

Blessed Together for 50 Years

by Sis. Sarah Ledger
Bartow, Georgia

On February 28, 2008, my husband, Paul, and I were married for fifty years. In a way, it seems like such a short time! When I look at him, in my mind's eye, he still looks like the slender, handsome man with the horn rimmed glasses that I married. I wonder if I still look to him like the tall, slender girl with the long brown hair.

On Sunday after our anniversary, our children and grandchildren gave us a reception at the Church where we are members. We were both humbled and honored at the number of friends who came by to wish us well. After the announcement of the reception was made, I had several people to ask me if I would do everything all over again. My reply was that I would certainly marry the same man, but circumstances alter all situations, so I'm not sure how we would have done things under different circumstances.

There are things I would certainly do again. I'm thankful that we raised our children in the church. My husband always went to the hog houses on Sunday mornings so the help could have the day off, so he came on to worship later. But I have wonderful memories of the three children in the back seat as

we headed out to Bible Study. As long as my mother-in-law was able to go, we picked her up and part of the time, another member who lived in town rode with us. Until they were grown and out of the house, going to worship was never an option. They still go to church.

I'm thankful that we were able to raise the children on the farm. They all went in the hog houses at early ages to help feed up and keep them clean. They learned to respect God's other creatures and take care of them. They often spent summer afternoons pulling pig weeds out of the soybean fields. Most of the time the only pay they got was a cold drink and cookies from the country store owned by Mr. Johnny (my husband's farming partner). Mr. Johnny and his wife, "Miss" Marie, were like grandparents to our children and they loved spending time with them. I don't think that having chores when they were children has scarred them too badly! They all seem to have a good work ethic now.

I'm thankful that I was able to stay at home during most of the childrens' growing up years, although it meant that we never had a lot of things other people seemed to have. Most of the time

I drove an old car, but I could attend a lot of school functions and it got us to extracurricular activities, piano lessons and ball practice. I think I saw every ball game that both of the boys played in. Some of the time, I would be one of few mothers there, so I encouraged and cheered the other boys on too. After they were all grown and married, I went back to work in an office where I stayed until my retirement almost three years ago.

I know now that there are some things that I will never do. I won't go to France to see where my brother is buried (I wish that I had). My husband and I will never take that train trip across the Mid-West (we always wanted to). I won't see a Broadway musical (I would love to). But I have done so many wonderfully, simple things that have brought me so much pleasure. The joy of raising three wonderful children and now being able to enjoy their children is enough to ask for.

We have no way of knowing what the future holds. I can see that my husband and I are both aging and having some health problems, but aren't we thankful that we know Who holds the future? The Lord is so good.

Write It Down

Two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument and one friend slapped the other one in the face.

The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand, "Today My Best Friend Slapped Me in the Face."

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath.

The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him.

After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone:

"Today My Best Friend Saved My Life."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"

The friend replied, "When someone hurts us, we should write it down in sand, where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it." Learn to write your hurts in the sand and to carve your benefits in stone.

Learning to Lean on God

by Bro. Chris Bond
Patterson, Georgia

One day while cleaning out the stalls in our barn where the feed bags are kept, my dad and I were startled by several mice. We were picking up empty bags of horse feed that had been piled up on the corner and throwing them in the back of our pickup to be burned in the hole we dug. Of course to us, those old bags were trash that were causing clutter and needed to be disposed of; but to those mice, the bags were a cozy place to call home. They provided warmth and comfort. There were also plenty of unused pieces of food they most likely fed on. Without any warning or signal, the mice's lives were being changed. Such is the case in our lives too. We may lose our home, jobs, cars, money, and even our loved ones. Change is an inevitable and unavoidable experience we all have to face in this life. Sometimes it can cause us to lose touch with God and our faith because we dwell on what we've lost rather than on what we have in God. Change requires a good deal of courage in some cases.

Think of how Joshua must have felt after being an apprentice under Mo-

ses for forty years. Then when Moses died, leadership was fully bestowed upon Joshua. "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan...every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon...I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee (Josh. 1:1--5)." God commands Joshua to cross the Jordan River and gives him encouragement by assuring him that He will be with him as He was with Moses. Then in verses 6 and 7 God continues to speak with Joshua and tells him to be strong and courageous.

In Joshua 1:9, God finishes this conversation with, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." We need strength and courage to overcome changes in our lives. God knew Joshua was overwhelmed by not only the death of Moses but also this monumental task that

He required of him. Many of us have been in similar circumstances. A great change will come about in our lives. It might be quick and without alarm, but we still have work to do. Every one of us will lose our Moses, and then God will ask us to cross the Jordan. Hopefully we'll do like Joshua and lean on God, trust in God's strength, and cross the river.

As far as those mice go, some of them let go of those bags and continued with their work there in the barn. Some didn't let go and were thrown in the back of the pickup with the bags. The ones that let go and stayed in the barn received many more feed bags to use before the next cleaning. The ones that didn't let go were destroyed in the fire. We must learn to let go of some things when a great change occurs in our lives, or we too may be destroyed. Remember what God has promised us, "I will be with thee: I will not fail thee. Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Recollections From Childhood

by Elder McKinley Wright
Jacksonville, Florida

My early childhood was spent on a farm in South Georgia (Alamo). My father was a tenant farmer, always working on land which belonged to someone else. At the beginning of each year, Dad would "trade" for the year with someone in the community who owned a farm. Usually the arrangements would be for the landlord to furnish the land, seed for the crop, a mule to plow the fields, and half of the fertilizer; while dad furnished all of the labor attached to the cultivation and harvesting of the crops and the other half of the fertilizer. At the end of the year, the crops would be harvested and divided equally between Dad and the other landlord.

This manner of life had its good points and its bad points. The bad parts being in the form of mostly hard work. As soon as I was large enough, I began to work in the fields. Before that time, I was kept quite busy bringing in wood, raking the yards, feeding the mule and pigs, and keeping the calf in one corner of the pen while mother milked the cow. My largest duty while I was too small to work was watching my brother and sister while mother worked in the cotton field. She would find a place under the shade of a tree which was convenient to the field and leave us there. She would spread a quilt on the ground for the children to sit upon while she hoed or picked cotton near by us. She would also leave a jar of water in the shade where

it would be kept cool, and each hour or two she would come see how we were getting along and get a drink of water. Sometimes, if the day was hot and she was almost through with the cotton, she would sit down and rest. Sometimes, when my brother and sister went to sleep, I would pick blackberries along the fence nearby. After a while, I was large enough to take my own hoe to the field. While the babies played in the shade, or slept in the shade. I would then hoe the cotton in the immediate vicinity. That was really a crowning achievement. However, the next year when I was large enough to hoe along with mother, it ceased to be such fun.

Of course all of life on the farm was not hard work. After we had hoed and plowed the crops, helping them to grow, and they had reached maturity, there would be a short season without any hard work while we waited for the cotton to open. Occasionally, on these days, Dad would take me down to the edge of the branch. In these modern times, they are called "cricks." We would dig up some earthworms. He would dig, and I would break the lumps of earth, catch the worms, and put them in a can. The next morning, we would get up early and the rising sun would find us traveling in the direction of the river. I always enjoyed fishing if the fish would bite, but if they wouldn't bite, I would soon turn my attention to the sand minnows which can always be seen in the water. I guess I

must have inherited my desire to fish from my grandfather. He was my idol from the standpoint of fishing. But if my grandfather went with Dad, I couldn't go because they left home too early for me to get up.

While I was small, I didn't have many pets. Of course we had a dog and a cat, but they seemed more like members of the family. When I was about five years old, Dad caught a very young rabbit and gave it to me. I kept it in a box for a few days, but one night I came home from the field and my rabbit was gone. I had left the box open, and the cat didn't let such an opportunity pass. At the time, I thought it was a great calamity. I was angry with the cat and wished all kinds of wit upon him. However, as I look back upon the scene now, it doesn't seem so disastrous. I shudder to think of the outcome if I was in the position of the cat and someone left a large piece of chocolate cake lying around to tempt me.

At the time incidents took place, many of them seemed most disagreeable while others were very much enjoyed. Looking after the babies in the cotton field was tiresome, but when night came and I could ride to the house, I soared to the heights of joy. The walk to the river wasn't fun, but to catch a fish made it worth while. If these have taught me a lesson, it is that anything worth having is worth working for, and the bitter makes the sweet taste better.

☞ THE LESS REAL RELIGION A CHURCH HAS, ☞
THE MORE ENTERTAINMENT IT TAKES TO KEEP IT GOING!!!

Gnats and Camels

by Elder Julius Stewart
Thomaston, Georgia

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. **Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel**” (Matthew 23:23-24).

The Scripture we will use for consideration is taken from Jesus’ rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees. In the context of this portion of scripture, we find the words of Jesus to be very sharp and pointed to the corruption of the religious leaders of that day. We can draw many comparisons from that era of time to the Church today. There are a great deal of things that Jesus addressed in all this 23rd chapter, far too many to delve into at one time for an article like this. We will just look at Jesus’ comparison of a gnat and a camel.

In order to look at these words in the order that they were given, it is important that we define the word “hypocrite.” Even without turning to a dictionary, we can gain from the context of just these two verses that a hypocrite is at least someone who has two characteristics. First, a hypocrite only does part of what is expected of him by God. Usually this is what is convenient and requires the least sacrifice. Look at what Jesus clearly teaches here: “for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin.” Jesus says, “these ought ye to have done.” Jesus is commending or agreeing that paying tithes is a good thing. Certainly we know that without the giving of tithes, much of the ministry of the Church would be crippled and rendered ineffective. We know that there is a great need for giving today just like there was then. We also know that we can expect God to bless us for giving to His service. With our Scriptural giving, there will be great rewards recip-

rocated back to us by the hand of God. The old adage is true that says, “You can’t out give God.” (See also Malachi 3:8-10.)

A second characteristic of a hypocrite is that when faced with the difficult areas of service, those that require a true display of real conviction, discipline, and Spiritual action, the hypocrite fails to do that which God requires of him. Jesus said the hypocrites “have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.” Jesus says, “and not to leave the other undone.” They had left judgment, mercy, and faith undone!

Jesus is telling us without question that judgment, mercy, and faith are “weightier” (more important issues) than paying tithes of mint and anise and cummin. There is a popular saying today that seems to say all sins are equal. The statement, “A sin is a sin is a sin” is used to falsely proclaim that God judges all sin the same, no matter how great or small. This is a lie from the devil. (See John 19:11; Genesis 18:20; Matthew 5:19; 7:3-5 11:20-24; 12:31; Luke 12:47,48, etc.) Those who believe this lie say, “Since we are all sinners, the church has no right to carry out the judgments of God by disciplining members of the Church.” Running with that same way of thinking, people conclude today that parents have no right to discipline their children. Then, with that said, there is a trickle-down effect. All of a sudden, it is reasonable that the government has no right to prosecute criminals. All of these contradict and undermine plain biblical truths. Our world today is swallowing a camel! Jesus said here clearly that omitting judgment is more serious than not paying tithes. It is true that all sin is indeed sin. One sin, no matter if great or small, that was not paid for at the cross of Calvary, will condemn a person to Eternal Hell.

Thank the Lord that He has paid for ALL of the sins, of ALL His people, for ALL time! He did this through the atonement with His own precious blood. But for now, while we live here on this Earth, King Jesus is judging us according to our works. There are different degrees of sin and different consequences for various sins.

Look at one of many passages of Scripture where God had rebuked the Jewish nation for failing to carry out judgment. “The way of peace they know not; and **there is no judgment in their goings**: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. **Therefore is judgment far from us**, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: **we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us**. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And **judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off**: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and **the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment**” (Isaiah 59:8-15). Please also read Jeremiah 5:1-5; 8:7; and Habakkuk 1:4.

Judgment, Mercy, and Faith

These Jewish leaders had resorted

to paying and accepting tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to the ungodly practices and doctrines of the people. The Jews had become financially rich but spiritually destitute. It no longer mattered how people lived or what they believed. As long as their money was good, everything was fine and dandy in their estimation. They refused to carry out the judgments of God. They threw accountability to the wind. They developed a "live and let live" attitude. They thought they were keeping peace by not causing any waves. The Jews were giving, taking, and paying tithes, but omitting the weightier matters of the law! They were swelling their pockets and hoarding up the Lord's money instead of carrying out judgment and being merciful to the poor. Ungodliness abounded, and there was no judgment. They closed their eyes to the oppressed and hungry. They had hardened their hearts and refused to repent and forgive those who had trespassed against them. They had forgotten that if it had not been for the mercy

of God, they would spend eternity in hell. They had fallen into the snare of the devil in believing that righteousness came only in the letter of the law (their coveted doctrines) and disregarded personal responsibility. The irony of it all is that they thought in their blindness that they were pleasing God! While Jesus condemns us carrying out our personal judgment (Matthew 7:1-4), He declares: "Judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

"Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

As God has created them by his sovereignty, there is a great difference in the physical makeup of a gnat and a camel. It is quite easy for us to swallow a gnat, but they strained with swallowing it. What should have been so easy for the Pharisees and Scribes to see was their need for change. It is sad to think that in our world today, especially in the church, we have become so blind that we fight against truth if it threatens the comfort of our current system. Quite often we despise judgment, mercy, and faith. If these things

are absent in our practices it is evident that we have not learned from the failings of the Jews. However, it is typically or practically impossible for a man to swallow a whole camel. But in many cases in our world today, especially in the church we have done just that. In order to swallow a camel we have to divide it up. Little by little we let this slip then that. Things creep in unawares. There comes in a little false doctrine here and a little bending of the rules there. Before you know it the devil has fed us the whole CAMEL!

Now if we have swallowed the camel, we need to get rid of it. The Jews refused to repent and it finally ruined them as a nation. God cut the Jews off as a nation and grafted in the Gentiles. Now Jesus deals with His chosen people. What Jesus brought upon the Jewish nation, He will bring upon America. Everywhere around us it seems that the writing is on the wall. God is about to bring serious judgment upon His people for turning their backs on Judgment, Mercy, and Faith! May the Lord grant us to understand what it means to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

FINANCIAL HELP NEEDED!!!

We are thankful for the individuals and Churches who are helping ease the financial burden of THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH. We never want to stop sending the magazine to anyone who wants to read it but are unable to help share the cost of printing and distributing the magazines. We have many elderly, others in financial trouble, and many in poverty-stricken countries who love the Lord. They seem to appreciate the words of comfort, encouragement, and instruction as much or more than anyone else. For some in other countries, this magazine is the only thing they ever get to read. Churches and schools in other countries are using the magazine to teach the truths from God's Holy Word!

It is amazing to see how many ways the Lord is using the magazine!

Please send as much as you can to help share the truth of God's word with many of His children who are hungering to read more. No salaries or profits are made from your contributions. Every penny goes to print and distribute the magazines.

Thank you in advance for partnering with us as we continue to spread the truth!

THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH WEB SITE

For those who have access to the internet, we encourage you to look at articles, hear sermons, and look at other Scriptural writings on our web site: www.trumpetoftruth.org

The Knowledge of His Will

by Elder Greg Phillips
Chattanooga, Tennessee

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9).

The Epistle to the church at Colosse was written by the Apostle Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome. Epaphras, who Paul identifies as “our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ,” (Colossians 1:7) had reported to Paul on the condition of that church.

False doctrines were being taught, troubling the church. Some years earlier, Paul had written the letter to the Galatians to combat the false teaching of certain Judaizers, who were unsettling the minds of Gentile Christians by teaching that it was necessary for them to be circumcised and to observe the Jewish ceremonial law.

From Paul's statement in verses Colossians 2:11, and 16, it appears that the false teachers alluded to in the present letter were again primarily Jews, engaged in their old practice of unsettling the minds of Gentile Christians. Also, to the observance of Jewish ceremonial law, now they had added the importance of the sacred seasons, such as the Sabbath, the new moon, the feast day, and had laid down certain restrictions as to meats and drinks. This heresy nullified the doctrine of the All-sufficient Saviour, by holding that the Gospel of Christ must be supplemented by Jewish law.

Another heresy referred to by Paul was the doctrine of “a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels” (Colossians 2:18). In another verse he calls it philosophy.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,

after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). The Greek philosophy prevailed much in the regions around Colosse, and perhaps also the Gnostic philosophy. The basic heresy of this doctrine is a denial that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Paul taught that any religion that sought to add to the simplicity of Christ as presented in the Gospel, or any that would take away from Christ, was necessarily a false religion.

While the church faced these challenges, Epaphras reported much that was good. Epaphras had reported of their “faith in Christ Jesus” and of the love which they had “to all the saints” (Colossians 1:4). They possessed a constancy in adhering to the true faith, and had a true Christian love for all the saints, wherever they were. The church had a great hope according to the Gospel and that hope was bringing forth fruit (Colossians 1:5-6).

Epaphras had also “declared unto us your love in the Spirit” (Colossians 1:8). This love was in addition to and beyond the love which they had “to all the saints” (Colossians 1:4). This love was wrought in them by the Holy Spirit. It was not mere natural affection, but love working in their hearts by the agency of the Holy Ghost. It was spiritually fervent affection, not moved by carnal considerations, arising from a renewed heart. It was love for Christ, for the gospel, the apostle, and all that did love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Upon hearing this report, Paul began unceasing prayer for the church. “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9). While the church was

doing well in many respects, Paul desired that they be able to stand against the heresies that troubled them and to be ever growing in the discernment of God's will.

The Apostle Peter referred to Paul's writing and expressed the same desire for the church. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (II Peter 3:17-18). The life of a Christian is a life of growth. He is at first referred to as born of God, then a babe in Christ, then as a little child. He becomes a young man, then a father in Christ. Every father was once an infant, and had he not grown, he would have never been a man. Those who are content with the grace they received when converted to God are, at best, in a continual state of infancy. In the order of nature, the infant that does not grow, and grow daily, is sickly and soon dies. In the order of grace, those who do not grow up into Jesus Christ are sickly and will soon die; die to all experience and influence of heavenly things.

To know the Lord Jesus Christ—to possess correct views of His person, character, and work is the essence of the Christian religion and the only way heresy can be defeated. Thus, Paul prayed that the Colossians “...might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” The Colossians had knowledge, but they must have more; they must be “filled” with it. They had shown, by their faith and love, that they were disposed to do His will, and the apostle now prays that they might be fully acquainted with what He would have them do.

They needed "full and accurate knowledge" as the Greek indicates.

It was not enough, however, to simply possess such knowledge. Paul desired that they would have knowledge of God's will in order to do God's will. He prayed, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10). The Christian life demands that every man behave himself as it is fitting for one so blessed with the excellent grace of God. We are to be holy as our God is holy.

We must walk according to the precepts and commands of the gospel according to the privileges and liberty of the gospel, answerable to the pattern of holiness which the gospel sets before us, and the example of Jesus Christ. We are to constantly, consciously, seek to please God.

How may one know if his walk is pleasing to God? It will be made manifest by one's "...being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10). That the church at Colosse was bearing fruit was manifested in their faithfulness to the Gospel and their love for the saints. They still needed to increase in fruitfulness. As the church at Corinth, they needed to be "...stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (I Corinthians 15:58).

Good works means works of devotion towards God, works of righteousness towards our neighbors, works of self-discipline towards ourselves, works of charity towards all. Fruitfulness in these good works means an unwearied diligence and persevering constancy in doing of them, that our fruitfulness be abounding and abiding.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God" in verse 10 differs from "the knowledge of his will" in verse 9. "Increasing in the knowledge of God" is daily increasing in the living, experimental knowledge of God, our Father. We must be ever increasing in our knowledge about God and also increasingly know Him personally.

Such knowledge is the very essence of eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The word "know" here, as in other places, expresses more than a mere mental acquaintance with the character and perfections of God. It includes all the impressions on the mind and life which a correct view of God and of the Saviour produces. It includes love, reverence, obedience, honor, and thanksgiving. To know God as He is, is to know and regard Him as a lawgiver, a sovereign, a parent, a friend. It is to yield the whole soul to Him and strive to obey His law.

As fruitfulness in good works contributes much to the increase of knowledge, so increasing in knowledge will contribute very much towards our fruitfulness in good works.

Paul recognized that no one can, in their own strength, walk in such a way as to please God. Such a life requires divine strength. Thus, he prayed that the Colossians be "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:11). He desired that they might be strengthened for the performance of duty, to meet temptations, and to bear up under the various trials of life. The sufferings for Christ are unavoidable. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Ordinary, human patience and determination cannot equip the believer for such trials. Yet might, all might, glorious power, which is here prayed for, and elsewhere promised to believers, can and will enable us to stand under them! Glorious power is victorious power.

This power is "glorious," or, as it is in the Greek, it is the "power of his glory." It is manifestly the power of the great and glorious God, and is power characteristic of His glory. It is power that promotes His glory, and shows forth His praise.

Similarly, Paul prayed for the church

at Ephesus, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). Paul prayed that the Ephesians be strengthened in the inner man. What did he mean? The inner man was a phrase by which the Greeks understood three things.

(a) There was a man's reason. It was Paul's prayer that Jesus Christ should strengthen the reason of his friends. He wanted them to be better able to discern between what was right and what was wrong. He wanted Christ to give them the wisdom which would keep life pure and safe.

(b) There was the conscience. It was Paul's prayer that the conscience of his people should ever become more sensitive. It is possible to disregard conscience so long that in the end it becomes dulled. Paul prayed that Jesus should keep our consciences tender and on the alert.

(c) There was the will. So often we know what is right, and mean to do it, but our will is not strong enough to back our knowledge and to carry out our intentions. Paul prayed that the Ephesians (and the Colossians) would have the strength necessary to carry out their intentions.

Paul prayed that the church of Colosse be strengthened "...according to his glorious power." Paul desired that from God's plentiful and superabundant power, the church would receive an abundant, overflowing supply of strength to do the will of God. The strength is not of human means, but by the power of God. The best Christians here below are weak as well as imperfect, not able to perform what is required of them for doing and suffering the will of God till strengthened. It is the power which God gives them in the day of trial that enables the performance of His will.

This power is glorious, or, as it is in the Greek, it is the power of His glory. It is manifestly the power of the great and glorious God, and it tends to promote His glory, and to show forth His praise.

The result of such power would be “all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:11). Patience is cheerful (or hopeful) endurance under trials.

Believers are to bring forth fruit with patience; to run with patience the race set before them; to bear patiently all afflictions and tribulations; to wait patiently for the things promised by God, and for the coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the heavenly glory or hope laid up for them in heaven.

Longsuffering is to be slow to anger and not easily provoked to wrath. It

is to be ready to forgive injuries and to bear long, and with patience, all reproaches and persecutions for the sake of Christ, and His Gospel. All this requires daily fresh supplies of grace and strength.

“...All patience and longsuffering” is to be accompanied by joyfulness, with a cheerful spirit, or with joy in the Holy Ghost. We are to esteem reproach for Christ’s sake above the riches and honours of this world and to rejoice when counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. This requires strength above that of nature, and a renewed supply of grace.

Longsuffering expresses patience in respect of persons, and patience the same in respect to things. The man is long-suffering who, having dealt with injurious persons, does not allow himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blaze up into anger. The man is patient who, under a great siege of trials, bears up and does not lose courage.

All this will lead to its proper conclusion, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

HOMOSEXUALITY AND SODOMY

A. Scriptural proof that homosexuality and sodomy are evil, wrong, an abomination in the sight of God:

1. Leviticus 18:22,23; 20:13,15,16
2. Romans 1:24,26,27
3. I Corinthians 6:9
4. I Timothy 1:9,10
5. Genesis 19:5-8 (entire chapter)
6. Deuteronomy 23:17; 27:21
7. Judges 19:22
8. I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46
9. II Kings 23:7
10. Exodus 22:19

The word ‘harlot’ is sometimes from the feminine form of the word “sodomite”: Genesis 38:21,22; Deuteronomy 23:17; Hosea 4:14.

B. It is our responsibility to confront others about serious sins in their lives. It should always be done in love, not in a Pharisaical attitude!

1. Knowing how severely God judges disobedience, we cannot keep the second Great Commandment without warning others of the consequences of sin.
2. God commands us to warn others when we see them committing serious sins: I Thessalonians 5:14; I Timothy 5:20; Ephesians 5:11; II Chronicles 19:10; Isaiah 58:1; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 4:14; Titus 3:10; II Thess. 3:14,15.
3. God severely punishes those who see people sin but do not warn them! Ezekiel 3:17-21
4. The only ones who are spared when God judges a nation are those who have been warning others about Jesus coming to judge us. This is called the “testimony of Jesus Christ,” which is the spirit of prophecy. This is when we tell others not only about Jesus being our Saviour, but also being our Judge; Him not only being the Lamb of God, but also being the Lion of the tribe of Judah. See Rev. 19:10; 12:17; 1:2,9; 6:9; II Thess. 1:7-10. Always remember ! Corinthians 14:32. Do not warn about anything God has not told us about in His Holy Word!

Strangers and Pilgrims!

by Elder McKinley Wright
Jacksonville, Florida

(Before beginning to read this article, it is recommended that the reader study John 15:18-20; Hebrews 11:13-16; I John 4:4-6 and Acts 2:40, fixing in your mind what these Scriptures say. The article attempts to bring together some of the ideas expressed in these Scripture passages.)

The Bible teaches that there are two kinds of people. The first kind is identified by the expression "of the world." The other group is identified by the expressions "of God" and/or "not of the world." To emphasize the contrast between the two, we shall in this article identify the two groups as "of the world" and "not of the world." Both groups live in the world. In this article we try to look at the peculiar situation of a people that is in the world, but is not of the world.

Before beginning the study of this group who is **not** of the world, we should look for a moment at the other group who **ARE** of the world. There is a tendency to adopt the position that those who are not of the world are children of God but those who are of the world are not children of God. Although it seems a simple (easy to be understood) idea, this generalization will not hold up when we compare it to the Scriptures. The writer knows of no place in Scripture where one who is not a child of God is exhorted to become one. The reason is obvious. It is impossible for one who is not a child of God to do or say anything that would cause him/her to change from the one state to the other. Such a person has neither the ability nor the desire to change.

But the Scriptures in many places exhort people to change themselves from the state of being "of the world" to that of being "not of the world".

(1) "Save yourselves from this un-

toward generation" (Acts 2:40). Surely there can be no doubt that the "untoward generation" is another expression for those who are "of the world." The apostle was not exhorting people who were not children of God to start acting like children of God, even though there had been no change within them. Such an exhortation would be ridiculous. Even if they could change their ways and mislead those whose hearts had been changed, the old nature that would still be within them would emerge almost immediately, and they would change back. The apostle was teaching them that they ought to make the fundamental change in their lives (their hearts have already been changed) that would remove them from one group (of the world) to the (not of the world). If they save (separate, remove) themselves from the "of the world" group, they have to go into the "not of the world" group. There is no other place to which they can go.

(2) "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed..." (Romans 12:2). The change that the apostle was exhorting them to make was not a superficial change (on the surface), but was a change that they were to make deep within themselves. It is described as a transformation. In our efforts to distinguish between Conversion and Regeneration, we sometimes leave the impression that Conversion takes place on or near the surface of our lives. We, thereby, make Conversion seem to be relatively unimportant. But in doing this, we mislead people. Conversion takes place deep within us -not as deep as Regeneration, but still nowhere near the surface! The experience of Conversion is so moving that many people look upon the time when they experienced Conversion as being the time when they were born again.

The Apostle even told the Romans how they were to go about achieving this transformation (by the renewing of their minds, etc). In the next two passages we are highlighting the thing that we are told to do. This is being done instead of discussing the instructions.

(3) "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Corinthians 6:17-18).

(4) "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 Corinthians 7:1).

Surely the fact that God gives these exhortations is proof that the people who are under consideration can move themselves from one state to the other; and that, therefore, the pair of states about being (or not being) of the world is not the same as the pair of states about being (or not being) a child of God. So, when the Bible describes someone as being **of the world**, it is not necessarily saying that they are not children of God.

Those who are described as being **not of the world** are children of God who have not only been born again, but have also **committed themselves** to lives of service in the kingdom of God. The point of distinction between being of the world or not of the world is a person's commitment to a life of service to God! The Bible has no commendation, nor promise, nor encouragement for the person who has been born again but has not acknowledged at least to himself a hope in Christ. Such a person will be delivered into the glory world at the final resurrection; but while he lives in this world, he has no promise of it.

He has no hope. He has no consolation. How sad is his condition!

The condition of being in the world but not of the world corresponds with the expressions in the title of this article, **STRANGERS and PILGRIMS!** We who are in the world but not of the world are **pilgrims** in the sense that as far as the natural life (the world) is concerned, we feel to be just passing through. We have our eyes on a heavenly home that is beyond the world. Those who are of the world have their eyes on worldly things. They want to live here forever, and they act as though they expect to do so. When Pharaoh asked Jacob's age, Jacob answered, "the days of the years of my **pilgrimage** are an hundred and thirty years..." (Genesis 47:9). As much joy in worldly things as Jacob had known from time to time, he still looked upon his lifetime as a journey through with anticipation. He looked upon the lifetimes of Abraham and Isaac as being pilgrimages also. No doubt they had looked upon them in the same way (Hebrews 11:13). Joseph lived in Egypt and was faithful concerning his duties there. But all the time, he longed for Canaan. As the end of his life approached, he exacted a promise from his brethren that they would take his body back to Canaan for burial when they returned home. The record of the fulfillment of that promise is found in Joshua 24:32. The Pilgrims who came to America were not pilgrims because they had come from their old homeland to a new one. They were pilgrims because they were **on a journey through the world**. They had come to America; but as much as they rejoiced in the freedom to worship God in the way that they felt was acceptable to Him, their real joy was the anticipation of what lay at the end of the journey on which they were still traveling. It is a sad fact that so many who say that they are committed to lives of service to God **spend most of their time working to obtain comfort in the world!** Our lesson suggests that such people are still "of the world."

We (real honest-to-goodness disciples) are strangers in the sense that the ways of the world are strange to us. We just do not feel at home in the world. When we were born again, we were changed internally in such a way that we could develop a new set of values. The development of this new set of values was not automatic. If it had been, every child of God would live this new life. And every one of them would live it in a perfect way. We know that no one lives it perfectly, and many make hardly any effort at all. Right after the New Birth, this new set of values could more or less be likened to a spark. If this spark is fanned (primarily by our faith, study, and obedience), it will grow into a flame. As we grow in this grace, we reach the point of being identified in our own minds as followers of Christ. This growth leads us further and further away from the ways of the world. Our growth is such that at some point in our lives we find that the ways of the world are abhorrent to us. If the word "abhorrent" seems to be too strong an expression to describe our feelings, we probably have not grown as we should, and we are not as far from the world as we ought to be.

As we live in the world, even though we are not of the world, the things of the world tempt us. Someone has likened the person who is not of the world but faces its temptations to a frog that someone is trying to cook alive. If one were to drop a live frog into a pan of hot water, it would immediately jump out. In the same way, if a professed disciple were faced with some large deviation from the standard of the Bible, he or she would immediately recognize the evil of the situation and would reject it outright. For example, not too many years ago the average person would not have even entertained the idea of aborting an unborn child.

But if the one who caught the frog were to place it in a pan of cool water, it would be comfortable and would not jump out. This corresponds to the disciple who is so tolerant toward world-

liness that he is not offended by it. If the heat under the pan of water were turned up slowly, the frog's body temperature would warm up along with the water until it was scalded to death. In the same way, the person who is not of the world but lives in the world can become comfortable because the things that he or she is experiencing are not so far removed from the standard set forth in the Bible. Soon, we don't even notice such deviations in the lives of others. When we become comfortable in the world, trouble surely lies ahead. Like the frog in the water, we are not disturbed by such a small deviation from the gospel standard. Soon, we make it a part of our practice. When we begin to accept this small deviation, one will come that is slightly larger. Then, when we become comfortable with this one, an even larger one will come. This will continue to the point that our effectiveness as disciples of Christ is destroyed!

Most disciples who fall away from discipleship follow a course such as this in doing so. None of us one day makes a conscious decision, "Beginning today I am no longer going to live up to the standard the Bible sets forth." Such a suggestion is repulsive to us. But the world and the prince of the world keep whittling away at us, and we yield bit by bit in the little things until without having made a conscious decision to do so, we are living like the world. This will surely happen to us unless we remind ourselves continually that although we are in the world, we are not of the world. Our citizenship lies in heaven, and we must remain ever aware of heaven's standard. If we fail in this, we will surely dishonor our God.

We must not fall into the trap of thinking that on some little relatively unimportant point we can adopt the world's standard as our own and get away with it. The teaching of the Bible is so clear that we can classify virtually any activity as to whether it is good or bad. **AND THAT STANDARD NEVER CHANGES.** On the other hand **the world's standard is that if a majority of the people**

do a thing, it becomes acceptable! Using this standard, cannibals justify the act of eating other people. And their behavior is acceptable to others in that society.

Thousands of unborn babies have been killed this year, and the people of the world think nothing of it. A few years ago, such a thing would have been unthinkable. The world's standard has changed. Using the standard, almost any act that can be imagined can be justified by those who are of the world. But an odd fact of life is that when one who professes to be a Christian (not of the world) tries to use the world's stan-

ANYTHING YOU WANT!!!

When I was a child, we used to talk about finding a bottle or lamp, rubbing it and a "genie" popping out and giving us three wishes of anything we wanted. Most people have some idea of things they want, even if they seldom talk about them. Right now, think of three things you would really like to have. Is there anything YOU can do to get those things you want?

In the word of God, we have an occasion where God came to Solomon and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." (I Kings 3:5) Do you remember that Solomon asked for wisdom or an understanding heart. He wanted to be able to judge between good and bad. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (I Kings 3:10-14). Solomon asked for it, and he got it! May God help us all to realize that wisdom is the

dard to justify his doing of a certain thing while he is in the world, the world will turn upon him and will not permit him to use her standard as a justification. Although that is the standard worldly people follow, they will not allow the Christian to follow it. Instead, the world will insist that the Christian must hold to what they construe as the standard of the gospel. If he tries to follow their standard, they will call him a hypocrite! Perhaps they are correct in doing this. Surely his witness or testimony would be more effective if he insisted on following the teaching of the Bible. Many disciples dishonor

God by forsaking His standard as they walk before the world.

Those who are in the world, but are not of the world, are in a peculiar state. As they seek the approval of those who are around them (and everyone wants such approval), they can find it only by living up to the standard that is taught in the Bible. They can do this only by **constantly** reminding themselves about **who they are** and what they ought to do. This is not an easy task. **Lord, give us grace to conform our ways to Thy ways! Amen!**

main thing we need every day, that God is the only source of true wisdom, and that He has told us to be asking for wisdom!

What is true wisdom?

1. "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28).
2. "I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom" (Job 32:7).
3. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (Hosea 14:9).
4. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:" (Matthew 7:24).
5. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Wisdom is important!

1. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." (Proverbs 3:13,14).
2. "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it" (Proverbs 8:11).
3. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get undefstanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

What can we do to get wisdom?

1. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).
2. "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God" (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
3. Paul prayed for God to give the saints at Ephesus wisdom- "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:" (Ephesians 1:16,17).
4. "Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word" (Psalm 119:169).
5. "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk upright" (Proverbs 2:1-7).

What would you ask for if God were to say He would give you anything you want?

Inactive Members

by Elder W. H. Durrence
Brooklet, Georgia

In our nation today, multiplied millions of dollars are spent on the remodeling and reclaiming of old dilapidated areas in the inner cities. Even in our own community we often see an old building being remodeled and made beautiful again to be used for family dwellings or business offices. Who among us has not passed by some old home and thought that, if we had the money and time, we would like to restore that building and make it useful again?

In our society some of the more valuable automobiles are antiques. Though they were manufactured many years ago, they have been rebuilt and often restored to their original beauty. At times I have even thought of purchasing an old car and rebuilding it myself as a hobby. But while some few such cars have been restored, most have been allowed to deteriorate until they are worth nothing more than the price of scrap metal.

While it is sad to see an old dilapidated building or automobile, a far greater and sadder reality exists among the church members of America. There are people who were once shining lights and in whose fellowship we rejoiced (John 5:35), but now they are dimly lit. Some no longer shine at all in the public worship of God. How sad, when you realize what they are missing and what the church is missing by being denied the use of their God, given talents and abilities.

Some statistics indicate that as much as a third of the listed members of the churches of America are inactive. Such information should be alarming to us because on the rolls of almost all churches, including the church I Pastor, there are some members who never attend the worship of God. This fact should concern each of us and hopefully burden some hearts

deeply. Perhaps looking at this subject will motivate us to do something about it.

If people are willing to spend huge sums of money and exhaust great energies to remodel old buildings or restore old cars, should not we also be willing to spend and be spent (2 Cor. 12:15) in endeavoring to reactivate members and restore them to their former place of service? While it is important to pray for God to add to the church (Acts 2:47) so that it may grow and prosper, we should also ask God to help us in the important matter of member reclamation. By reactivating members at the same time that new members are being added, the church is strengthened much more rapidly. Since a church usually loses some members by death and transfer of membership as they move to new areas, it becomes more essential that we strive not to lose members through discontent and discouragement. What good will it do a church to gain new members if it is losing members to inactivity? Numbers are not important on church rolls; they are important on church pews, engaged in the worship of God (Luke 14:23). Something is wrong when churches have two or three times as many members as the seating capacity of their sanctuary. Evidently they have either failed to be interested in inactive members or failed in their efforts to reclaim them. In most cases the former of the two reasons is probably true. There is general apathy in Christianity today toward those who have gone astray. Think about the level of your interest and involvement and then evaluate what you have done about this matter in the church of your membership.

Mortals have long debated the question which Cain asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). We

should have no doubt that God does expect us to be keepers of one another. The law of Christ is love (John 15:12), and when we love each other as we should, we will be genuinely concerned about the physical and spiritual welfare of each other. God speaking through Paul, said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1,2). This passage reveals a number of important facts which apply to our study. (1) "If a man be overtaken in a fault" reveals what we all know, that people do make mistakes. We all do wrong at times. The problem under consideration (inactivity) is a fault which deprives the church body of these members' fellowship in public worship. (2) "Ye which are spiritual" indicates that some Christians have achieved a greater level of spiritual maturity than others. We are taught the nature of such growth in 2 Peter 3:18. Peter said to grow in both grace and knowledge. Some members remain carnal and spiritually inactive and as such will have little or no effectiveness in dealing with delinquent members. If you remain carnal, you will not become a teacher of truth (Heb. 5:12). For that, You must be spiritual. (3) "Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" says that we have a divinely appointed responsibility to those who fail in their responsibilities. It also tells us that there is a right and wrong way to do the job, the right way being with meekness. If you visit inactive members in the wrong way, your efforts are in vain. Be considerate of them, realizing that in different circumstances, the roles could be reversed (Mt. 26:22). Therefore, treat them with

burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” tells us to feel their burdens and help lift them up through a Christ, like love, which is self, sacrificing on our part.

Now let us consider a few rules that can be helpful in reactivating members: (1) **Visit them!** Your visit should not merely be a social visit, but a spiritual one, showing your concern for their spiritual welfare. Time spent together helps establish a bond upon which you can build a fruitful relationship. (2) **Be concerned!** You should have a genuine concern for their spiritual welfare and happiness as well as the prosperity of the church. If you are not really concerned, pray that God will help you to become that way. If you are not concerned, you will not be persistent enough and they will quickly recognize your insincerity. Even children can detect whether or not you really care about them. (3) **Listen to them!** I do not mean to remain silent and refuse to engage in conversation with them, but

be willing to listen, really listen, to them. Listen to their words, but also listen with your heart, to hear where the hurt comes from. Recognize that while they are wrong in not attending, the church may also share in the wrong, perhaps in not having ministered to them in their hour of need. Listen carefully (to discern the real problem) and prayerfully (to be able to help heal the wounds). (4) **Be honest!** If they are wrong, don't sanction their sin, but let them know by the Word of God why they are wrong. You should also remember that how you speak to them is important. If you are kind and loving, your honesty will help them, but if you are cutting and critical you may hurt more than help. Remember that wounds of the heart as well as those of the flesh remain tender for a long time.

In conclusion, let us consider some scriptural guidelines. Heb. 10:23 tells us to hold fast and be faithful ourselves, Heb. 10:24 tells us that our objective is to help the person serve

God, and Heb. 10:25 tells us to love and support the worship assembly and then we can better encourage others to do so. When these and other spiritual actions are exerted to reclaim the inactive members, statistics tell us that fifty percent can be activated with as little as one visit. If your visit is unproductive, then either you have failed in your task) or the person is in the half which will require more love and labor on your part.

Our duty toward others is not limited to prayerful concern only, but to actions also (James 2:15,16). “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20). May we, faithfully perform this task for the glory of God and the greater worship of His Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Grow in Knowledge

1. "Thy _____, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter."
2. "God _____ over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne to all _____."
3. "Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne of his holiness."
4. "_____ and judgement are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."
5. "His seed also will I make to _____ for ever and his throne as the days of heaven."
6. "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the _____ before me."
7. "Thou hast made his _____ to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground."
8. "Thy throne is _____ of old: thou art from everlasting."
9. "Clouds and _____ are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."
10. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the _____; and his kingdom ruleth over all."

A Woman Who Loved Much!

by Elder W. A. Mullis
(deceased)

"And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:37-48).

In the first verse of the above printed Scripture, we are told that a Pharisee "desired him (Christ) that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat."

Then we are told that "a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." These words give us the full setting of our lesson. The lesson draws a beautiful contrast between the Pharisee and the woman who "was a sinner." We want to remind every reader of this lesson that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). This lesson is for each of us individually and should be profitable for our lives in the service of God.

The Pharisee

The Pharisees were a people who thought more highly of themselves than they should have. Christ taught some things to His disciples about the Pharisees, and warned His disciples not to be like them. In Matthew 23:2,3,5, we find these words: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not. But all their works they do for to be seen of men." Again in Matthew 6: 1-2, Christ warned His disciples for them to take heed "that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

It is easy for the people of God to be like the Pharisees. It is for this reason that God has warned His people to take heed to themselves and guard against such. In Romans 12:3, these instruc-

tions were given to the saints at Rome: "For I say through the grace given unto me, to EVERY MAN (or woman) that is among you, not to **think** of himself more highly than he ought to **think**; but to **think** soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Then we read in Romans 11:20: "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not **HIGHMINDED**, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee."

One of the basic reasons why the people of God become highminded and think more highly of themselves than they ought to think is because they fail to "examine themselves" and "judge" themselves with the word of God. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Corinthians 13:5). Again in I Corinthians 11 :31 we read, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." The only way we can prove ourselves and judge ourselves is to use the "plumbline" of the word of God in our lives. Doing this will remove pharisaical tendencies from us. If we are not willing to prove ourselves and judge ourselves with the word of God, God will do it for us.

The Woman Was A Sinner!

By contrast to the Pharisee, we are told that the woman who came into the Pharisee's house where Jesus sat was **a sinner!** The Pharisee was a sinner also, but he thought so highly of himself that he could not see the sins in his own life. This woman "stood at his feet behind him weeping." She must have felt the burden of all her sins upon her heart. Only the Spirit of God in her heart could have wrought such a work within her. The Scriptures teach that the people of God can become so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and our conscience become seared with a

hot iron to the point that sin in our lives will not bring grief and sorrow as this woman experienced. (See Hebrews 3:12-13 and I Timothy 4:1-2).

The convictions of this woman's sins in her life brought forth true repentance and grief. It produced a result that brought action in her life toward her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. There is no greater need in this nation today than the kind of repentance that this woman manifested in her life.

Christ Instructs The Pharisee

In verses 44-46 of our Scripture lesson, Christ told this Pharisee: "Thou gavest me no water for my feet;" "thou gavest me no kiss;" "my head with oil thou didst not anoint." Remember that Christ said of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:3, "they say and do not". One of the most common of all the pharisaical tendencies is "to say and do not". Most of the people of God in this nation today want to do as little in the true worship and services of God as they possibly can. They are like the people Christ spoke of in Matthew 15:8, "This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." The "true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him" are the words of Christ in John 4:23-24.

"She Hath Washed My Feet With Tears"

After Christ told the Pharisee what he had failed to do, He then told the Pharisee what service this "sinner" of a woman had rendered to Him. We ask each of you to consider carefully in your heart how you think most of the "professing Christians" in our day would look upon the actions of this woman. Do you think some might say she was "full of new wine"? (Acts 2:13). Or maybe some might say that she

was "mad" or "beside" herself as Festus said about Paul in Acts 26:24.

Christ said this woman had washed His feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her hair. Not only had she done that, but Christ also said "this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet." The vain pride of the flesh might cause many in our day to say that if this is the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, they would want no part of it. Sometimes we say by the deeds of our life what we would not say with the words of our mouth. The pride of the flesh is the enemy of God, and of all who would be true worshippers of God. Then Christ said in verse 46: "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

"A Certain Creditor Had Two Debtors"

In verses 40-42 of our lesson, the Lord Jesus Christ gave a parable to the Pharisee. The "certain creditor" is God and the "two debtors" represent the people of God in the world. They were both "debtors," and they "had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." Every child of God in the world is a "debtor" to God as a result of what He has done for us in our eternal salvation. Paul said in Romans 8:11-12: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore brethren, **we are debtors**; not to the flesh to live after the flesh." The people of God who know God in their heart have the Spirit of God in them, and we are all debtors to Him: owing Him a debt of love and a debt of service.

Some of the people of God are more **mindful of the truth of their indebtedness to God** than others, and as a re-

sult they render a greater love and service to their Lord than others. It is the conviction of this writer that the people of God in the world will never put Christ and His kingdom first in their lives and seek to be a true worshipper of God in the fullest extent unless they know they are a greater debtor to Him than they are to any other person, place, or thing in the world. Only then will they be rendering the service and love toward Christ that this woman rendered, and following the instructions Paul gave in Philippians 2:14-16: "Do ALL THINGS without murmuring and disputing: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the WORD OF LIFE; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

(Please read I John 1:5-10.) .

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the characteristics of the Pharisees.
2. Discuss the possibilities of the people of God being pharisaical in their lives in the service of God.
3. How can the people of God prevent themselves from becoming high-minded and thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think?
4. Discuss what caused this woman to render the love and service to Christ that she rendered.
5. Discuss the difference in the service the Pharisee rendered and that the woman rendered.
6. Discuss the importance of a child of God knowing to whom they are the greatest debtor.
7. To whom is a child of God the greatest debtor? Can we put Christ and His kingdom FIRST and still fulfill our responsibilities to others?

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Throne - Psalm 45:6 | 4. Justice - Psalm 89:14 | 7. Glory - Psalm 89:36 |
| 2. Reigneth - Psalm 47:8 | 5. Endure - Psalm 89:29 | 8. Established - Psalm 89:44 |
| 3. Generations - Psalm 89:4 | 6. Sun - Psalm 89:36 | 9. Darkness - Psalm 97:2 |
| | | 10. Heavens - Psalm 103:19 |

Our Time

by Elder Edward McIntyre
Fitzgerald, Georgia

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5).

I read today that the average American will spend 15 years in front of the television during his or her lifetime. Can you imagine 15 years of sitting in front of that box, clicking away? What a waste of LIFE and of TIME.

So often we hear someone say, “I just don’t have the time for Church and things of God and I hope He understands!” WHY do we not have time? Is it because we squander it on things that will perish with time? Will God understand why we don’t have time for Him, or His Church? Will God overlook this sin of wasting time? I don’t think so!

Didn’t Jesus say in Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Didn’t God Himself say to Israel in Deut 10:12, “And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in

all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” There are many other Scriptures that tell me that God requires His people to have time for Him and The Church that Jesus built.

Often people will say when they retire or get to this or that point, THEN they will serve the Lord with more of their time. This usually comes in our older years and we have missed opportunities to influence our children as to the priority of serving God with all our lives.

The WORD of God exhorts younger folks this way in Ecclesiastes 12:1, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;” We that are older may not have the privilege of time in our older years to serve God because of the grave, so the writer tell us this: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither

thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

God is saying, DO IT NOW!

The Bible has much to say about our use of time and many exhortations to use it wisely. So why do we squander time and especially the Lord’s time, by being so slack in service. Time passes swiftly. Consider these two verses: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. He also made this observation” (Job 7:6) “Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good” (Job 9:25).

Going back to scripture that opened these thoughts: “Redeeming the time,” redeeming carries the idea of rescuing from loss. We cannot recall the time of days and hours, BUT we can begin to use our time in serving God, to undo some loss by putting devotion to Jesus as a PRIORITY in our LIVES.

Which is more important? Watching TV or Seeking to serve the Savior?

“Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing” (Psalms 100:2). May the Lord bless us all with a desire to serve Him in a more diligent way, and be more conscious of wasting our time!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!

Many churches and individuals have responded with love and a desire to help spread the truth of salvation by grace. We are so thankful for those of you who are sending contributions. You are helping send magazines overseas (many going to schools and churches in poor countries), as well as to libraries, doctors’ offices, hospitals, businesses homes of the elderly, and others unable to help financially across America.

Every month, many read the magazine for the first time, contacting us to let us know how thankful they are to find a magazine that expresses truth they have never understood, while others are thankful that the magazine does not compromise on the truth. People are increasing in knowledge of moral, practical, and fundamental doctrines because of your support! We have more requests for magazines overseas than we can ever supply. We are grateful for everyone who shares in this ministry to spread the true gospel.

All of your contributions go toward the printing and distribution (postage, packaging, etc.) of the magazine. No one receives any money for writing articles, or for the many hours of proofreading, wrapping of packages, attaching address labels, and all the other work which goes into the compiling and mailing of the magazines each month.

We need more support financially. If you or the church of your membership can help, it will all go toward sharing the truth with others who rejoice in reading the messages from God’s Holy Word!

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Hebrews 6:10).

Bible Reading Calendar for October

| DATE | MORNING | EVENING |
|------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Isaiah 19,20,21 | Eph. 2 |
| 2 | Isaiah 22,23 | Eph. 3 |
| 3 | Isaiah 24,25,26 | Eph. 4 |
| 4 | Isaiah 27,28 | Eph. 5 |
| 5 | Isaiah 29,30 | Eph. 6 |
| 6 | Isaiah 31,32,33 | Phil. 1 |
| 7 | Isaiah 134,35,36 | Phil. 2 |
| 8 | Isaiah 37,38 | Phil. 3 |
| 9 | Isaiah 39,40 | Phil. 4 |
| 10 | Isaiah 42,42 | Col. 1 |
| 11 | Isaiah 43,44 | Col. 2 |
| 12 | Isaiah 45,46,47 | Col. 3 |
| 13 | Isaiah 48,49 | Col. 4 |
| 14 | Isaiah 50,51,52 | I Thess. 1 |
| 15 | Isaiah 53,54,55 | I Thess. 2 |

| DATE | MORNING | EVENING |
|------|-----------------|-------------|
| 16 | Isaiah 56,57,58 | I Thess. 3 |
| 17 | Isaiah 59,60,61 | I Thess. 4 |
| 18 | Isaiah 62,63,64 | I Thess. 5 |
| 19 | Isaiah 65,66 | II Thess. 1 |
| 20 | Jer. 1,2 | II Thess. 2 |
| 21 | Jer. 3,4 | II Thess. 3 |
| 22 | Jer. 5,6 | I Tim. 1 |
| 23 | Jer. 7,8 | I Tim. 2 |
| 24 | Jer. 9,10 | I Tim. 3 |
| 25 | Jer. 11,12,13 | I Tim. 4 |
| 26 | Jer. 14,15,16 | I Tim. 5 |
| 27 | Jer. 17,18,19 | I Tim. 6 |
| 28 | Jer. 20,21,22 | II Tim. 1 |
| 29 | Jer. 23,24 | II Tim. 2 |
| 30 | Jer. 25,26 | II Tim. 3 |
| 31 | Jer. 27,28 | II Tim. 4 |

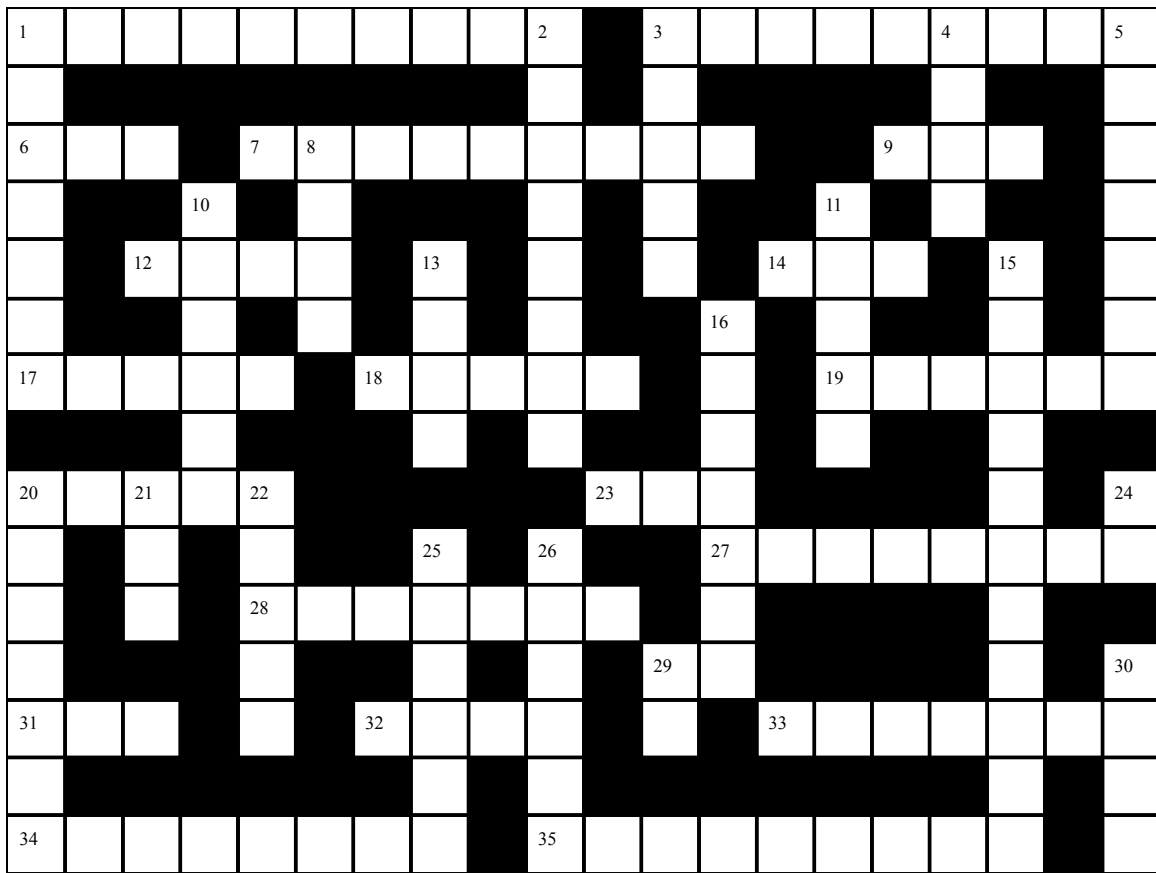
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
SEPTEMBER 08**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|----|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|
| 1 | I | M | A | G | I | N | 2 | A | T | I | 3 | O | N | S | 4 | A | 5 | C | C | O | U | N | 6 | T | | | |
| N | | | | | | | L | | | | | | | | 7 | H | | A | | | | | | H | | | |
| 8 | I | T | | 9 | B | E | L | O | V | E | D | | | | I | | | R | | | 10 | R | | I | | | |
| Q | | | 11 | O | | | | | | | | 12 | A | B | 13 | O | M | I | N | A | T | I | O | N | | | |
| U | | | V | | 14 | S | | | | | | E | | | I | | | F | | | A | | | E | | | |
| I | | | E | | | | E | | | | | | | | N | | 15 | A | | | L | 16 | T | H | E | | |
| 17 | T | U | R | N | E | D | | | 18 | W | R | E | S | T | L | E | | | | | | | T | 19 | H | | |
| Y | | | T | | | M | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 | M | I | S | E | R | Y |
| | | 21 | S | A | V | E | D | | | 22 | N | | | | 23 | D | O | N | E | | | | | O | | P | |
| 24 | R | | | K | | | T | | | E | | | | 25 | S | | | | | | | | | U | | O | |
| 26 | E | Y | E | | | | H | | | 27 | B | I | T | T | E | R | N | E | S | 28 | S | | | S | | C | |
| P | | | 29 | N | O | | | | | T | | | | | A | | | | | | | | W | | | R | |
| E | | | | | | 30 | L | | | 31 | C | H | R | I | S | T | | | 32 | T | H | I | N | K | | I | |
| N | | | | | | | E | | | E | | | | | O | | | 33 | B | | | | F | | | T | |
| 34 | T | O | G | E | T | H | E | R | | | | | | 35 | I | N | H | E | R | I | T | A | N | C | E | | |

Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "Do all things without _____ and disputings." 3. "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly _____ unto all good works." 6. "Others mocking said, These men are full of _____ wine." 7. "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have _____; and many such like things do ye." 9. "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of _____." 12. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken _____ mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." 14. "Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the _____, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place," 17. "And when the _____ days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him," 18. "Was then that which is good made unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working _____ in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." 19. "Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not _____ to kiss my feet." 20. "Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by _____, and stole him away while we slept." 23. "And they began to accuse _____ saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King." 27. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and _____ nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" 28. "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I _____ into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head." 29. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth _____ withersoever he will." 31. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth _____ that is put away from her husband committeth adultery ." 32. "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will _____ the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." 33. "_____ yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 34. "So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly _____ among the Jews until this day ." 35. "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the _____ of the elders."



DOWN

1. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good _____." 2. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he _____ a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." 3. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the _____, to live after the flesh." 4. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's _____, and heirs according to the promise." 5. "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they _____ him." 8. "And if this come to the governor's _____, we will persuade him, and secure you." 10. "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea; the time _____, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." 11. "Now when they were going, behold, some of the _____ came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." 13. "Well, because of unbelief _____ were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:" 15. "All scripture is given by _____ of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" 16. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a _____ before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." 20. "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, _____ laboured in vain." 21. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy _____ with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." 22. "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after _____ works: for they say, and do not." 24. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not _____ judged." 25. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no _____ of your father which is in heaven." 26. "And he said unto them, Full well ye _____ the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." 29. "_____ the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? 30. "The wicked shall be turned into _____, and all the nations that forget God."