. This is because that God, sending His Son to be the Savior of the world, "condemned sin *in the flesh*" (Rom. 8:3). The fleshly order and, as well, the old (unregenerated) man have, thus, been condemned and rejected by God because of sin. This is also the reason that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50).

We should add here that the old man is put off by us indirectly as we put on the new man. It is as the new man is daily renewed in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, that we are enabled to effectively put off the old man with its deeds. "But though our outward man perish, yet the *inward man is renewed day by day*" (II Cor. 4:16). --Editor

Divers Musings for the Times

Betty Ward Writes. "Dear Brother Blakely, I have enjoyed receiving and reading your publication, *The Banner of Truth*, for several years.

"Having followed the illness of your precious wife, I want to express my deepest concern and sympathy for all that you have been through these past four years! Please know that your readers have been with you, and that I join their hearts in expressing our Christian love and caring to you and all your family.

"I was in Indianapolis visiting my Mother when the Banner (with Sister Rubye's death notice) arrived, so I am just now getting word about Sister Rubye. She must have been a very, very special person and dedicated to the Lord.

"In recent years, I purchased the video tape of your son, Given and the debate with Alan Highers. I was agreeing with Given throughout the entire sessions. Thank you so much for the work and commitment of both you and Sister Rubye. --Betty Ward, Libby, MT (Editor's Note: A \$15.00 contribution for *The Banner of Truth* was included with Sister Ward's letter.)

A Letter from Wesley Turek. "Onward Christian Soldiers! Here is an overdue subscription payment - in fact, two of them (totalling \$30.00) for the past and the future. God bless you all! Sincerely, Wesley J. Turek, Chicago Ridge, IL. P.S. Please send me the address of The Word of Truth, so I can send a supporting offering. Thank you."

"I saw the obituary for Rubye in the *Christian Standard*. Praise God for her victory! In Christian love, Gladys Newell, Cornelia, GA

"Thank you very much for the extra papers that you sent. Enclosed is a small check (\$10.00) to help the paper. God bless your work for the Lord." --Joan Hemmerick, Quartz Hill, CA

"Dear Brother Fred, We send our love to you and your family. In Christ, Lloyd and Elaine Larson, Lula, GA

"Brother Fred, May the peace of Christ Jesus which surpasses all understanding remain in your heart and sustain you today and every day." --Phillip Alan Lee, Salisbury MD

Natural appetites, when pursued out of the boundaries which God has set, will lead to sin. --Fred O. Blakely

The very struggle that we have, because we are yet in the sinful body, evidences life. --David Maddack

We are not commanded to like one another, but rather to love one another (Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; I Th. 4:9; I Pet. 1:22; I Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; II Jn. 5). --David Maddack

To care for another's present condition and for another's eternal destiny as if they were your own, that is love. --David Maddack

We are commissioned to overcome this world's mastery of us. The "earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7), in which we are presently housed, are what pose the hazard. --Robert Cobb

If you don't take heed with regard to imaginations, they will enslave you. --Robert Cobb

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Sinful affections and lusts are to be outlawed in our spirits. --Robert Cobb

ignation. And that is to, not a third, but a second coming. "Christ . . . shall appear a second time" (Heb. 9:28).

We, therefore, can proclaim as a matter of revelation--wholly beyond the sphere of human opinion--that Christ shall "appear a second time." But if we speak of a "third coming," we revert to the sphere of man's opinion, or human tradition.

There is another valid and weighty consideration in that respect. It is that, of all the references in the Bible to our Lord's coming, there is not one which contemplates it in a plural sense; they are all in the singular. "I will come again," He promised. What shall be the sign of Thy "coming"?--not "comings" His disciples asked Him. The church is depicted as "waiting for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Peter speaks of the "revelation"--not "revelations"--of Christ. He emphatically forewarns of "the day of the Lord"--not "days"--in referring to the second coming.

But space limitations will not permit me to cite all of the Scriptural references dealing with the subject. Read them, and you will see that they are all in the singular.

Now, in that they are singular, any scriptural expectation of a third coming is thereby excluded, *a priori*. If there were yet to be more than one coming of Christ, any reference to a subsequent one would of necessity be ordinarily designated. At no time could reference be made in the singular to a subsequent coming, unless the context were such to clearly identify it.

We are thus shut up to the conclusion that neither the Lord nor the Apostles knew anything of a third coming of Christ. Furthermore, by their expressions touching the subject, they closed the door to any such expectation.

Where, therefore, does that situation leave Premillennialism? Why, without a third coming. And, thus, the theory explodes of itself. END

The Easy Is the Hard Way

Most people today are interested in the easy way--the easy way to make money, the easy way to be religious, the easy way to get along with the world and be accepted, the easy way to get out of marriage or any other responsibility, and the easy way to go to heaven.

What is the easy way? First, it is the line of least resistance. Secondly, it is the way of the majority. Thirdly, it is whatever costs us the least time, money, and effort. At least, this is the way the world looks upon it.

In contrast to that, we find Moses "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). He had all the best of the easy way available, but Moses determined that that which appeared easy was not the best in view of eternity. Most of those who want things "easy" will find that in the end they are the hardest of all. "Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

The only way which in truth will be easy is one which most consider too difficult and reject. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt. 11:28-30).

The only truly easy way for you and me is the way of denial, suffering, sacrifice, and faithful service.

*I must needs go home by the way of the Cross:
There's no other way but this.
I shall ne'er get sight of the Gates of Light,
If the way of the Cross I miss.*

Anything easier will be too hard for us to bear. --Oran Rhodes, "The Easy Way," *Gospel Light*, June 1981, p. 83

"Enter ye in at the strait gate . . . Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14)

The End of the Commandment

By Dean E. Boelt

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Those who wrongly divide, or interpret, the Word, therefore should be ashamed.

The Scriptures speak to us. And they are "of no private interpretation" (II Pet. 1:20). That is, as regards our life before and our duty to God, they cannot mean one thing to an individual and something entirely different and contrary to another one. Although men are divided, the Scriptures are not.

Neither do the new-covenant writings provide for a special priestly, or clerical, class in the church, with the rank and file of the membership wholly dependent upon it for their knowledge of God. Rather, every believer is his own priest under Christ, and is fully accountable to God as such (Rev. 1:6). "They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," was the prophecy of the new-covenant era (Jer. 31:34).

If we are to be "approved of God," or by Him (II Tim. 2:15), we must be familiar with His Word, and adhere to it in our daily lives.

We are "born again" by the "incorruptible seed" of God's Word (I Pet. 1:23). That Word is "living and active," when so proclaimed and received (Heb. 4:12, ASV).

As it is written, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth" (Eccl. 12:10).

Thus, "the power of God unto salvation" is not to be found in the wisdom of this world" (I Cor. 1:18). It is in the blessed gospel of His dear Son. So "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1:21).

Modification or compromise of the Word in concession to the flesh is intolerable by God, although practiced by some today. That is because God's objective in the gospel is to transform people into His Image, and thus ready them for Heaven. Any other end than that by the preachers of today falls short of God's purpose.

The Promise of Life

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). "This is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life" (I Jn. 2:25). "And this life is in His Son" (5:11). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36).

Faith is the means by which we receive the salvation which God has prepared for and offers us in His dear Son. "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" (3:18; cf. v. 19).

Believing the record which God has given of His Son is the appointed means for receiving the redemption in Christ. He that believes does so unto "everlasting life" (Jn. 5:24). The acceptance of Christ, and continuance in Him: that is the way to life, abundant and eternal. It is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent (Jn. 17:3; cf. I Jn. 5:20).

The blessed salvation available to us in Christ is the precious gift of God to humanity. Let us, then, have the godly attitude of the psalmist toward it, saying, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord" (Ps. 116:13). God is a willing and cheerful Giver of life and blessing to those who will seek them from Him. The "promise of life," in fact, is "in Christ Jesus," as it is written (II Tim. 1:1).

The spiritual life available to people in the Savior will revolutionize their spirits, making them fit for God's fellowship and service. We, therefore, should seek it with the whole heart, and nourish it with all diligence and perseverance. It is thus that we may best glorify the Father and the Son, and serve our fellow men. --Fred O. Blakely

The Things Prepared For Us

By Fred O. Blakely

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:9-10).

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (v. 12).

Since, under the reign of Christ, God constrains us by incentives to do His will, it is essential that we know of those incentives, and be fully persuaded of them, and of their availability to us.

It will be recalled that it was by the method of constraint that the Lord Jesus accomplished His mission to earth. That is, by due consideration of “the joy that was set before Him” that He endured the cross” and triumphed in His mission (Heb. 12:1-2).

That principle of divine constraint for the people of God badly needs to be recognized by the “church” of our time. Duly considered, of course, it would make of the people an essentially heavenly-minded folk, as was so with the church in the first century, when the church was dominated by its love of the risen and glorified Savior.

Foremost of the blessed “things” which God has prepared for saints, of course, is endless life with Himself and the Son in the everlasting world to come. “And there shall be no more death,” it is written of the heavenly inhabitants. “Neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4-5).

Another glory of the heavenly life is that we shall be able to serve our God and His Son without distraction. Here, when we would do good, evil is present with us, and deters us (Rom. 7:21).

We, thus, are not able to fully implement the desires of our regenerated heart and soul, in the worship and service of God and His dear Son. But there it will be gloriously different! No longer shall we say--as we often have to now--“that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Rom. 7:15-17). Then, by the fullness of God’s grace, we shall be able to wholly implement the desires of our glorified heart. That is an especially attractive blessing of the heavenly life for the people of God.

The fuller knowledge of the Father and the Son which we shall have on the other side of the river of death is also impelling. Here, at best, we but “know in part” (I Cor. 13:10). But there we shall know fully, even as we are fully known (v. 12). And in that fuller knowledge we shall be enabled to perfectly serve the God of our salvation.

In the good warfare of our faith, let us labor to keep these verities constrainingly in our hearts and minds. That is the way which God has provided and intends for us to make our “calling and election sure” (II Pet. 1:10).

“For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall,” we are told. “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 1:10-12).

Let us, therefore, as we are encouraged to do, “gird up the loins” of our mind, and “hope unto the end” for the consummate grace that is to be brought unto us at the coming of the Lord, or our going by death to be with Him.

So shall we be wise with that wisdom which is from above. And in that wisdom and procedure, “inherit the kingdom” prepared for us “from the foundation of the world” (Mt. 25:24).

The Need for Affectation. A person must be affected by the hardness of people’s hearts and their indifference towards God’s Word, and their rejection of it, before he can effectively minister for Christ. In this day of such hardness and indifference, that situation desperately needs to be heeded. In recognition of it, we need to seek, obtain, and be duly governed by the Mind of Christ, even as the Savior of men wept over Jerusalem because of its rejection of Him. --Fred O. Blakely

The Call to Serve God

By Dean E. Boelt

We must put on the whole “garment of salvation,” or the “robe of righteousness,” in order to be accepted by God, and to be effective in His service (Is. 61:10). That is done by believing and obeying the gospel of Christ. Otherwise people are naked before God. And “the shame” of their “nakedness” is offensive and repulsive to Him.

Since the holy Father “would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4), we continue to preach the gospel, and beseech men to receive the reconciliation to God which the blessed Savior has wrought for them. As Jesus declared, “To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required” (Lk. 12:48).

Let us, therefore, be good stewards of the measure of grace that we have received from God. That is so, at the last day when we must give account to Him, we may do so with joy, and not with regret and sorrow.

We are now confronted with the Babylonish church, whose judgment by God is sure. Let us, therefore, be “girt about with truth” (Eph. 6:14) and be “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” as we are urged to be and do (v. 18). That is the prescribed procedure for prevalence over the present evil world, and fruitfulness in the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

Thereafter--and forever!--we shall worship and serve God forever, and that without distraction in the glorified and eternal world to come. Jesus shall have come, or we shall have gone to Him by death.

In that blessed hope and sure expectation of Christ, let us persevere in the faith, and in our discipleship of the blessed Savior.

Soon He that shall come will come, “and will not [longer] tarry” (Heb. 10:37).

The Rule for Fruitfulness

By Dan Powers

God’s Word is knowable by His people. And, by His grace, it is also doable by them. And God requires that they do that Word. Thus, as it is written, “Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22).

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,” declared the Lord Jesus (Jn. 15:14). It is by abiding in Him, and doing His will that we become fruitful branches in Him, to the glory of God.

The penalty for persistent unfruitfulness is to be “cast forth as a branch” from the Vine, which is Christ, and ultimately to be burned (Jn. 15:6). That terrible consequence of itself should move us to fruitfulness for the Savior.

God has provided us with ample resources to enable us to avoid the penalty for unfruitfulness. He has given us “exceeding great and precious promises” to constrain us to properly serve Him (II Pet. 1:4).

The branch, being in the vine, is part thereof, it is true. But, if severed from the vine, it is no longer a part thereof. So are those who once were in Christ, but have departed from Him, and they are “not a people,” unless they recover themselves, and return to Him (Rom. 11:19-25).

God’s blessings are not to be unconditionally enjoyed by people. He makes very distinct and exacting demands. And, if His blessings are to be had, the commands must be duly obeyed. “He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings,” said the Lord (Jn. 14:24). That is the rule of the kingdom. Thus, Jesus’ command, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

So are we, having heard the Word of God, to “keep it,” and “bring forth fruit with patience,” to the praise of His glory (Lk. 8:15). That is the way to receive “blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation (Ps. 24:5). --Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely

The Nature of Faith. Our faith in Christ controls the desire and direction of our lives. It gives us readiness to do what He says and to rely upon Him for the outcome. It gives us stability and security, as if we were holding His hand. --Seth Wilson

God, The Preparer of Good Things

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

There are some unspeakably wonderful things prepared for those that "love God", "who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). We know enough of the way that leads to destruction to know that we should not want to know of that downward way any more. Let us continually let Him show us the path of life. The path of life is the way of obedience to the gospel and continuance in the faith.

This is a path that is beset with sorrows and affliction, but it is the one that leads to the everlasting presence of God where there is fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

The Blessedness Laid Up. "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men" (Ps. 31:19). The Psalmist was lost in wonder as he considered the prospect of that which is laid up for the people of the saints of the Most High God.

One never reads about men being bored or disinterested when they were given a glimpse into the world to come or into the place where God is. They were always elevated in spirit, they were ecstatic, they were made to rejoice in God and to forget about the cares of this world, at least for the moment, and to count them but dung in comparison with the things which God has laid up for them that fear Him.

This is a goodness which God has gone to great lengths to make known and to demonstrate to the sons of men. And the ultimate demonstration was the sending forth of His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6).

That which is "laid up" is also that which sets hope in motion. And it is the consideration of that which is laid up that causes us to purify ourselves and impels us on to the world to come. God has laid these things up for us there so that we will not become settled down here in the pollutions of this present world.

"For those who take refuge in thee, in the sight of the sons of men!" (RSV). And now is the time for taking refuge, because we are not yet in the everlasting habitations. We must now to take refuge from the snare of the fowler, and from the devices of evil men.

God's Lovingkindness. "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Ps. 36:7). Trust is a part of faith that will carry over into the world to come. We trust Him here and we shall trust Him there. Those who are accounted worthy to obtain that world have learned to trust in Him while they were yet in the enemy territory of this world. They trusted in Him while there were things and personalities that were militating against that trust.

How precious will the trust be there in view of this! There the Lamb shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

"For with Thee is the fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9). From the perspective of the new covenant, the fountain of life is in the propitiation for sins. Where sins are put away by Christ, there is abundant life. And where they are not put away there is death. Or to put this another way, where men have not received the putting away of sins by obedience to the gospel, there is death, death, death! They are "condemned already" (Jn. 3:18) and they "shall not see life" (3:36)!

The River of Life. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High" (Ps. 46:4). This is the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1).

This is Zion, the city of God, the church of the living God. It is the

heavenly Jerusalem. This is the city for which Abraham looked, and all the prophets. There is a city which is presently not a continuing one, and there is a continuing city which is yet to come, and which we presently seek. The water of life is able to make glad this city both now and then.

The Testimony of Isaiah. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa. 64:4).

God has made blessed things to be ready for them that wait for Him. He has made things, He has readied things, He has made things perfectly suited for those who wait for Him, He has made the blessed things pertaining to the knowledge of God accessible to those who wait for Him.

The One who is known for depths of riches of wisdom and knowledge and for unsearchable judgments and ways past finding out has prepared these things. The One who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son has prepared these things.

Let us encourage one another to wait for Him. God calls upon us to outlast our "appointed time" (Job 14:14) in our waiting for Him, or to outlast the world, whichever ends first. These unspeakably blessed things are prepared for the waiting ones.

The Prepared Kingdom. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34).

Right now we are being held at bay somewhat from Him because we are yet in the body of this death, but the day is coming when the cry will be made, *Come*, and we shall be ushered immediately into the everlasting Presence of the God of our salvation, and of the Lamb. The King has been earnestly desiring this blessed time and so have they who have been waiting for Him. He will say, *Come*, and right now they are saying, *Even so, Come!*

All through this earthly sojourn this voice has been heard, *Come*. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, *come ye* to the waters, and he that hath no money; *come ye*, buy, and eat; yea, *come*, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). And again, "*Come* unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). And again, "And the Spirit and the bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Now this word that is spoken is in the form of a grand invitation, but then it shall be in the form of a grand summons into the presence of God.

Inherit means that God is calling us to be joint heirs and joint possessors of this kingdom. And to us who were sometimes darkness and who were not a people, He will give us that which is our own. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Lk. 16:12).

Inherit the kingdom. God is the great King, and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And He, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, is calling us to share in that kingdom which is His own. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

This kingdom has been prepared for redeemed men and women from the foundation of the world. The Father and the Son, even now, are preparing men to take possession of the afore-prepared dominion, and the time will come when they will take it. As is said in Daniel, "And judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7:22). That time has been afore determined by the Father, and it shall soon be upon us. Either when we shall go to Him, or when He shall come to us.

The Prepared Place. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn. 14:2). "Dwelling places" NASB. There are habitations, prepared of God, for men to reside in the glory, and there is an abundance of them. And when Christ shall come again the second time, we shall possess our habitations, our resurrection bodies. "For we know that if our earthly house of

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The Indispensability of Faith

By David Maddack

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

This is one of the few places where something of the Bible is defined in a “such-and-such is . . .” formula. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We do not presently possess the unseen things for which we hope in their fullness. But we do have faith. Firstly, this faith is the supporting evidence of the hoped for things. Our present faith is inextricably linked to the reality of what we believe. Faith is far more than academic assent to the propositions of Scripture. Faith is the foundation of hope. Secondly, this “substance” is also translated as confidence, “for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our *confidence* steadfast unto the end” (Heb. 3:14). So then people of faith have a confident assurance that they will receive the things hoped for, the things that only God can give. To have faith is to be firmly persuaded of the reality and the nature of the hoped for things.

By Faith We Have Understanding. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3). “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (11:3, NIV). This reference reaches back even to the very foundations of the universe.

All through Hebrews chapter 11, faith is the prime mover, the energy that prompts and sustains obedience to God, and the energy that drives the people to action. Some of these people did things that were wrong, but their faith was able to overcome their imperfection. (How true this is of us as well!) Some of these even came to technically inaccurate conclusions (Abraham), but their faith overcame their weakness.

Not everything may “appear,” but we still have faith that God has “framed” the heavens and the earth. There is design in the worlds, and we believe in the Designer.

The Faith of Abel. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (11:4).

Abel’s faith obtained the “witness that he was righteous.” Faith was the main component of being pleasing to God in the Past as well as in our Present. Abel’s faith showed that he was righteous - is your faith showing this? Abel’s faith made him *do* something for God - is your faith causing you to act now on God’s behalf? Faith is not just mental agreement with doctrine. Devils and demons know that Jesus is the Christ, but their knowledge will never save them. You may believe that Jesus is the Christ, but is this knowledge at work within you?

By faith we can have an influence for godliness even beyond the grave! I hope that according to my ability that I may be able to have such an influence even beyond my earthly pilgrimage.

God accepted Abel’s gift because of his faith; God rejected Cain’s gift because of Cain’s lack of faith.

Enoch Translated. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. 11:5).

What great work did Enoch do? He had faith! This is a great work! He, by his faith, was so pleasing that God, speaking as a man, that God could not wait for Enoch to die; the Heavenly Father could not wait to have the sweet fellowship with His servant.

This demonstrates the inaccuracy and the error of “soul sleeping.” Could you imagine God being so pleased with someone that He puts them to sleep for over 5,000 years? By doing so, God would actually cut Himself off from the one who has pleased Him. Doesn’t it make more sense that “to absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord”? And

that entails being consciously present with Him. My daughter Rebekah is adorable while she lays sleeping. I am pleased to watch her rest; however, my joy is all the greater when she is awake and is playing and we are fellowshiping as parents do with their children. Would God be any different? Would not God prefer to have conscious fellowship with His children, rather than to merely watch them sleep?

If I ever disappear, or if I ever am missing and am not found, I want to have been so full of faith that my brothers and sisters in Christ wonder if maybe, just maybe, I was translated. How I want to be pleasing to my Lord. Dear Father in Heaven, may I have this testimony!

A Veritable Impossibility. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently [NIV earnestly] seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Apart from faith, we are coming to God “some other way.” If we try to reason our way to God, or try to figure out everything to obtain God, we are “thieves and robbers.” God, by His wisdom, has purposed that the world, by its own wisdom, will *not* find Him.

God will, at the great and terrible day of the Lord, destroy all those who are displeasing to Him: namely, those who are without faith. When the Son of man comes to the earth, will He find faith? in me? in you? Jesus is going to consign to hell all pretenders. Only by faith can a person be pleasing to God. And, Praise God!, with faith, *We know* that God is pleased with us. By faith we need not wonder! In Christ by faith we are God’s sons and daughters; we are beloved to Him as Jesus, we are pleasing to Him as His Son is.

Two Things we Must believe! *God is!* Not was only, or will be, *but is.* I AM that I AM. God exists, He is the Living God! He is not a product of my imagination. He has personality, He is Someone, He can be known, He has revealed Himself. All mankind is actually a product of His Will, for He said, “Let us make man.” This creation was an act of His will.

Belief is a present activity! Your present faith validates or makes worthwhile all your previous faith (yesterday’s faith). If you have faith at the return of Christ, all the faith of your past is vindicated and will be to your eternal benefit. However! If you are “without faith” at Christ’s return, if you are not pleasing to God, then all the faith of your past is heaped up in judgment against you! God could say, you have had faith before, why do you not have faith now? “Who hath bewitched you?”

He that comes to God *must* believe that He is and that He (God) is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

God has all of the universe to do with as He pleases. He does not lack of resources with which to reward us. But even beyond all the natural order, He is the God of Peace. He is able to reward our faith even now with a peace that passes understanding. God is so eager to reward man, that God even gave His only begotten Son, One in Whom He was well pleased, to die for us. He who gave us His only Son, how shall He withhold from us any good thing?

We must ask ourselves this question, how is our diligence? Are we diligently, that is repeatedly, that is fervently, seeking Him? Or are we taking God for granted? Have we shelved the Heavenly Father? Are we failing to seek Him, waiting instead for a “more convenient season”?

The Lord will not compete for our attention! He is the LORD and is worthy of our complete devotion. God rewards us with what we are seeking. What are we seeking? We are seeking *Him!* He is eager to reward us with *Himself!* He has said, “I will not leave you comfortless” “I will come unto you” “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Pet. 1:9-11).

The Faith of Noah. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things
(*FAITH, Continued on Page Eight*)

not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7).

Consider this that it had never rained! A mist had watered the earth prior to the flood, a heavy dew. Noah's faith and actions based thereon saved his family. Today, our faith, and our subsequent response in faith saves us! Faith, without response is not faith! Faith without works is dead, and dead faith will not bring you into heaven.

Your belief condemns the world! Just as Noah condemned the world by building the ark, so do we condemn the world by our putting on of Christ. But what about you? what do you think of Christ? whose Son is He?

By faith we inherit the promises: promises of eternal life, of forgiveness of sin, of going to heaven (that where I am, there ye may also be), of understanding God (they shall all know Me).

The Faith of Abraham. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8).

Faith doesn't require having all the right answers. Abraham obeyed without so much as a crude map of where God was leading him. Ignorance is not to be exalted or praised; however, obedience is *always* the right response. "Because I told you so," becomes a fine reason for obedience when the Almighty says it. "I the LORD have spoken it." He knows what we need, He knows how to give good gifts, and He knows what is better for us than we know ourselves. "To obey is better than sacrifice."

Obedient faith does not require a thorough knowledge of all the divine plan and purpose, but it does require knowledge of the Planner. Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus.

In fact, knowledge can be our downfall. "Nobody is going to respond, why should I tell them God's word? I know what kind of people these are, they will never repent." These were Jonah's thoughts - and Jonah was wrong! The people of Nineveh did *repent*!

Peter knew he had fished all night long catching no fish. Peter knew that he had just finished washing his nets. But Peter did not quite know fully who Jesus was. But he knew enough to obey! And Peter received the blessing! When Peter, in ignorance of what was ahead, did what Jesus asked anyway, the Lord gave him what he needed!

And you, brethren beloved of the Lord, when you obey Jesus, even when you don't have all the facts, even when you don't know all that you'd like to, if you'll just put down your nets in simple trust, Christ will fill you with more blessing than you can contain!

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country [NIV, like a stranger in a foreign country], dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb. 11:9).

Abraham left the known to obtain the unknown. He left prosperity and houses and inheritance to live in a tent. No matter how Sarah decorated, no matter what luxuries she may have bought, it was still a tent!

This is true of the saint in the world. No matter how many things we may buy, no matter how much money we may save, no matter how possessed we are with possessions, *it is all still as trinkets in a tent*. But let us not be unduly captivated by such possessions. The hymnwriter expressed it this way. "This world is not our home, we just a passing through, if heaven's not my home, Oh Lord! what will I do?"

We are headed for the land of promise. "The meek shall inherit the earth." But this earth is presently corrupted, and so we, as children of the King, are yet foreigners and strangers in this corrupted world order.

We are waiting for that day, when the "new heavens, and the new earth" will be revealed. That new earth is where both Abraham and we receive the promises.

But, until that day, we live in tents. The good thing about tents is that we can travel light. No matter how fancy your house is, remember, it is just a tent!

You are just camping out in the foreign land waiting for your Captain to return! And when He does, all that is opposed to God will be removed, and the meek shall inherit the earth.

Now, because we are just camping out, does it make sense that we should become enraptured of earthly things?

One major difference between a tent and a house is the foundation. Tents don't have any! Why not? Because our foundation has been laid and He is Christ the Lord! We already have our foundation, and it will endure, even when everything else is burned up. If you are tempted to trust in earthly things, if you are tempted to want the bigger and the better of the world - just remember - *it's all going to burn!*

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder [NIV architect] and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth" (NIV).

This is a good confession for us to make as well. Namely, that we are pilgrims and strangers here in this world. By confessing that we are strangers, we are saying that this world is not our home. And as pilgrims we are headed for that blessed home that has been prepared for us of God in the world to come. --233 N. 10th Street, Fredonia, KS 66736

The New Life in Christ

By Given O. Blakely

Once we were lost, but now, by God's grace, we have been found. In time past, we were not a people, but now are the people of God. Formerly, we were carnally minded, but now are spiritually minded.

However, before we came to God, He came to us in the Person of His dear Son. That was so that the "mystery of the faith" might be, and is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). That is now the experience of those who have received the blessed Son and are cleaving to Him with purpose of heart.

The Father, thus, was in the Son, "reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:19), which situation is to be preached "all the world" (Mt. 28:18-20).

It needs to be recognized that the present fellowship with God to be had--on this earth--ordinarily is in the midst of the conflict. Thus, the early church "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer" shame for Christ's Name (Acts. 5:41). Fellowship with God in this world is to be had, thus, in the midst of the suffering and tribulation. It is occasioned by the championing of His way. Like Daniel in the lion's den and the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, it is one of conflict and suffering for the people of God.

Let us not, therefore, draw back from the suffering necessitated by our bearing of the cross. Rather, let us rejoice in that fellowship, reckoning that "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him" (II Tim. 2:12).

In that suffering we can comfort and encourage our hearts by the truth proclaimed by Paul: "I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). --Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

A Letter From Della Stewart

Dear Friends,

You are in my heart and prayers. As we said before, I never had a better friend than Rubye. I know you knew her as a devoted Christian wife and mother -- grandmother too.

You, too, were devoted caretakers for her. Please express my condolences to Tim (Blakely), as I don't have his address. May God bless you all. *Della Stewart, Prescott, AR*

The Grace of God

By Given O. Blakely

The subject of God's grace has been a theological battleground for centuries. Some have chosen to view grace as a spiritual opiate that excuses sin. Others, reacting to this erroneous view, have chosen to neglect the grace of God.

Theologians, overreacting to flawed views, have compounded our problem. Attempting to clarify the nature of grace, they have introduced terms like "sovereign grace," "saving grace," "free grace," "special grace," "covenant grace," and "irresistible grace." In all of these, "grace" itself is incidental. The real point is the theological view of grace that is embraced, not grace itself.

Every believer must exercise diligence to avoid this Satanic snare. The primary associations of grace are God and Christ! It is "the grace of God" (Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:26; 15:40; 20:24; Rom. 5:15; Col. 1:16), and "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 16:20, 24; I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 8:9; Gal. 1:16; 6:18; Phil. 4:23; I Th. 5:28; II Th. 3:18; I Tim. 1:14; Phile. 25; Rev. 22:21).

Grace is not an end in itself. It comes from God, and leads to God. Without that association, grace cannot stand. Without God, grace has no significance. Without Christ, it cannot be appropriated!

The word "grace" has been distorted by Satan. His intent is to neutralize the effectiveness of grace. And that is precisely what will happen to all who accept his distortions. It is little wonder that Peter spoke of "the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Pet. 5:12).

Grace defined. The classic academic definition of "grace" is "unmerited favor;" i.e., loving consideration and provision from God that is undeserved. That this is the situation in our case cannot be denied. But that is not a true definition of "grace."

When our Lord Jesus Christ "dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14), He advanced spiritually and physically. The Holy Spirit's comment on that period of time is arresting. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him" (Lk. 2:40). It surely is evident that this was not unmerited, or undeserved, favor.

God, in His grace, bestows mercy upon people gratuitously, or "without price" (Is. 55:1). He also does so freely, and in abundance. Early in God's dealing with Israel, He revealed "mercy" as one of His primary attributes (Ex. 20:6). Grace brings an abundance of this divine quality to us.

Good Will Towards Men. The religious world has not relied upon God's "good will" as it should. This is an aspect of God especially revealed in Christ. When our Savior was born, it was a token of the Father's "good will" (Lk. 2:14). This speaks of an intent towards mankind that is intrinsically good, i.e., an intention of blessing. Contrast this with the curse of the realm that took place in Eden (Gen. 3), and the destruction of an entire race that took place in Noah's day (Gen. 6). Both were an expression of Divine will, but neither were a blessing. Grace brings us God's *good will*.

His Lovingkindness. This attribute is more than mere sympathy. Lovingkindness joins pity with divine intent. It lifts the fallen, strengthens the weak, and brings hope to the hopeless. There is heavenly creativity in lovingkindness, and grace brings it to the heart of the believer.

When we have grace, we do not come to a frowning God. Israel faced an angry God at Sinai with whom they could not converse. They were told not to come near to Him, lest they be consumed (Ex. 19:12). So intense was God's wrath against Israel, that even Moses "was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against" them "to destroy" them (Deut. 9:19). But in grace, God has a friendly and beneficent disposition towards us. How marvelous is His grace!

In Christ, by grace, we can come close to our heavenly Father without fear of being consumed. We can look forward to the judgment, confident that He is able to "present us faultless before His presence with exceeding joy". How marvelous is the grace of God!

In His grace, God is prompted by Divine will, not by obligation or debt. He is prompted more by His desire than by our need. Grace is an expression of His nature. Here divine *purpose* and *preference* dominate.

Grace Brings Faith and Love. Some may perceive faith and love as qualities developed by us. There is a sense in which this is true, but there is more to it than that. We have a word from God on the matter. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 1:14).

How marvelous is that word! Not only does grace bring faith and love, it brings it in exceeding abundance! This implies that such an abundance is required to run the race that is set before us.

Grace Contrasted. We can develop a godly appreciation of grace by contrast. The Spirit employs this method several places in Scripture. These comparisons will serve to confirm us in the nature of grace. They will challenge us to lay hold of God's grace confidently, refusing to let it go.

Early believers wrestled with a tendency to again become enslaved to the law as a means of justification. Unfortunately, this proclivity still remains with professed believers. Hear the word of the Lord. "For the law was given by Moses, by grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). There is significant difference between that which Moses mediated and what was introduced by the Lord Jesus.

The law was a principle of legal recognition. It was based upon human merit, and made no provisions for recovery. It was not attended with strength, and could not rescue from a fall. But grace is so different. It brings us salvation upon the basis of Another's merit. When it comes to accomplishment, it is the accomplishment of Another that forms the basis of our acceptance. Salvation by grace is certainly legal, but the basis of its legality is found in Jesus Christ alone.

The Contrast with Debt. God has never been indebted to men; but some people suppose this to be the case. In fact, some are relying upon God giving them salvation as a debt. This is an imagination. The Spirit argues forcefully on this point. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

"Him that worketh" is not a description of mere activity, but of activity with the quest for merit. We are God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). Those works, however, are the result of salvation, not the cause of it. Those who imagine that God saves people because they do enough are simply deluded. He saves people by His grace, which, in this case, is actually contrasted with "work".

The Contrast with Works. Amplifying further on this same point, the Scriptures declare, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6).

Some might argue that the subject under consideration is the Jewish nation, and thus the text does not apply to us. Those that suppose such a thing have really missed the point. The text is teaching that salvation is by grace, and that even the ancient people of Israel can be saved no other way.

From this perspective grace and works cannot mix; they cannot be joined together. The basis of our salvation must be either what we do or what God does: works or grace. It cannot be both. The glad announcement is that it is by grace!

Foretold by the Prophets. One of God's traits is that He "will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Never is this any truer than in the case of the grace that has come to us in Christ. This is the bold proclamation of First Peter 1:9-10. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you".

The real theme of the prophets was not the destruction of the ancient cities or the restoration of Israel. While those matters were included in their prophecies, they were not the real heart and core of them. The focus

(GRACE, Continued on Page Fourteen)

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.

The Witnessing Table. At the Lord's table in the weekly assembly we see fulfillment of the law's requirement of us. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the law, and then took it out of the way as a means of fellowship with God, "nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14).

We thus come to the table each first day of the week to commemorate that blessed accomplishment for us. And to fellowship with and glorify Him who so wrought for us. --*Dan Powers*

The Jeopardy of this Time. It is to be noted that today many religious people are more affected by the false religion of the times, and the utter wickedness of the present world, than they are by the Word of the living God contained in the Bible. Yet, that Word is God's means for the salvation of people's souls, and their sanctification from the corruption of this present evil world. Let us not be so hardened toward the God of our salvation, and His soul-redeeming Word, and the sanctifying testimonies of His mouth. --*Fred O. Blakely*

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

The Compulsion of Grace

By George Brewer

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins is the basis of our spiritual confidence in God, and of our "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (II Th. 2:16). As it is written, He has by that sacrifice "perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

Brethren, we are not under a system of law, whereby we must deserve salvation by achieving a perfectly sinless life. We are under the blessed economy of divine grace, being accepted by God in His beloved Son. And that not because of anything morally meritorious which we have done. It is because of what God, through Christ, has done for us, "when we were yet without strength" to do anything that would save us (Rom. 5:6).

Only a firm persuasion and a full acceptance of the thorough efficacy of Jesus' sacrifice for us will give us the "full assurance" of salvation in and by Him (Heb. 10:22; cf. 6:11). That is, as we receive the Son on the terms of the gospel, and continue to cleave to Him "with purpose of heart" (Acts 11:23).

As it is written, "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26-28).

He or she that gets into Christ and abides in Him "sinneth not," as God regards the situation, as the Apostle John declares (I Jn. 3:6). That is because his sins are covered by Jesus' blood, and He is their "Advocate with the Father" (I Jn. 2:1).

Christ's sacrifice for the world's sins was accepted by the Father. That was demonstrated by the Father's resurrection of the Son from the dead, and His seating of Him at His own right hand in heaven.

The purpose of God was fulfilled in and by the Son. That was to "make an end of sins," and to bring in "everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24).

The redemptive work assigned to the Son by the Father has now been done by the blessed Son. Let us unreservedly receive Him and the great salvation which He has accomplished for the condemned race. And let us cleave to and serve Him wholeheartedly in appreciation for what the Father and the Son have done for us.

Such commitment is what is expected of us, and is so richly deserved to be accorded by us. --*Noted and Recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

The Way of Salvation. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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. 1:5-7).

On the other hand, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (v. 8). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9).

So it is that by grace we are saved, through faith, as it is written (Eph. 2:8). Thus, our salvation is "to the praise" of God's grace (v. 12). --*Dean E. Boelt*

Sanctified Aspiration. For the fully devout, aspiration in the Spirit will always in this life exceed accomplishment. That is a vital part of the warfare of faith. "If there be first a willing mind," however, "it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Cor. 8:12). Thus, as it is written, God's ways are wholly "equal" (Ezek. 18:29). --*Albert G. Stoner, Jr., Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

As we come to the Lord's table each first day of the week, we do so in remembrance of our dear Savior and the wholly-efficacious sacrifice which He made in our behalf on the cross. Let us remember Him that "loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." --*Robert Cobb*

The Way of Life in Christ

By Jesse Stoner

The weekly assembly of the saints is primarily for the comfort and edification of the brethren, and for Christ's glory. It is also for preaching of the gospel to the world, to the extent that unbelievers are present in the assembly.

The new life in Christ is a complete change from the old one of unbelieving nature. As a child of God, you can't have "the best of both worlds," as some contend. You are required to sacrifice the love of the present evil world, replacing it with love of the world to come, and devotion to making your calling and election sure for that one. As says the Scripture, "If any man love the world [this one], the love of the Father is not in him" (I Jn. 2:15-17). The new life in Christ involves a complete change. You don't put the new wine of regeneration into the old bottle of nature.

The Proper Perspective. The proper perspective is indicated by the Lord Jesus in a characteristic exhortation. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Lk. 12:4-5).

"Reckon yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin," as Paul exhorts, "but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass," as Peter says. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:24-25).

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Pet. 2:24; cf. 25).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (v. 25).

Being thus "made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2; cf. v. 1).

Thus our attitude, as it should be, as set forth by Paul: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Conclusion. Let us, therefore, as the Lord Jesus urges us to do, enter in "at the strait gate." For, as He remarked, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. But strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

Let us, therefore, stand, having our "loins girt about with truth," and having on "the breastplate of righteousness," as Paul urges us to do (Eph. 6:14; cf. vv. 10-13, 15-18).

Thus shall we make our "calling and election sure," hand have an abundant entrance ministered to us "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11). --*Note and Recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

We must "go on to perfection", as we are enjoined to do in the book of Hebrews (6:1), in order to avoid a mere creedal and lifeless association with the faith of Christ.

(PREPARED, Concluded from Page Six)

this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

The voice of groaning is heard in the tabernacles, but it shall not be heard in the mansions that are up ahead for the people of God. We presently groan, because the treasure is in an earthen vessel, but there we will forget how to groan, for sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

"I go to prepare a place for you." In this case it was Christ's going that prepared the place for us. It was not that He was going away to spend an extended duration of time building a place for us to come. But rather His very going into the presence of the Father has prepared the place for us. "Christ the first fruits, and afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." One Man in the presence of God is the Surety for all who will follow after. He is bringing many sons unto glory.

The Ordered Circumstance. "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28, RSV). He has prepared and laid up exceedingly precious things for men in the world to come, and now He is presently making all things work together for them unto that blessed time when they shall take possession of them.

Those who are called by the gospel, and continue in the faith, are the ones who are called according to His purpose. And God's purpose is to demonstrate unto principalities and powers His manifold wisdom, and in the ages to come "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9). It is not that God is hiding these things from us so that we can't see them, but rather the depths to which our race has fallen in Adam presently hides many of these blessed things from our eyes. But we are given glimpses of them from time to time by God's Spirit, as it is written, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (v. 10). And the Spirit searches these things, not for Himself, but so that men may behold and consider them.

The Laid Up Crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8). This crown is laid up for redeemed men and women. But the implication here is that we presently have an association from time to time with sin and unrighteousness. Now we have righteousness by imputation because we have believed on the Son of God, but experientially we are still waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith. Now is the time for hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but there in the world to come righteousness shall be a crown to us. We shall be for ever delivered from all unrighteousness and we shall reign in righteousness.

The Prepared City. "For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). This is the city where all the redeemed shall be gathered together in one place and in one accord. Even in the beginning, God said, it is not good for man to be alone with regard to the help meet. But this is also true in the broader sense as well. God has not called us to be spiritual loners. Both Abraham and we are looking for a city, which hath foundations. And if God has prepared this city, then we do well to become accustomed to the city life that is up ahead.

God created man to be a social creature. Man is a creature made ultimately for both Divine and regenerated associations. There is often friction involved with associations in this life, but that is because we have been made for associations in the world to come. Even now we have a foretaste of this as we walk in the Spirit and seek those things which are above. There is a limited amount of friction even now between individuals that are engaging in the same upward quest.

Now is the time to greatly delight in the city of God and in Divine and regenerated associations. By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. --*Editor*

The Joy of the Lord

By Albert G. Stoner, Jr.

“Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased” (Ps. 4:7).

If God could do that on the other side of the Cross, how much more can He do it now, that sins have been put away by Christ, and the Holy Spirit given to His people!

Thus, it is written, we now “also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:11).

In God, there is “fullness of joy”, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11). Let us, by grace, seek them, and glorify God by their presence in our lives.

Peter wrote of the “joy unspeakable, and full of glory” which may now be had by believers (I Pet. 1:7; cf. v. 8).

David prayed: “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me by Thy free Spirit” (Ps. 51:12; cf. vv. 11, 13). That is a prayer that we, too, often need to pray.

As David asserted, “Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning” (Ps. 30:5). Praise God for the blessed hope and the expectation of the weepingless morning!

“Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee (that is, Christ) with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. That was said of the Son, because He had “loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (v. 9). To the extent that we are enabled to do the same, we also can have the joy and gladness of God.

“Rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20). That is the main cause for joy and rejoicing.

“They shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Ps. 51:11). “And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.”

Being clothed “with salvation,” the saints “shall shout aloud for joy” (Ps. 132:16; cf. Acts 16:25).

We, thus, are to “show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light” (I Pet. 2:9).

Let us, therefore, “with joy” draw water “out of the wells of salvation”; and go forth with “everlasting joy” upon our heads and in our hearts (Is. 12:3; 35:10).

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:17, 18). --*Noted and Recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

The Word's Indispensability

The Word of God speaks of the blessings which God has for His faithful people.

Because we are the children of God, for example, He has “sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit's possession by us, thus, confirms our divine sonship.

It needs to be recognized, however, that the divine Spirit operates through the Word of God. So do we, as Jesus said, live by every Word of God (Mt. 4:4).

The required sanctification is by the truth, as it is written (Jn. 17:17). It is also quite true that we are sanctified by the Spirit. So we read of the “sanctification of the Spirit,” which results from our belief of the truth (II Th. 2:13).

These circumstances serve to evince the complete unity of the Godhead in its redemption and sanctification of people. God, the Father, purposed and provided for our salvation by the Son. The Son accomplished it by His death and resurrection for the world's sins. And we receive the eternal benefit by belief, through the Spirit, of the truth, our obedience thereto, and our continuance therein until and unto death. --*Fred O. Blakely*

We cannot have a secret affinity with sin. --*Fred O. Blakely*

A Word About Modest Apparel

By Michael Blakely

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

It is a shame that such a subject as this should ever require addressing, especially since we are seeking to minister to the people of God. Nevertheless, we shall say something because the need has become quite obvious.

The apostles didn't give specific standards for modest apparel to the church, so neither shall we. And really, that would not cure the problem anyway. Asking how short is too short, how low cut is too low cut, how tight is too tight, or how much exposed skin is too much are not the right questions, therefore it is fruitless to try to answer them.

Some better questions would be, How “vile” is this body (Phil. 3:21)? Is my body really a “body of sin” (Rom. 6:6)? Is it really a “body of death” (Rom. 7:24)? Have I kept my “body for the Lord” (I Cor. 6:13)? How shameful is nakedness in the sight of God (Ex. 28:42; Is. 47:3; Lam. 1:8,9; Rev. 3:18)? Why did God clothe Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:10, 21)? Why were the priests commanded to not walk up steps to the altar (Ex. 20:26)?

The old defense that “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” has been quite misused in this case (I Sam. 16:7). Arguing the sensibility and spirituality of modest apparel reveals an unregenerate heart. Decency and modesty go hand in hand with the rest of the Spirit's fruitage. As it is written, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17).

Is anything more fleshly than the flesh itself? Does anything embody the carnal nature more than the body itself? Let us keep it under subjection! Let us keep it covered, and especially during the assembling of ourselves together! Whether it is a man or a woman, the flesh is a distraction. It is an opportunity for Satan.

There are too many preachers today who are too afraid to touch this subject even with the proverbial ten foot pole, because they fear that they might offend a newcomer or a new believer. It has been our experience that when modesty is part and parcel of the assembly, newcomers will notice and follow the godly example. At any rate, the problem is not that the people of the world don't know better, the problem is that, apparently, the church doesn't know better. And yet, admittedly, it does require some tact and discretion when speaking in the assembly about these things. We heartily endorse the gospel as appropriate subject matter. Heavenly light has its own way of dispelling earthly darkness. And earthliness is the problem. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:15,16). THE END

Earthen and Heavenly Vessels. The containers (cf. II Cor. 4:7) that we now have (the body of this death) can barely handle the first fruits of the Spirit, but there our heavenly vessels shall be able to bear the fulness of the glory that shall be revealed in us. In the world to come we shall have the heavenly treasure in a heavenly vessel. --*Robert Cobb*

“The redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:23-24) is coextensive with the curse. --*Fred O. Blakely*

The Message Of The Gospel

By Gene Hutchcraft

“Who has believed our message? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” (Is. 53:1)

Why such a question? Who would dare not hear and believe his message? More than that, to whom would God not reveal His message? These are pivotal questions about the kingdom. Those who do not know are either young in the kingdom or not part of it. Isaiah may not have understood the full extent of these questions, but believers today must understand them.

This message of the gospel has gone out to all humanity. “Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Rom. 10:18). God has prepared a table for us to eat in His presence. They are the good things of eternal life. Unless we eat and drink of them we have no life in ourselves (cf. Jn. 6:27, 53). Even as the Lord Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you”.

God extended Himself to us in Jesus’s coming into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. He purposed to do this from the foundation of the world (cf. Gen. 3:15). He made the world to be an arena to demonstrate His wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places (cf. Eph. 3:10).

Also, He would do something new. He has made beings, namely men, in His image who may accept or reject Him at their own will. And His inscrutable wisdom provides for the restoration of the repentant and believing ones. Contrariwise, Satan and his angels are eternally damned with no hope of reclamation (cf. II Pet. 2:4). But those who were created in the image of God, being made a little lower than the angels, He crowned with glory and honor (cf. Heb. 2:7). This is particularly so regarding the Son of God, and as well, those who are in Him through obedience to the gospel.

The prophet Isaiah, in the text quoted above, restates the question with regard to the revelation of God’s arm. “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” This is the language of power and accomplishment on the part of God. And the power of God is clearly seen in the gospel. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). And this is the means which has been chosen by God for men to come to Him, namely by faith. “So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17, NASB).

The truth is spiritual, and it is hidden from the eyes of the insincere by the wisdom of God. Even as the Savior declared, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Mt. 11:25-26). It distresses many to think that God would hide the truth from certain individuals, but if He did not, the ungodly would abuse it. And those who reject the truth are said to hold it in unrighteousness. But we thank God that ultimately, as it is written, “we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (II Cor. 13:11).

Satan is neither all knowing nor all powerful. But God is. The devil thought that he had devised the demise of God’s salvational plan when he orchestrated the death of the Savior. But God fulfilled His purpose in spite of Satan’s devices. God extended His holy arm in righteousness destroying the power that Satan had over us through “fear of death” (cf. Is. 59:16; Heb. 2:14). We, that are in Christ, have already died in Him, and the fear of death is gone!

Men who reject God’s will for themselves are without understanding (cf. I Cor. 2:6-9). But we who believe the message of the gospel have seen the arm of the Lord extended in all its wondrous power and strength. The power is now operative in bringing many sons unto glory. --304 Woodland Place, Carl Junction, MO 68434-9542

Jesus Revealer of the Father

Scripture Citations by Fred O. Blakely

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (Jn. 1:18).

“If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him” (Jn. 14:7).

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” (v. 9).

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works” (v. 10).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (Jn. 1:1-2).

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (1:14).

“My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” “Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me” (Jn. 7:16, 28-29).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:1-4)

The Children of Light

By Robert Cobb

By Christ we have been delivered from the bondage of the law. That is so that we may now serve “in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6). Although we now “walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the implements of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations and every high thought that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. 10:5). That is God’s good and perfect will for us. Let us seek, obtain, and use the grace that is essential to its accomplishment.

By His grace we are the children of God, and so of the light. That is because “the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth” (I Jn. 2:8).

Let us, therefore, walk as the children of light, and so glorify Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, and from death in sin to life in His dear Son.

We cannot be habitually of the world and live and walk with God. We, thus, must reckon ourselves to be dead unto the world and sin, if we are to have fellowship with, and serve God.

Abundant grace is available to us to do that. But we need to seek, find, and duly amply employ it to do God’s will for our lives. --Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely

Let us continually look unto Jesus, our Lord and Savior, as we are bidden by Scripture to do (Heb. 12:1-3). It is only by so doing that we can overcome the present evil world and obtain the crown of life. --Fred O. Blakely

We come to the table of remembrance on the Lord’s day to commemorate our eternal redemption in and through Christ, God’s dear Son. And, of course, that righteousness, “the righteousness of God,” which we now have through the Son (Gal. 4:7). --Robert Cobb

that permeated their writings, by the will of God, was “sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Pet. 1:11).

The multitudinous prophecies of nations rising and falling, together with inspired diatribes against decadent Israel were only the husks around the prophetic Kernel, which was Christ. They were quantitatively more significant, but the message of a coming Messiah outweighed them all!

How marvelous it must have been for men and women of faith to hear of a time when the covenanted people would not “walk any more after the imaginations of their evil heart” (Jer. 3:17). That was a prophecy of “the grace” that has come to us!

Think of Ezekiel foretelling a people with new hearts and spirits. How radically different this differed from the constituency to who he prophesied. “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (11:19). That was a prophecy of “the grace” that has come to us!

Peter tells us that the prophecies of the prophets arrested their own attention. They longed to know more of them; to see beyond the veil that hid them from their eyes. God revealed to them that they had been chosen to foretell something they themselves would not experience. “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into” (I Pet. 1:12).

Its Present Preeminence. The grace of God is preeminent under Christ. This is the time of grace. No believer should tire of hearing of it. Not child of God should tire of appropriating it!

After all the theological haggling has ceased concerning the means of salvation, it will be affirmed that it is “by grace.” Grace brought salvation to us. It made it accessible to us, and caused us to experience it. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit. 2:11). How marvelous the truth!

Grace Instructs us. Grace is the effectual teacher of the believer. The law was a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-25), but it could not teach like grace! Grace teaches us to avoid what God hates, and to embrace what He loves. “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12).

Grace’s Plenteousness. Because grace is so precious, there will be a temptation to suppose it is scarce. But this is not the case. Grace “abounds,” overflowing with blessing. There is never a time when, for the believer, this is not true; “He giveth more grace!” (Jas. 4:6).

Ponder these affirmations. “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Rom. 5:15). What Adam did was bad, what Jesus did was better. Sin extended to the extremities of the human race, but grace reached every area infected by sin! Grace has “abounded” unto the same “many” that were corrupted by the fall!

“Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). That sin abounded cannot be denied. “All have sinned,” proclaims the Lord, “and come (not ‘came’) short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). There is no part of the world where sin has not dominated; no tongue it has not corrupted; no affection that it has not blighted! But grace has done more than sin! It has reached where sin has reached, and brought the fallen back. It has *abounded* marvelously!

Access to the grace of God is like access to a treasury. It is not possible for the unbelieving heart to touch the hem of the garment of the greatness of grace. But the believer can touch grace just as surely as the woman with an issue of blood could touch the hem of Christ’s garment (Mt. 9:20).

It is no marvel that Paul wrote of “the riches of His grace.” How our impoverished race needs this! “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Eph. 1:7-8).

The Copiousness of Grace. Grace opens God’s storehouse! Because of Christ, abundance of grace is available to us. This is a rich supply of resources required to get us from earth to heaven. It is “abundant mercy” that rescued us from the fall. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (I Pet. 1:3). It requires a lot of what God has to save us; and that is what He gives us!

If you wonder how serious the Lord is about bringing you all the way to glory, think of these words. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit. 3:5-6).

Spiritually impoverished religion is an affront to God. It is a contradiction of the salvation that is professed to be experienced.

The Throne of Grace. Those engaged in “the good fight of faith” are aware that they are in a jeopardous situation. Grace is not just for getting into the kingdom, it is also for staying in it. If you are serious about being “forever with the Lord,” you will need a lot of grace.

How refreshing that grace is available in abundance! No child of God ever has to be without it. In Jesus, we have access to “the throne of grace.” We are urged to avail ourselves of this provision. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

I know that you have times of “need,” just like myself. But we have something more in common than our need. We also have access to the throne of grace, where resources adequate to meet the needs are dispensed. You are to come “boldly” or “confidently” to this throne, expecting to receive what is required.

It is a throne of grace, because it is superior to all opposing influences. There is no condition to which grace is not equal! There is no need it cannot supply!

In the flesh, you would not think of “grace” in association with a “throne.” The world does not reckon such a trait in association with reigning or ruling. But grace does “reign.” That is why it is dispensed from the “throne of grace.” “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

Do not miss the intent of the reign of grace. It is “unto eternal life.” Grace is God’s copious favor given to the believer to bring such ones into the eternal realm. There they will be forever identified with God, and will reign with Jesus Christ “world without end” (Eph. 3:21).

Grace’s Frustratableness. It is necessary to say a word about the frustration of God’s grace. One of the five tenets of Calvinism is “irresistible grace.” The tenet is a delusion. Grace is not irresistible. If such were possible, Paul’s confession would be reduced to nonsense. “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. 2:21). Paul’s intent is to confirm that a reversion to law for justification is, in fact, frustrating the grace of God. This means that grace which is so frustrated will not accomplish its intended end.

For some this affirms a weak God that cannot accomplish His purpose. A cursory review of the Word of God will confirm this to be a very foolish position.

God put Adam and Eve in the Edenic paradise because He wanted them there. But they were expelled from Eden when they frustrated His love. God brought Israel to the promised land because wanted them there. But they were expelled from the land when they frustrated His loving intentions. Even though Israel was chosen by God, they conducted themselves in such a way as to cause Him “to abhor His own inheritance” (Ps. 106:40). Therefore let us not trifle with the grace of God. Let us receive it, be instructed by it, glory in it to the praise of His glory. (*Given O. Blakely is on staff at Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.*)

Spiritual Focus

By Robert Cobb

There are many things to focus on these days in which we live. These are the last days and “the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16). We who have “believed from the heart that form of doctrine” (Rom. 6:17) which the Apostles spoke of ought to be lifting up a standard. We have been given to see the eternal things by the belief of the gospel. Focusing on the things which are above where Christ is presently sitting brings the power to overcome the seen things which surround us in this present life.

The Ministry of the Assembly. Assemblies should be places of uplifting. Elders and deacons, as well as believers should be about the ministry of elevating men’s minds upward into the realm of the Spirit where the victory over sin is dominant. Instead of focusing on the building programs of men we should center men’s minds on the Christ who loved them and gave Himself for their sins. But until the minds and hearts of elders and deacons are elevated upward there is little possibility of them encouraging others to attain such things.

This dilemma is common among the so-called modern evangelical movement today. Men are captivated with the here and now. They are perfectly happy in this present body and have no real desire to depart from it and be present with the Lord. Oh they may have the right words concerning these doctrines but their hearts are not engaged in striving against sin. They watch the same movies as the world; they attend the same night clubs as the world; and when the judgment is set they will receive the same rewards as the world. That will be “the reward of unrighteousness” (II Pet. 2:13).

Working Together with God. God has called a people out of the world. He has told them to come out and be separate! He has promised that He Himself would be waiting for them for the purpose of fellowshiping with them. God wants to walk in His people. God is the One who has made salvation possible, it is He who is shortly going to burn up this present evil world and it is also He that has made a way that we might be saved from the wrath to come. But even God himself can’t make us come out of the world. He must operate within the realm of divine incentives. God tells us what He will give us if we deny ungodliness and forsake this present world. And it is in the belief of these “exceeding great and precious promises” (II Pet. 1:4) that we obtain the strength to overcome.

The Jeopardy of Not Seeing Afar Off. Without a proper focus of the world to come we are forced to operate under a system of law, a system that God knew from the beginning wouldn’t work. The law wasn’t given to save anybody. Rather it was given to show man that his need for a Savior was greater than he imagined. The law exposed man’s sin and showed the exceeding sinfulness of sin (cf. Rom. 7:13). If taken seriously the law will drive us to Christ, and then we will appreciate the Advocate we have between us and God, “the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

Peter had somewhat to say concerning those who had lost their focus, He said that they were blind and could not see far off and that they had forgotten that they were purged from their old sins. They had taken their eyes off of Christ and they were focusing on the present world, a danger of eternal magnitude for everyone who is in the warfare of faith.

We must always keep our eyes on the Savior. That is our only source of power over sin. Paul said, “This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). The natural mind or the mind of the flesh is our enemy. It is set against our obtaining of eternal life and it is at home here in this present evil world. We cannot operate with the mind of the flesh and, at the same time, be pleasing to God. We must live in the Spirit, which is to say that we must walk in the truth of what Christ has done in our behalf. If Christ has captured our heart’s affection then we will not want to live and walk in the flesh. And this is the very thing that God has desired to be worked in us.

The Need for Knowledge. Focus cannot be maintained without knowledge. We must understand what God is presently doing in Christ Jesus if we are to maintain our walk in the Spirit. God is presently getting

a people ready to inhabit a new world wherein is only righteousness. And if we will allow the Spirit to illuminate our minds to this fact, God will work in us to perfect us. But if we persist in resisting his Spirit we will be cut off “without remedy” (Prov. 29:1). The lake of fire will be filled with those who would not have this man Christ Jesus to rule over them (cf. Rev. 21:8; Lk. 19:14). They will forever have to face the truth that God wanted to purge them from dead works in order that they might serve Him, and they would not!

A Ministry for Every Believer. There is a great ministry that awaits every believer in Christ. Everyone who has bowed the knee to the Savior can avail themselves of this ministry. As we meet with those fellow saints in light we must always strive to help to refocus all eyes on Christ! There are rewards for everyone who is a helper in this ministry. Maybe it would be just a word fitly spoken that would help some wayward soul get a hold, by faith, on the blood of Christ once again. We, who have believed, have what the world desperately needs, namely Christ. So let every man be about proclaiming Christ’s death for sins until Jesus comes again.

The unity of the Spirit can only be maintained as we keep our minds on the things that pertain to eternal life. Christ is the central Personality in all of history; “all things were created by Him, and for Him” (Col. 1:16). He is the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6). And we all come to the Father through Him. Let us labor to keep our eyes focused on the better things.

A Calling to Death and Life

By Tina Cobb

When our Lord was on this earth, He called many to leave all that they had and follow Him. There were Peter, and Andrew, who left their boats, their occupations, to be the Lord’s disciples. James and John were mending their nets in the boat with their father when the Lord called them. Without a moment’s hesitation they left everything behind and followed Him. Matthew was tax collector but the Lord called him just the same and he left his tax office, never to return.

We see by dying to ourselves and our own lives, we are made alive to God. Jesus calls us, in the same way as the disciples mentioned above, to lay down our wills and to set our affection on things above. We are to be living sacrifices. At first glance this may seem like a contradiction of terms. It simply means that by dying to ourselves and our own lives, by crucifying the flesh, we are made alive to God.

Soon the things that are unseen will be seen with perfect clarity. Our faith will be lost in the glorious sight of God Himself. These afflictions, when seen from a heavenly perspective, are deemed to be “light”, and working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The Restorative God

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of this vision (Ezek. 37:1-14). The dry and disjointed bones are a sad symbol of the entire people of Israel. The Northern kingdom, and now the Southern as well, had been destroyed and left desolate. The scattered survivors of the two kingdoms could in no sense be considered a nation any longer.

God had a positive Word for those discouraged exiles, however; The graves, i.e., the foreign lands in which God’s people were languishing in captivity, would be opened. Israel would be resurrected from those metaphorical graves, and restored to Canaan (v. 12). This stupendous miracle of national resurrection would cause the faith to be firmly established (vv. 13-14). Only the impartation of God’s life-giving Spirit could effect such a revival: only the action of God could bring them back to their own land. The God of Israel not only has the power to predict; He has the ability to bring to pass what He foretells. --James E. Smith

God made Himself vulnerable to rejection in Christ Jesus. He gave a gift (namely, that of salvation) that could be rejected. --Dan Powers

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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 close 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.

The Enlivenment of Knowledge

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," declared the Spirit by Paul to the church (I Th. 4:13). People are "alienated from the life of God" by their spiritual ignorance (Eph. 4:18). They are related to and associated with Him by their knowledge of Him. So is it written that we are "renewed in knowledge after the Image" of God (Col. 3:10).

The "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) will certainly result in full fruition for those who have and persevere in it. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Is. 35:10).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (I Th. 4:13-14).

The blessed Lord will "swallow up death in victory" (Is. 25:8; cf. I Cor. 15:54) and bring again its victims "from the land of the enemy" (Jer. 31:15-16).

With Him in Paradise--bless God!--"the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest" (Job 3:17-18). --*Albert G. Stoner, Jr., Noted and recorded by Fred O. Blakely*

A Letter from the Pinks. "Dear Fred, Nelda, Dan, and Family, I was so sorry to read in The Banner of Truth that your wife and mother passed away on January 7th. Rubye and I used to have such great times together. I really loved her a lot! Please use the enclosed \$20.00 in whatever way you think best as our memorial to Rubye. God bless you and yours, always and all ways! --*Ceil and George Pink, Glendora, CA*

The seasons of heaviness (cf. I Pet. 1:6; 5:10) will soon pass from us all. And which one of us have not benefited from God's longsuffering? --*Dan Powers*

Miscellaneous Observations and Reflections

Evangelist Bob Chambers Writes

"Dear Brother Blakely, I want to express my sincere condolence to you, dear brother, upon the *arrival* (in Heaven) of your faithful companion, Sister Rubye. As with others I have followed the reports concerning your dear wife's condition for these several years. Your article, 'Sister Rubye Called Home' in *The Banner of Truth* was touching. How precious is our hope when a dear one leaves us to 'walk through the valley of the shadow of death.' I know God will minister to you by means of the indwelling Spirit. Our prayers are with you.

"Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of my book, *Heaven*. God has used it to comfort many. I have noted the frequency with which articles have appeared in *The Banner of Truth* respecting Heaven. Your understanding on numerous matters in the heavenly realm is as mine.

"Your writings have been a blessing to thousands. 'Great will be your reward in Heaven.' Thank you for your kingdom service. In His Happy Service, *Bob Chambers, Scottsdale Church of Christ, Scottsdale, PA* (Editor's note: A \$15.00 contribution was also enclosed for the *The Banner of Truth*)

Robert McWaters Writes

"Dear Brother Fred, When I saw the notice in *The Banner of Truth* of the passing of your good wife, I had mixed feelings. Without a doubt you will miss her, yet we can both rejoice that she has gone to a better home. Praise God, her suffering is over!

"It's been a long time since you were helping our congregation when you were living in Fargo. I do want you to know that your two volumes, *The Apostles' Doctrine*, have been of tremendous help to me throughout the years. So many times I have used your insight in those books to help me in my teaching and preaching.

"May the Lord grant you peace and comfort as you go on without your beloved wife, looking forward to rejoining her in glory with all the other saints." *Bob McWaters, Crookston, MN*

The Indwelling Godhead. There is no question in God's Word about the possibility of Deity indwelling mankind. God clearly affirms that He dwells within the humble and contrite heart (Is. 57:15), even though "the heaven of heavens cannot contain" Him (I Kgs. 8:27).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:23; Rom. 8:11) are each set forth as dwelling within the redeemed. Although this is challenging to our faith, we must have the courage to honor God in our acceptance of the truth. That is the unique prerogative of our faith.

God comes to dwell within us in order that the divine purpose might be realized. This is the means God has chosen to implement His eternal purpose. This is how He works in us to will and to do of His own good purpose. This is a rich resource of divine power for us. --*Given O. Blakely*

Till He Come. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him" (Rev. 1:7; Mt. 24:30-31). At the Lord's table each first day of the week, we are put in remembrance of that blessed appearance, as well as of the Savior's death for our sins. That is because we keep the feast in remembrance of Him "till He come" (I Cor. 11:26; cf. vv. 23-25). --*Floyd M. Coffman*