

The Bible Standard



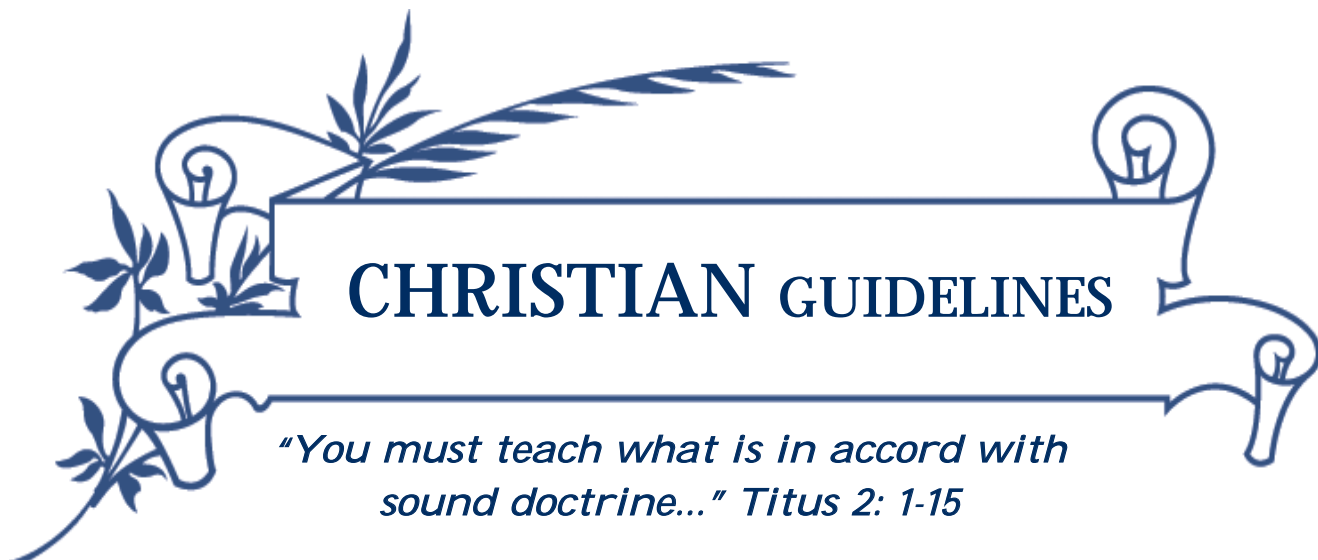
**“LIFT UP A STANDARD
FOR THE PEOPLE”
ISA. 62: 10**

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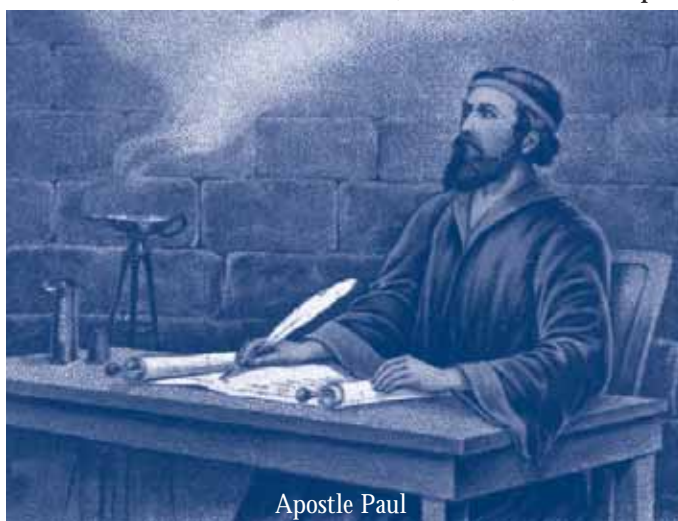
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2006



CHRISTIAN GUIDELINES

"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine..." Titus 2: 1-15

THE APOSTLE Paul penned the words of our lesson, instructing Titus, an elder of the Church—ministering to the believers in the island of Crete located off the coast of Greece in the Mediterranean. The instructions are not intended for, nor applicable to others than consecrated believers, and refer specifically to six classes in the congregation at Crete. (1) The older men—not merely in years, but rather the advanced, the matured, who doubtless would be also advanced in years. (2) The mature women—advanced in the knowledge of the Word. (3) The young women. (4) The young men. (5) Those who, though freemen in Christ, were bondmen according to the flesh—servants. (6) To Titus himself. Titus, as a preacher, should have before his mind a certain standard or ideal in respect to each congregation of the Lord's people, and should, as the minister of the Lord, labor to the attainment of that ideal which the Apostle here brings clearly to his attention—intimating that instructions along the lines here laid down are in fullest accord with "sound doctrine." It has been claimed by some that the people of Crete were specially degraded and lacking of good character, and that this thought was necessary for the Apostle to give this exhortation to those who had left the world and joined themselves to the Lord as His consecrated people. We shall see, however, that every word of the exhortation is



Apostle Paul

quite applicable to the Lord's people today, even though they live under the most enlightened conditions.

MATURE MEN

The Men, who are advanced, sober, grave, temperate (moderate)—not superficial in understanding. Not only their years of natural life, but also their years of experience in the Christian life, should bring them to conditions of maturity and sobriety. These three qualities would belong to a large extent to them as persons who are exercised and influenced by their new minds; but in addition to these there should be three other graces characteristic of their preparation for new positions in the Kingdom, which would be soundness in the faith, in love and in patience. It is of intention that the Apostle here emphasized (in the Greek) *the* faith, *the* love and *the* patience; for there are various faiths, various loves and various kinds of patience, and he meant to be understood as referring to the faith, the love and the patience which are of God, and respecting which, He is instructing His people through His Word, as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." It was not by accident that the Apostle placed "sound in the faith" before "sound in love," for since love is one of the fruits or graces of the spirit of the truth, and since one cannot receive much more of the spirit of the truth than he receives of the truth itself, the two are

dependent on each other for development and therefore the importance of the truth, in having a sound faith.

Often we are told that it matters not what a person *believes*, but that it is more important what they *do*; but to this we answer that a sound faith is all-important, not only in shaping conduct, but also in cleansing our entire

“Sound in the faith”

being, physically, mentally, morally and religiously. It is only in proportion as we have the truth of the Word and its sanctifying power, received into both our intellects and our hearts—the inmost feelings and motives, that we can resist the directives of the adversary and his schemes. Therefore, in proportion as we hold errors which vitiate or nullify the truths which we hold, in that same proportion we will be lacking and deficient in the sanctifying power of the Scriptures; and hence deficient also in sanctification. We should ever remember and co-operate with our dear Redeemer’s prayer to the Father on our behalf, “Sanctify them by your truth; Your word is truth.” Neither was it by accident that the Apostle placed love before patience; because, although patience may be cultivated from a natural standpoint, as, for instance, in the interest of worldly aims and desires; nevertheless, such patience does not affect the heart, but is merely a forcing or curbing of the outside life, and when the force is removed, it is like the rebound of an extended spring to the original condition of impatience. The patience which will last and become an integral part of character must result from a change of the motives that rule the heart: love must do this work by replacing the mainspring of selfishness. How grand the characters thus portrayed! We could not wish for more amongst the Lord’s people of any place today than that the matured brethren should be sober minded, dignified and moderate, with their new minds well supplied with the sound faith of God’s Word, and their hearts full of love, manifesting forth all of the various good qualities represented by this Word—kindness, meekness, gentleness, all of which might briefly be summed up in the word *patience*. We exhort

Kindness
+
Meekness
+
Gentleness
=
Patience

all of the advanced brethren in the truth everywhere to note well this likeness of a matured person of God, grown up into Christ, our living Head, and well conformed to His character; and we exhort that we all

keep this image well before our minds, and make it our ideal in our Christian course.

MATURE WOMEN

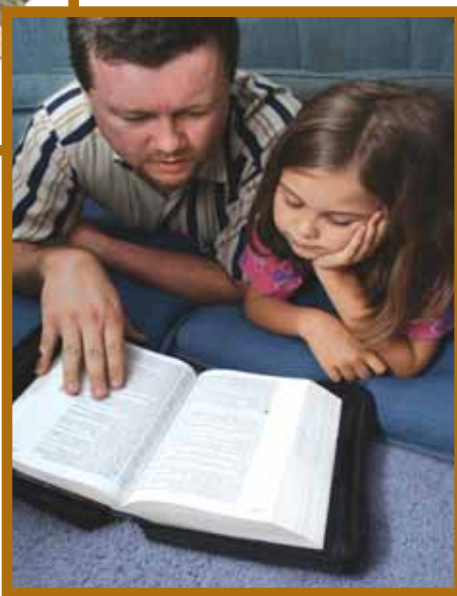
The Mature Women have also a model set before them by the Apostle. They should be “reverent in demeanor.” (R. V.) They are to have holiness—not perfection, but right living that is manifested in a full consecration to the Lord—the complete desire to know and to do His will, and such consecration is to shine forth in their lives. The Apostle proceeds to mention a few of the ways in which it would be manifest. They will not be “slanderers” (R. V.)—neither false accusers or accusers in any sense of the word. On the contrary, as the Apostle shows further on, they will be examples in the matter to “mind your own business.” They will not be enslaved to much wine, but be teachers of that which is good, by precept as well as by example, to all with whom they have an influence. Naturally their influence will be greatest over the young women, and it should be exercised as becomes women professing godliness; professing to be guided by the Word of the Lord, the spirit of the truth.

“Not slanderers or false accusers, or accusers in any sense of the word”

YOUNG WOMEN

The Young Women should find examples in their elder sisters, the influence of whom will not be in the direction of insubordination and a fostering of a battle between the husband and wife in the home; and their advice will very rarely be, “Stand up for your rights”; “Give him a piece of your mind,” *etc.* On the contrary, they will be peacemakers, and assist the younger women with such advice as will help to make the home happy by obedience to the directions of the Divine Word. Instead of helping to cultivate in the young women the spirit of selfishness, which inheres naturally in every human being through the fall, they will assist them, by both word and example, to cultivate the opposite spirit, the spirit of love—“to love their husbands and to love their children.” If love is fixed in the mind as the first law of every home, as the chief of the Christian graces to be developed and practiced, it would indeed make a wide distinction between Christian homes and others; and better than in almost any other manner, the Christian mother can preach the glorious gospel of salvation, and illustrate in her own life and home its power to deliver from the bondage of sin and selfishness, even in this our present imperfect

state. They will learn from them also to be discreet, and sober-minded; to do some sober thinking along many lines, and thereby to cultivate both heart and head, and to increase their own joys in the Lord, as well as, to prepare themselves the better for their own family duties and privileges. Chastity, modesty, purity, should also be learned—an instruction deep and powerful in its influence for good; not only to the young women themselves, but also in their families. They should seek to be “keepers of the home,” as well as workers outside the home, as the need might warrant. The home is her workshop and the children need her while in their early years, and it is there where her influence should be great and most valuable. They also should learn to be “obedient to their own husbands,” or, as the *Diaglott* renders this, “*submissive*”—this means not attempting to usurp the place of the husband in the home; nor for the husband to seek to displace his wife in her position. Neither spouse should keep up a continual strife and battle about life’s affairs in or outside the home. By “obedience” and “submission” we do not understand the Apostle to mean *blind* obedience or *dumb* submission, nor in any sense of the word that either the wife or the husband shall not enjoy fully all proper liberties and privileges; but that while enjoying these, let them both use them with propriety, so as to make life a blessing and not a burden to themselves or to each other. Remember that they are a team working for the best interests of all in the family. Yet the chief responsibilities of control of the home lie with the husband, according to both Divine and human law, though often disregarded.



involving her conscience); because, according to Divine arrangement, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church—the final arbiter respecting family affairs. Should the Christian wife at times find that the pursuance of this Scriptural course has brought her disadvantages or was about to work ill to the general interests of the family, let her protest kindly, and point out to her husband, without “harping” or “nagging” what she foresees to be the results, and urge a change; pointing out (especially if the husband be not a Christian) that the responsibilities of the transaction lie wholly in his hands: and let her then console herself with the thought that she, at least, is following the Divine direction, and that the ultimate result is sure to be a *spiritual* blessing, in harmony with the Lord’s promise that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him—and who demonstrate their love by obedience. This is where the saying, “Hindsight is better than foresight” and is appropriate; for the tendency among young men and women is to ignore or they may not be aware of the Scriptural admonition “to marry only in the Lord.” As the Apostle puts it “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” This advice is meant to prevent the disharmony that can result from a marriage between the consecrated and the world. If either partner has entered into a relationship, contrary to the Lord’s direction, with one in the world, let them take the matter to the Lord in prayer and leave the results with Him. As the Apostle points out, this course is the one least likely to bring reproaches upon the cause we love and to which we have consecrated even life itself.

YOUNG MEN

To the Young Men of the congregation the Apostle sends an exhortation that they be sober-minded—not rash, thoughtless, conceited—that they exercise self-control. And then, in view of the fact that Titus himself was a young man, he exhorts that he shall be a pattern to all the young men of the class, and he exhorts all of them to note carefully and to be exercised by the qualities and considerations then urged upon Titus.

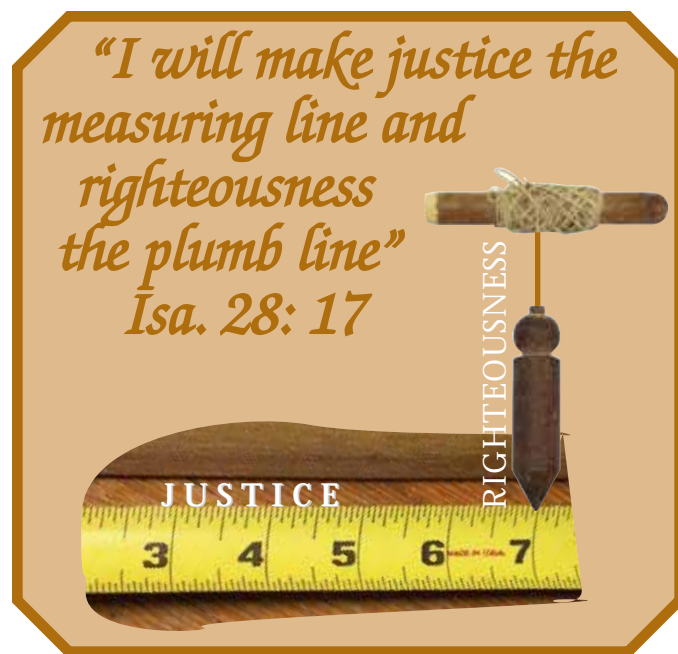
The Apostle urges Titus to be a pattern of good works and soundness of doctrine; not permitting his instruction to be corrupted either with vain imaginations of his own or those of other people. He urges him, and all young men, to sober thinking, the opposite of frivolity, levity: as Christians they have something to occupy their minds that the world has not; they have the greatness and grandeur of hopes vested in the earthly phase of the Kingdom. So our positions set forth in the Divine Word, should give to all, young and old, a general conduct and weight which, like a substantial cargo in a vessel, would keep us from being mentally top-heavy (heady) and prepare us to ride out the storms and difficulties of life through which we must pass to reach the Kingdom. Sound speech, with which no fault could be found, is another of the qualities that Titus and all of the Lord's people, especially the young men, are to strive for. Not merely sound speech in the sense of accurate and grammatical in expression, but sound speech, especially, in the sense of having their conversation and the influence which they exert through conversation, of a truly helpful, strengthening kind—to mind and heart and character.

Alas, how much of the conversation of even Christian young men is anything but sound, anything but helpful to themselves and their companions. Young men in Christ are to be copies of God's dear Son, so that in their everyday use of language, as well as, by their general demeanor they shall continually preach Christ and properly represent before the world His noble characteristics—truth, righteousness, purity, gentleness, goodness, love. Sound speech cannot be condemned by anybody, friend or foe, heathen or Christian, saint or sinner; and, as the Apostle suggests, such a course will be a constant reproof to those, who, in the face of such noble living must surely be put to shame—"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom" Jas. 3: 13.

DUTIES OF SERVANTS

To workers the Apostle sends a message also; and it was a very different message from what some of God's dear children, less wise than the Apostle in their understanding of the Divine plan, would have given. Many of God's people of today, instead of being peacemakers are peace-disturbers, because of a failure to see properly the principles which underlie the Gospel and their proper application in the present time. They exhort the worker to "strike," to "stand up for their rights," to see that they are not "put down," to "demand justice," and see that they get it. The Apostle, on the contrary,

understanding God's plan, knew better than to expect full justice, not to expect human rights or any other rights to be upheld in the present time, because we are still in what he designates, "this present evil world" or dispensation; because "the prince of this world" is Satan, and because his kingdom of the present time is not based on love or righteousness, but upon selfishness (Gal. 1: 4; John 14: 30). The Apostle understood that he should not expect all the wrongs to be righted and justice to be dispensed under Satan's administration, and hence in all of his teachings, he points the believers to the coming time when the Lord, the righteous King, shall take possession of earth's governments, and fulfill that petition of our prayer, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." In that day justice may be expected, because justice is done in heaven; then all rights will be respected, as all rights are respected in heaven; but before that glorious condition shall be manifested, Christ's Kingdom must be established and Satan, the prince of this world, must be bound, that he should deceive the nations no more, and that his rule of unrighteousness and selfishness shall be set aside; Isaiah speaking of Christ's Kingdom, "I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line"; (Isa. 28: 17; Rev. 20: 1-3; Dan. 2: 44).



EXHORTATIONS TO SERVANTS

The Apostle's exhortations to servants are in harmony with the proposed justice of the coming Kingdom, that they be obedient to their masters, and seek to please them. These words would also apply to workers and their relationships to their employers. These brethren should not be shiftless, careless, and indifferent as to the prosperity of their masters' interests and

the care of the employers' goods. They are to take as much interest in those things as though they were their own—as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, they are to do their work as though they were doing it for the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 10: 31). Such service should be rendered to an earthly master “as unto the Lord,” because of a desire to please the Lord, and because of the indwelling of His truth, and its spirit. This work will undoubtedly be accepted of God through Christ, although it is not presented in a more desirable form of service done directly in the interest of His cause. Not only as servants and employees who endeavor to please their masters and employers in the little duties, but also as well, in large projects; and thus Christian workers would be recognized, wherever they might be, as different, distinct from others, too many of whom are “eye servants,” faithful merely under the eye of their employer.

We, as Christian servants, will come to be recognized as jewels even by those who have no sympathy with our religious convictions, and possibly our good work ethic would constitute the weightiest sermons we could deliver. Some might obey their masters and yet continually protest and complain; hence the Apostle adds a word on this point, saying, “Not answering again”—not contradicting nor quarreling with your employer over his methods and ways of business; not complaining or sharing the common ill will of your fellow employees, whatever that might be; preferably, indeed, letting others complain, and you holding your peace, rather than stirring up strife—and having your service discerned by others as wrong.

YOUR NEIGHBOR'S BIBLE

Not stealing—secretly appropriating to yourself or to your associates the goods that are owned by your employer and that are under his control, contrary to his known wishes. It is important here for us to remember that if our employer should desire us to engage in some work that would be dishonest, morally wrong, this would be a proper ground upon which we should refuse to engage in evil. Our conscience must be preserved in every matter that properly belongs to justice; but we may not busybody ourself into the company's affairs in matters which are not our concern. By our own strict integrity even in the smallest things we shall do our silent preaching, not by Bible exhortation in this situation but by merely doing the assigned job and thereby exercise the Christian influence upon our supervisor or employer and others, “showing all fidelity,” and faithfulness to the one in charge. The effect of this information is to put the true Christian under

restraint to do those things only that are just, true and pure. It emphasizes the thought that however widely different the conditions between the king and the peasant are as respects people and earthly things, they really are on a par as respects God's law—on the same level from the standpoint of Divine justice.

This thought, once received into the mind, puts to naught the idea of exaggerated veneration which otherwise might be felt toward those in earthly authority. It is an uplifting thought to the common person, that, before the great King of all the earth, they stand on the same footing with the richest, the most learned and the most powerful of earth—that, whether rich or poor, a person is a person. It causes them to realize that a human being has certain rights, and that these are more than the human rights that center in the body, that they include liberty of mind and conscience and certain liberties of conduct. It is this very enlightenment which Christianity has brought to the world that is causing the great convulsion and revolution of this great Time of Trouble which is in process of overthrowing all present institutions in anarchy.

OUR LORD'S RETURN

It has been the teaching of mainline churches in this last century, that when the tribulation features of the Time of Trouble start, Jesus is to come in the flesh and gather His faithful and whisk them to heaven and safety, while the earth itself is going to be destroyed by fire and or nuclear catastrophe. It is becoming more apparent every day that this philosophy is being proven wrong. First of all, we believe that Jesus is not going to return in a body of flesh for He gave His humanity as the ransom price for Adam and the race, in Jesus words: “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20: 28).

The Apostle further states: “yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Cor. 5: 16). Since His resurrection He is a spirit being and, as such, is invisible to human sight (Phil. 2: 7-11; John 6: 51;). This is the reason why the disciples asked Jesus for a sign whereby they might know of His Presence (Matt. 24: 3). If on the other hand, He is to come in a body of flesh with the blaring of a literal trumpet and everyone seeing Him with their literal eyes, why did He give signs in the Bible that we might know of His Presence? Don't you see, the signs of the Bible are symbolic, not literal, and the world will eventually come to recognize Christ in His Second Presence, by the manifestations of wrong-doing in the “great tribulation” operating

within today's human society—in the areas of religion, government, business, and finance—all wreaking untold havoc and accompanied by world war, world revolution and worldwide anarchy. Adding to this sad state of affairs, is the imperfections of our planet, with innumerable calamitous situations brought on by floods, tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, avalanches etc.

As servants of the Lord, we are to be more than merely enlightened people: We are *consecrated to God as well*; who have surrendered our “rights” to the will of God, and have placed ourselves in the Lord's hands and are being taught of Him, and recognize that we are being fitted and prepared for our place in His Kingdom. We should not confuse the Heavenly Calling with the earthly inheritance which is still future. Many do not realize that the Divine program has progressed way beyond those things which occurred at Jesus' first coming. That the call for the Church was open for nearly 1900 years but has now closed. The spiritual elect classes have all been gathered and those of us who remain are now in line for Christ's earthly Kingdom soon to be installed on the ruins of Satan's empire.

If we are true Christian workers and servants like our Master—Phil. 2: 7 we are consecrated as was He, and that we, being under Divine providence, should not expect our rights during the time of this present evil world, nor to strive for them; but that on the contrary, we capitulate to the will of God—to the

doing of the Lord's will so far as we may have opportunity, and to the having of the Lord's will done in us according to the Lord's wisdom and providence. If oppressed and dealt with unjustly, let us look to the Lord for deliverance, and in whatever way it shall come, we will accept it as of Divine arrangement; and however God does not provide in the way of deliverance along reasonable and just lines, we will accept as the rulings of His providence, and render to the Lord thanks for His watch-care and seek to learn the lessons of patience and experience and long-suffering, which these trials may inculcate; recognizing in such a case that these trials, from whomsoever they come, are permitted of the Lord, if not ordered by Him, and intended for our welfare and spiritual development.

True Christians, in every walk of secular life, are the only ones who know what contentment really is. Others are striving for the attainment of rights and for the correction of wrongs, and are only cultivating more and more the spirit of selfishness in their own hearts, and generally causing themselves the more trouble and discontent. Only the Christian can say, “Content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me”; and he can take this position only by the exercise of a living faith, and can exercise such a living faith in life's affairs only after he has made a consecration of himself to the Lord, and can make such a consecration of himself only after he has come to some knowledge of the Divine character and plan.

* * *



As we proceed deeper and deeper into the “Day of God's Preparation” and the Time of Trouble, which is to precede the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on the earth, we should not think it strange that many new and old forms of evil are more and more coming to the attention of God's people everywhere. The increased use of narcotics and the abuse of prescription drugs is a major issue of today, as well as, our subject – homosexuality, or as its advocates prefer to designate it – sexual orientation.

Looking back at God's dealings with Israel, we become aware that He continually maintained a watch-

care, shepherding policy over them to keep them isolated from the many evil beliefs and practices of the Gentile nations around them. This special arrangement for His Jewish Age people was unique, and not offered to any other nation of the earth “You only have I known of all the nations of the earth” (Amos 3:2).

The activities of those foreign countries were, by God, condemned because they were associated with the worship of pagan gods and demons.

One of the Creator's manifested purposes for mankind, both male and female, is that of pro-creation. So it is that we find the Biblically approved method

for men and women to cooperate with Jehovah is the creative process by means of marriage to each other. The apostle Paul in Romans 1: 26, 27 is very specific in the condemnation of improper sexual relationships and conduct as follows: “For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also, the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”

The increase of the popularity of the homosexual lifestyle and the promotion of the political demands for equal rights and legislation to guarantee public acceptance for lesbians, sodomites, fornicators, etc. has not escaped the notice of people everywhere.

The defining of marriage as the union of “consenting adults” and no longer only, the contract between a man and a woman, has recently been made a matter of law in some areas in the U.S. Also, the distribution of a “black book” information package dealing with the gay and lesbian lifestyle at a Massachusetts high school, with the approval of the Board of Education, should arouse thinking parents as to the dangers to young people in their teens. It is increasingly apparent that this “gay activists’ war” is directed against the Christian principles found in God’s word—the Bible.

How very important it is for all true believers in the inspired Word of God to recognize that there is an active and real effort to completely destroy the teachings of the Scriptures in respect to sexual conduct, especially in the United States and Europe and elsewhere.

While the gay activist agenda claims to only want equal protection under the law, the real agenda of homosexual activists is simple: the complete alteration of American society to fit the homosexual view of human sexuality, marriage, and family. Their tactics to accomplish their utopia for homosexuals includes the muddying of the waters of moral principles as understood by true Christian believers; in reality causing increased degradation.

The diligent student of God’s Word is well aware of the Bible’s teaching of the fall into sin at the time of man’s creation. As the result of this, no

descendant of Adam reflects the perfect physical, mental, and moral image originally possessed by our first parents. Many of our imperfect, degraded, human traits and habits stem from our ancestors, and some have been acquired by a sinful lifestyle and not the result of original creation.

It is important for any who may have become ensnared by the evil conduct and immoral behavior of our day, to recognize that there is a way out of this situation, and this way out, comes to us, first, by a recognition, that we are sinners and second, that Jesus died on the Cross at Calvary for all of the sinful human race, as the Apostle expresses it: “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; . . . for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Tim. 1: 15, 16). Paul also explains that Jesus “is able to save to the uttermost (no matter to what extent we have sinned—all is not lost), for those



“...And if he should find it... he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. ...not the will of the Father ...that one of these little ones should perish”
Matt. 18: 12-14

who come to God through him” (Heb. 7: 25). If we repent of our sin, change our lifestyle with Jesus’ help and then, third, consecrate our all to God and seek to do His will from then on, we can have God’s forgiveness and eventual salvation. This does not mean that our previous sinful life will be overcome by an immediate miracle, but it does mean that we can change our life for the better, with the help of our wonderful Savior who is ever able and willing to assist us in our desire to improve, in harmony with the Scriptural exhortations.

Dr. Howard Dean when campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, was quoted in the Washington Post, January 8, 2004, as saying that “from a religious point of view, if God had thought homosexuality a sin, He would not have created gay

people,” and “the overwhelming evidence is that there is a very significant, substantial genetic component to homosexuality.”

We take issue with the above statements of Dr. Dean; for God did not create the many imperfections that exist in the human race today. God created directly and initially two human beings perfect, and in His character image and likeness, but due to their fall into sin, they lost their perfection, and by human generation, this taint of sin has passed down to all subsequent generations even to the present time (Rom. 3: 10, 23). Now, after over 6,000 years of multiplied degradation with sin, the human race is afflicted with a multitude of mental and physical aberrations and debilities. Abnormal behaviors such as rape, murder, kleptomania, and homosexuality, etc., along with all other sinful acts, when repeated over and over through generations, do increase the probability for such traits to be transferred to the offspring at conception.

There is another matter to consider; most people today have enough common sense to recognize wayward behavior for what it is, and not to condone it, but on the contrary, oppose its detrimental influence to society. Laws have been formulated to seek to prevent and to punish those who murder, rape and steal. We don't tell the bank robber “that's O.K. you can't help it, it's a part of your character; just continue right on robbing banks.” Nor does society in general accept the evil of the rapist or the murderer, but regarding the immorality of the homosexual, many of our leaders in religion and government close their eyes to its obvious harmful effects. This is probably because, many in authority whether religious, governmental, judicial, or law enforcement are admittedly participants in these abnormal behaviors themselves. Such conduct is continually being foisted on us by the radio, television and the movies. In all this, our children are the recipients of the greatest harm, for it is set forth to them as acceptable and normal behavior.

Homosexual behaviors are fraught with serious mental and physical consequences – all of which are well documented in scientific literature. One doesn't have to consider homosexuality to be sinful to understand that such behavior places its participants at risk for mental and physical illnesses. The rapid rise of teenage attempted suicides and the HIV/AIDs epidemic are evidences of that.

Regardless of the position attained to in his political agenda, Dr. Howard Dean has ignored the true results of scientific research. Researcher Dean Hamer, for example, states: – “We know that genes

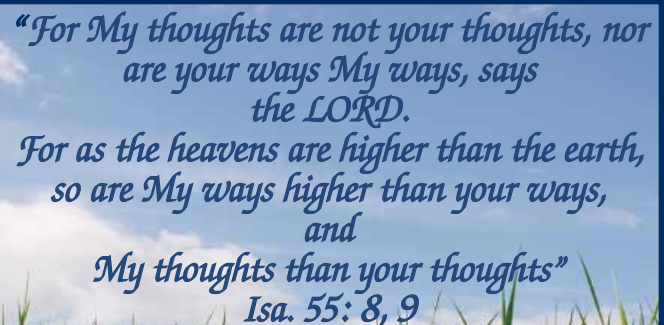
were only part of the answer. We assumed that the environment, also, played a role in sexual orientation, as it does in most, if not all, behaviors” (Hamer and Copleland, p. 82, 1994). “Homosexuality is not purely genetic; environmental factors play a role. There is not a single master gene that makes people gay” (Mitchell, 1995). “Simon LeVay, in his study of the brains of homosexual and heterosexual men, offered the following criticism of his own research: “It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain.”

*The wrath of God is love's parental rod,
The disobedient to chastise, subdue,
And bend submissive to the will of God,
That love may reign when all things are made new*

*The wrath of God shall never strike in vain,
Nor cease to strike till sin shall be no more:
Till God His gracious purpose shall attain,
And Earth to righteousness and peace restore.*

LOVE'S HIGHEST LEVEL

To be loved and accepted on earth is a basic human desire. But no human can love us perfectly – like God does. He desires a relationship with us, and, after we come to Him, He promises “I will never leave you, nor forsake you” (Heb. 13: 5). He says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with loving kindness” (Jer. 31: 3). “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5: 8). Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love; if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I



*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor
are your ways My ways, says
the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways,
and
My thoughts than your thoughts”
Isa. 55: 8, 9*

have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15: 9, 10).

The story is told of a gentleman of means who had an opening for a driver as chauffeur for himself and his family. In his interview with several candidates for the position, he called to mind a certain stretch of road, known to them all, which was very narrow and, at one point, very dangerously close to a precipitous drop-off on one side. He asked of each applicant how close to the edge could he safely drive.

One said he could safely drive the car within two feet of the edge. Another said that his expertise would permit him to drive twelve inches from the edge. Now the one who finally got the job as chauffeur for the owner and his family, answered the question of how close to sudden destruction could he drive, said, "I don't know how close to the edge I can drive, but I would stay as far away as possible!"

**HERE FOLLOWS GOD'S
ADMONITIONS:**

"Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, and do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on" (Prov. 4: 14, 15).

"Do not conform yourselves to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

The moral of this story is that as we keep ourselves separate from the unrighteous influences of this "present evil world," we will avoid its ever present corruption.

The life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of despair. These make up a large part of the varied weaving of experience; and the intertwining of character, which flows from the active loom of life; these will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which each of us weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the solemn shades predominate. To such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groans together and travails in pain till the present time," says the Apostle. The Little Flock were no exception to this universal rule; as Paul further states,

"but ourselves also, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body"—the Body of Christ.—Romans 8: 22, 23. These trials and tests were not only applicable to the heavenly classes—the Little Flock and the Great Multitude while they were still on the earth (Rev. 1: 1-17), but like experiences fall to the lot of God's people who are, at present, in the process of development for our future installation in the earthly Kingdom during the Millennial Age. But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important application to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial, bear to us a blessing or a curse.

Those experiences to which we are accustomed and which we regard as prosperous, often have in them subtle dangers. For, if wealth increases; or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us; how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of "this present evil world" (Gal. 1: 4). But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. We must fight the tendencies of our old fallen nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of our salvation. Let us take courage from our great Leader and not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must we sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. Our courage must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden us or make us bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may we allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence provided to prove our faithfulness as a steward.

**DEPTHS OF SORROW LEAD TO
HEIGHTS OF JOY**

Sorrow and grief may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and

*"Out of the
depths have I
cried to you,
O LORD!"
Psalm 130: 1*

Strength in every experience which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice; let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications" (Psa. 130: 1, 2). Feeling our own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities [imputing them to us], O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared [reverenced]."— Vs. 3, 4

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merit of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is the covering of our imperfections, so that we may come to God through Christ with humble boldness, courage—for forgiveness and in renewed hope for His favor of installation to the Kingdom.

If therefore, God through the intercession of Christ overlooks for the time being the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome, by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifies? Who is he that condemns? Shall Christ that died?"

(Romans 8: 31, 33, 34). The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are cultivated, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are rationalized, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will do that for us for our benefit (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32).

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to wait patiently for the Lord to work out the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How necessary is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul

waits, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those that watch for the morning: I say, more than those who watch for the morning" (Psalm 130: 5, 6). In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "He knows, and loves, and cares," and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be too severe.

The dear Master is standing by our testing experience, and will never permit it to grow so intense that the precious alloy of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering (1 Cor. 10: 13).

"Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37: 5-7). We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied; while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs; and we would not desire conditions in which the pre-

"When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?"

cious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice” (1 Peter 4: 12, 13). He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! “When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble” (Job 34: 29)?

The true Christian has in every sorrow and grief, a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be molded and fashioned for eventual installation into His Millennial Kingdom, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battlefield of life; it is the stimulating, refreshing draft for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless Adversary. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing, as soldiers of the Cross, the danger, burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do well are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong; but it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and inability, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving

to do His will; for, “He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.” “Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the faithful servant of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

“I HAVE SEEN THE PATIENCE OF JOB”

The consecrated people of God of every Age, have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn your statutes,” and again, “Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I keep your Word” (Psalm 119: 67, 71). God’s faithful servant, Job, suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out victorious when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by the experiences received while undergoing trial. Few, if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children whom he loved, then



JOB 2: 9

of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with a painful disease—boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sor-



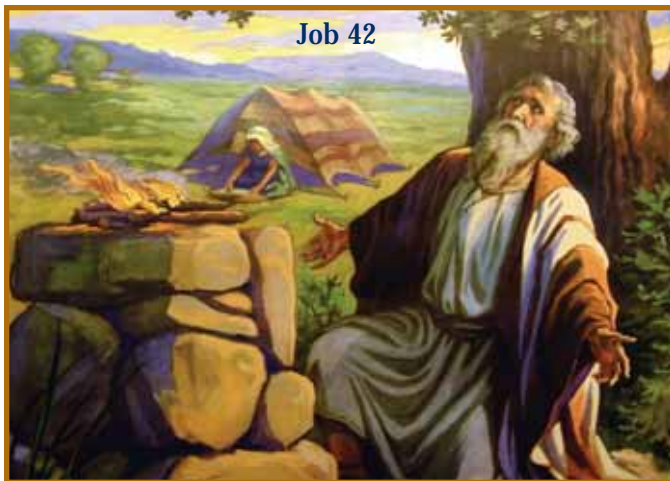
JOB 8: 11: 15:

rows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely, poor Job was severely afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD” (Job 1: 21). “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15). Job was indeed severely tried, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through it all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. The Almighty reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might work for their benefit eventually. In the end Job was blessed more abundantly than before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final

restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

*“Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may.”*



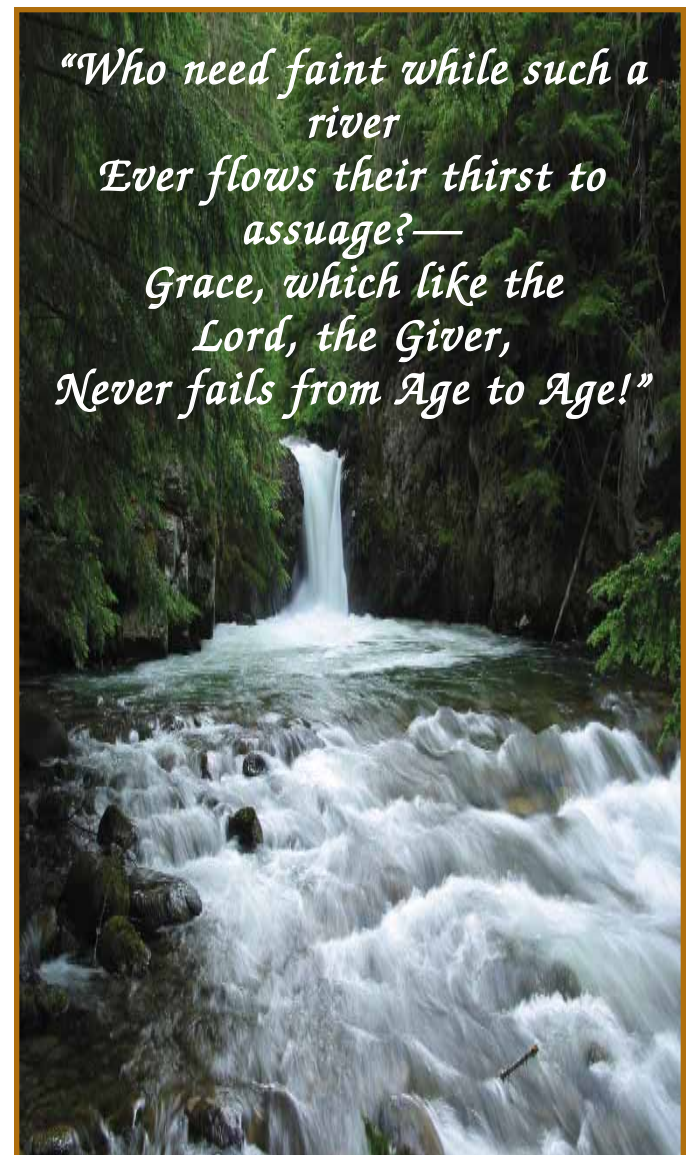
IN GOD'S FAMILY

It is when continued trust in the Lord is attained from His much providential overruling in our lives, that has brought us into a precious personal acquaintance and intimacy, that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unailing. We who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and truth and blessing. Therefore, to us He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is our delight. His friendship and love are the very impulse of life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural inclination to commit its way to Him. As fully dedicated persons to God, we can truly sing with the poet:

*“So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight.”*

Surely, these are the desires of our heart, and as a result, God's favor will abide with us. The fervent prayers of the righteous will avail much in the Lord's good time, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, it shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the light of noonday. Even while we remain here in preparation for our place in the Kingdom, in an unfriendly world, we shall be fed and nourished, in the truth and its spirit. We rejoice and are glad for the tutelage the Lord provides. Precious indeed are the promises of God that have been set down in His Word; this is to the praise of His abounding grace, His faithful people of the past and of the present, all bear ample testimony to their fulfillment.

* * *



*“Who need faint while such a
river
Ever flows their thirst to
assuage?—
Grace, which like the
Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!”*



The Mail Box

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your answers to my last questions. I hope you do not think me too much trouble, but I have two more questions. Nobody else responds to my inquiries but you.

I am still having trouble with the “Mustard Seed” parable. In Luke 13: 19 it says that the mustard seed grows to be a “large tree (Matt. 13: 31,32.) I looked up the Greek word for “tree” and it is the same as tree in English, seems from its usage elsewhere in Scriptures. From my understanding, the mustard seed becomes a bush not a tree, let alone a “large tree”. How can this be explained?

Also, in Matt. 11:11, Jesus said that John the Baptist is the greatest born of women—but Jesus is surely greater than John the Baptist.

K. J. M. Pennsylvania

Dear Friend,

We are happy to consider your questions and thank you for your kind words. As to your inquiry about the mustard seed of Luke 13: 19, the difficulty may be that we here in the U S are programmed to view the plant as it grows locally while one of the varieties native to Palestine is considerably larger. The Westminster Bible Dictionary states: “The common mustard of Palestine is *Sinapis nigra* or black

mustard. It grows wild, attaining the height of a horse and rider, as travelers have noticed. (Westminster Dictionary of the Bible; Nelson’s dictionary states, “15 ft.”) It is a tree when compared to normal sized herbs so its size may be considered as relative.

Matthew 11: 11 “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater [prophet vs. 9] than John the Baptist: Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This verse seems to be making a comparison between the prophets within Old Testament times. John was considered the greatest of the Old Testament prophets because he had the greatest message to proclaim and that message was the Savior has now come and is now in our midst (vs. 9, 10). You are correct to say that Jesus is greater than John and that is what the Apostle is saying. John is the greatest of the Old Testament prophets but the least one of the Church class (“the kingdom of heaven”) is superior to him. This is true because the Ancient Worthies (Heb. 11: 1-40), will have an earthly inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom during the times of Restitution. Their reward is to be perfection of human nature, not the Divine spirit nature in heaven.

Yours in the declaration of God’s Word,
The Editor

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You will find page reference numbers at the bottom of each page. These are provided in order to afford easy reference to either of the two current publishers of the Photo-Drama book (LHMM and the Dawn Bible Students Association).

The Photo-Drama Program was prepared by Pastor Russell as an outreach vehicle to contact and influence the public. We hope that the Drama book and accompanying Study Guide may be used as a vehicle for all desiring to learn the Divine Plan. We offer the study guide for \$5.75.

The Editor

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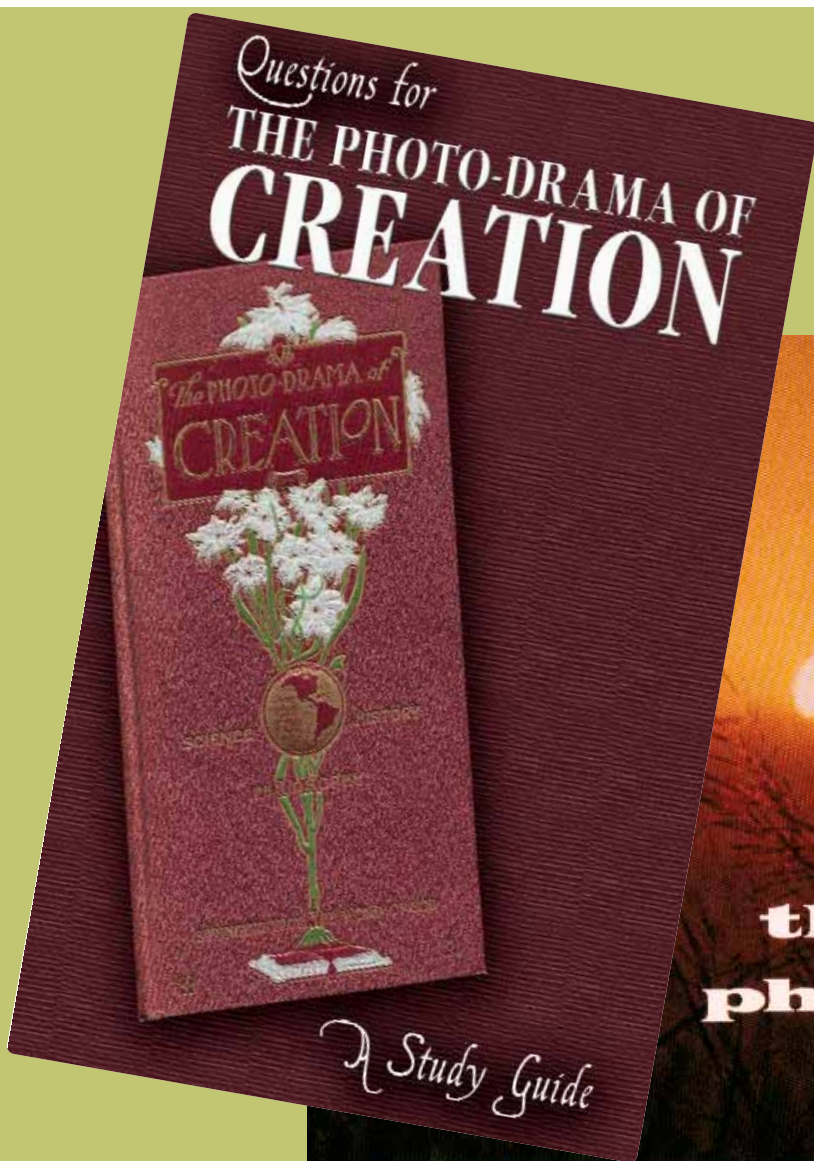
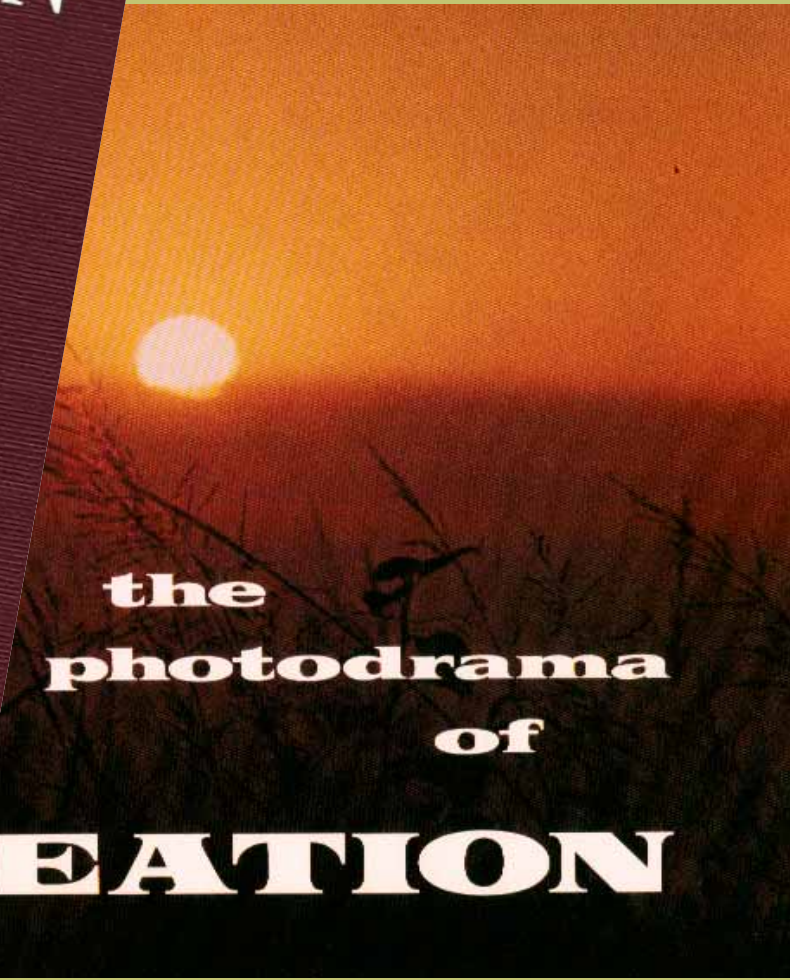


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