

The Bible Standard

"Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;..."

Psalms 43:3

"LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE"

Isaiah 62:10

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HABIT

Habit is something, perhaps, that we have not noticed as being so vitally important in connection with our walk of faith and our development for the Lord's service day by day and, in the fullest sense of the word, for eternity.

Romans 12: 1, 2; is to the point "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The next verse is vitally important to our subject, "And be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God."

REPENT

How often it has been emphasized that the first step in coming back to God from our fallen, strayed way, is to repent for sin. Therefore, our Lord told His disciples when they went forth that they were to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" The very first indication of their turning back to God was repentance. "...the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent..." (Mark 1: 15). Then again, the Apostle in answering the question of the young ruler, "What shall I do to be saved?" He was to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and "you will be saved." Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ brings us into the condition of justification by faith and that is the second step. Then the third step is consecration, as we have it in Romans 12, verse 1, "I beseech you therefore" *justified brethren!* You are already justified brethren and you are asked to present yourselves in consecration to God. You have already repented for sin and accepted Jesus as your Savior, bringing you justification by faith and now you are encouraged by Paul to take the third step and devote your lives to God and by so doing become full-fledged Christians. You have been bought with a price, therefore render unto God

that which is rightfully His. He has bought you with the precious blood of His own Son.

CONVERSION, WHAT IS IT?

You say then, "That is all that's necessary. I have repented. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have consecrated my life to God, and that is it." Yes that is it *comma*, but not *period*. Something else is necessary; *conversion*, and that is what our second verse here treats of. Conversion, what is it? We must be converted. "Oh," you say, "I'm already converted when I accept Jesus as my savior and when I consecrate my life; surely, then, I'm converted." No! You have started your conversion. However, the conversion is a gradual process and it sometimes takes years for us to be converted.

We remember the Lord said to Peter, after he had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and confessed Him, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And, "Lord we have given up everything. What shall we receive?" The Lord said, "You will have a hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come, life eternal." Yes, they had given up everything to follow the Master. They were consecrated. They not only repented and believed, but they also consecrated their lives to God. Was that enough? No. Jesus told Peter in Luke 22: 32, "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you are converted . . ." "Oh, Lord, I'm already converted! I've consecrated my life to you!" No! You are not converted yet. It is a gradual process that may take years. Therefore, when you are converted, strengthen the brethren, that they also might be converted. In addition, what does it mean to be converted? The word *convertio* means to turn around. From the word *convertio* we get the word *reverse* and so forth. *Convertio*, to turn around or to turn back again, to turn with the Lord, from one course to another. Oh, yes. It means a great change, and that change does not come at the moment of your initial consecration. We

still have some converting to be done in us. It is a great change that is taking place and God is working in us. He has picked us up and we are in His workshop, and He is working in us a transformation.

The drunkard that quits his liquor may say, "I'm a changed man!" The person who quits the tobacco habit and gets rid of that habit, may say, "I don't smoke anymore. I don't use tobacco anymore. I'm a changed man!" Is that the kind of change that the Lord here is speaking of? Is it a change of giving up the former things, giving up the bad habits, getting good habits? Is that the change that the Lord is speaking of? No, though that is involved. We have to wrestle against the bad habits and put on the good habits. Yes, that is involved, but that is not the entire matter at all.

Is it just a change of mind? Is that conversion or is it a change in one's religion; or is it a change of a person's denominational affiliation? Oh, it's far more than that. It is a change of the Christian's life and it begins in the mind. That is just the beginning. Therefore, we have to begin to think straight before we can walk straight. "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed" [changed] (Rom. 12: 2). How? "By the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." We have to set and prove it first in the mind before we can accomplish it in our life.

RENEWING OF THE MIND

There is a renewing of mind that is necessary in our transformation; in our conversion. Moreover, we have a certain mind that we have to put off to get rid of. In addition, there is a certain mind that we have got to put on, to acquire, to develop. We call it the new mind. The Apostle Paul contrasts these two minds in Romans the eighth chapter. It is all the way through here in Paul's writing, notice verse five; "For they which are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Now, notice also verse six, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8: 5, 6).

What is this carnal mind, and what is this spiritual mind? The Apostle Paul gives a description of it in Galatians, the fifth chapter, that in the nineteenth to the twenty-first verses he speaks of the fleshly mind, the things of the flesh that must be put off and then he speaks of the things of the Spirit that must be put on. We are to put off, of course, envying, hatred, drunkenness, reveling in the things of this world and such like. If we are going to mind

the things of the Spirit, here they are, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22-25). Let us examine ourselves to see if we *are* in the faith. If we are walking after the flesh we are not Christian. It might shock some of us to find out that we have been thinking for years that we are Christians when we are not Christians, because we are still minding the things of the flesh. We are still in love with the things of the world, and he that loves the world is an enemy of God.

We see, then, that this is a very serious matter. Going back to Romans the eighth chapter again, we read, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." If we think that the fleshly mind is going to become friendly to God, we are mistaken. Moreover, if we live in that fleshly mind we are not friends of God. So, then, they that are in the flesh CANNOT please God. If we are going to walk to please God, we are NOT going to live according to the flesh, after the lusts of the flesh. They that are in the flesh CANNOT please God. "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if, so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Wake up, my dear brethren! If we do not have the spirit of Christ, that sacrificial spirit, that is glad to lay down life even unto death in serving God and finding our chief delight in doing His will; if we do not have that Spirit of Christ, we are not a Christian! We are none of His!

We, then, must undergo a renewing, a transforming, a conversion, a changing, first, of the mind. If we do not have it in the mind, we will never have it in our conduct. The mind rules the body.

WHAT IS THE MIND?

Now, let us analyze it. Some will say, "The mind is the new will." No! The mind is not the new will. The new will is that which controls the mind. Some will say, "The mind . . . the new mind is the brain!" No, the mind is not the brain. The brain is that physical organ through which the mind operates. Then what is the mind if it is not the will, if it is not the brain, what is the mind? The mind is the sum of those impressions, which have been made on the brain under the direction of the will by the influences with which we have come into contact before and since our birth. You say, "Well, that's quite a definition." I think that covers it very

well; even before birth. The little child is born with a mind that thinks somewhat along the line of the parent. Therefore, it is even before birth that the mind is somewhat determined. God knows the prenatal influence that helped form our minds before we were born. He knows the surroundings under which we were raised; whether we had a family altar in the home and were minded toward God, or whether we were minded toward the things of the world and the fallen conditions of sin. Only the Lord knows how to allow for our background, so we cannot judge one another; but let us go over this definition again. The mind, what is it? It is the sum of those impressions that are retained by memory, the sum of those impressions which have been made upon the brain (the physical organ) under the influence of the will (under the direction of the will) by the influences with which we have come into contact both before and since our birth. In addition, it is directed largely by the inherent faculties, and these inborn faculties determine the leaning or drift of our thoughts and conduct under given circumstances. So much for the mind as a general definition.

WHAT IS THE NEW MIND?

Here we come to something beautiful. That new mind which we are all endeavoring to develop in harmony with the Lord's good will for us, for we are to be transformed, you see, by the renewing of the mind. When we consecrate, we present ourselves to God; that includes our brain and now we are going to begin the transforming of our characters by the renewing of this mind, which is the total of the impressions received upon the brain. This new mind is just like a baby's mind with not many impressions; we might illustrate as a blank canvas. The new will, is the will, that wills to do God's will and is likened to the artist. The artist carefully chooses certain pigments, certain colors. He blends them together, and he paints a beautiful image with the blended pigments as he applies them to draw out the picture. He blends these colors. The new mind operates like that. Our new will, which is the will to do God's will, is the artist. The artist, as the new will is going to get busy with that new mind. The new mind, maybe, does not have many impressions yet. When we first consecrate to God, we still have all those habits of the old mind to get rid of and we begin to blot out many of those lines of thought that we used to have when we loved the world. Now we begin to blend certain colors of God's Holy Spirit, the graces: meekness, gentleness, love, longsuffering, forbearance. What beautiful things, what beautiful pigments, what beautiful colors. However, they must

be blended. If we have faith and we do not have it properly balanced, we may run into credulity; believe anything and everything that comes along, but that would not be wise, would it? We have to blend those character graces to bring out the beautiful picture in harmony with God's wonderful plan of salvation. Therefore, our mind is gradually renewed by the artist, which is the new will, applying the beautiful graces of God's Holy Spirit to our characters to make them beautiful and in the image of God.

OLD HABITS

The "old habits" are there and it is very hard for us to get rid of them. Because, our old mind has, through prenatal influence and heredity, and through surrounding circumstances in which we were raised, given us a background that we are not proud of. Therefore, we have to try to lay aside those old things and to develop the spiritual things. It is very hard for us to try to develop this new mind; that is why the new will is needed. It takes a good, strong, new will to develop this new mind. We cannot serve two masters at the same time, one would conflict with one other. We see that this converting, this transforming work is going to be a hard, stiff battle. It is not easy, and we who have tried it, know that it is not easy. This is what it means for us to be fighting the good fight of faith.

MEMORY

I want to bring in the thought of memory briefly in this connection, because it is also very important. If we have not memory, we would never get to the point of habits, for memory is that mental function that makes it possible for our past experiences to be retained and recalled to consciousness. Speaking of memory as a noun, it would contain the subjects of recollection and reminiscence. A person who is proficient in these two things, we would say that he has a good memory. Unless the mind possesses this power of treasuring up and recalling its past experiences, no knowledge of any kind could be acquired. If every sensation, thought or emotion would pass entirely from the mind the moment that it was acquired and ceased to be present, then it would be as if it had not been, and it could not be recognized, named or recalled for future use. Such a person would be without purpose, without aim, without a plan regarding the future, for to make use of this information implies knowledge and therefore requires storage—memory.

Our mind that we have acquired up to this time is no good at all if we do not have any memory. If we cannot remember anything that we have heard or read up to this point, what good has our experience,

study and research done for us? Oh, see how dependent we are upon memory! Memory comprises not only the power to recall, but also the capacity and ability to receive impressions and of storing them away for future use. Hence, memory is not only the recalling, but also the receiving of impressions and if we cannot receive impressions in the form of information, we will never develop any memory.

Memory then is stored in the subconscious mind and is subject to recall, and without it, we can never develop anything along the line of a transformation of character by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12: 2). We see then how essential memory is to this renovation work and its accomplishment. Therefore, if we want a memory that is distinct and clear we must receive impressions on the brain that are under the direction of the new heart, mind and will and made impressionable and therefore clear.

INTEREST

Therefore, we are provided pressure in the form of interest. If we are not interested in Bible Truth, we can listen to a dozen sermons and we get no records in the mind, but if we have an interest in the subject, that interest brings the necessary pressure to give us an indelible impress on the mind. The more interest we have, the clearer and more distinct the impression will be. However, not only is interest important, but also we must have attention. We can have an interest in the subject and pay no attention. We can have an interest in the Plan of Salvation and pay no attention to the message. Therefore, we see that interest must be backed up by attention. Now attention may be either voluntary or involuntary. If the attention is involuntary, it is filled with interest and curiosity. We are curious to learn God's Plan. We want to know more about it. We have an interest in it and an attention to it and get an indelible record that is impressed upon our mind. It is recalled, of course, by memory. Voluntary attention, rather, is the time when the will acts and compels. The will says, "You may not have any interest in this subject, the history of the Gospel Age Church, but I want you to learn this also, for the Lord gives it to you and it is for your good." If we are not particularly interested in the history of the Christian Church, what do we do? The new will says, "You must pay attention. You have to develop interest in the topic. You have to pay attention to the subject matter." This is a voluntary application of the attention.

We must realize that attention and interest will vary at times. Sometimes we will be more interested in a subject than we are at other times. If we have lost one

of our loved ones in death, and a bereaved letter comes to us with a message of comfort, we are intensely interested in every message that we receive and, of course, it gives records that are clear and impressionable that will not be easily forgotten. Then again, there are different people that have different degrees of interest in a subject. One may be very much interested in the Word and the other may have just a passing interest. Which one is going to get the clear, indelible record? The person who has keen interest, curiosity and gives firm attention. We see, then, that interest and attention are important. If there is something that we do not care about, that we do not care to listen to particularly and we are not much interested in it; therefore, we pay little attention to it and it fails to register. Interest is an important faculty also for us to develop.

CHANGED INTO GOD'S CHARACTER

We say then, "Now this is all very good; we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, but just how are we to go about doing it?" Let us notice just one text, 2 Cor. 3: 18, "But we all, with open face," (not clouded over by a lot of prejudices and errors that we should get rid of, and our own ways of thinking contrary to the Lord's), we are to have an open face, as an honest sincere Christian, in whom there is no guile. We must therefore live in harmony with the Word of God, ". . . we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [as in a mirror] the glory of the Lord." When we look at the Bible we see the glory of the Lord reflected from the pages of the Scriptures just like from a mirror. Now, what is happening to us as we study the Word of Truth, as we look upon it free from prejudice with an open face? We behold it as in a mirror, the wonderful glory of God in His Plan of Salvation, all of His plans and purposes, how they reflect His glory. What is happening to us as we are beholding with an open face? We are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and we ourselves are changing. Now here is our conversion. We are in process of being converted. We are being changed; changed into God's image—character. It is not enough to simply say, "I laid aside a bad habit. I'm a changed man!" No you are not! The change that the Lord speaks of is when we are being converted to a transforming of the character by the renewing of the mind. Therefore, we are changed into the same image; that glorious character of God reflected in the Scriptures, in the Word of Truth. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory; from one attainment to a higher echelon, from one of nearness to God even to a closer relationship to God, even as by the Spirit of the LORD. This is that new mind, that Spirit

of the LORD that is working in us that works this transformation. We cannot get it any other way. What a wonderful text that is!

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” Yes, we read of this in Prov. 23: 7. This mind we must now train to think and learn along different lines from what its previous habit has been. By doing this, we will be transformed by the renewing of this mind as we behold with an open face, the glory of God and our change being made gradually into His likeness from one attainment into a higher achievement. What a wonderful transformation is this! What a wonderful conversion! Moreover, we see that it starts in the mind, as the Apostle here indicates (Romans 12: 2). An expression that wisely expresses it this way: “If you sow a thought, you reap a motive. If you sow a motive, you reap a word. If you sow a word, you reap an act. If you reap an act, you sow a habit. If you sow a habit, you reap a character. If you sow a character, you reap a destiny.” I do not think any of us would dispute the truthfulness of that saying. Therefore, what kind of thoughts are we to sow? We are to sow God’s thoughts. We are to reflect in thought, as He would have us think. We are to bring every thought into captivity unto Christ.

Now we have just noticed that if we sow these thoughts and words and acts that we will reap a habit, and that the habit is essential. It is a link in the chain, in the accomplishing of our goal, our character and our destiny.

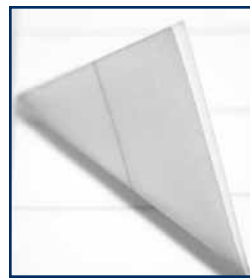
WHAT IS A HABIT?

A habit is that custom of the mind to think or to direct action along certain previously employed lines. If we previously have entered into a certain line of activity or of thought, then there is a tendency for us to continue along that line. Hence, habit is a power either for evil or for good. You say, “I have so many bad habits. I become discouraged at the very start of my course in consecration, as I go on, day after day, and see my failures, I get disheartened.” Well, those bad habits are difficult to dispose of. You know, you take the word *habit*, h-a-b-i-t, you knock off the “h” to try to get rid of that habit. You still have “a bit” left. In addition, you take away the “a”. A “bit” is still there. Furthermore, you say, “I will take off more. I will take off the ‘b’.” You still have “it.” Oh, yes! A habit is a hard thing to modify and change.

A SHEET OF PAPER

We will look to the Lord for His guidance and He gives it to us in His Word. He gives it to us in the instructions of the Sacred Scriptures. These habits are

likened to a sheet of paper. You take a plain sheet of paper and it is pliable to a certain extent, if it were not, you could not bend it. You crease that sheet of paper in a diagonal line across the page from top to bottom.



Then you open it up again. All right, now you try to fold it again in another direction and it will tend to fold the same way, unless you are very precise and determined to make a change. You say, “I’m going to fold it a different way this time.” You take the

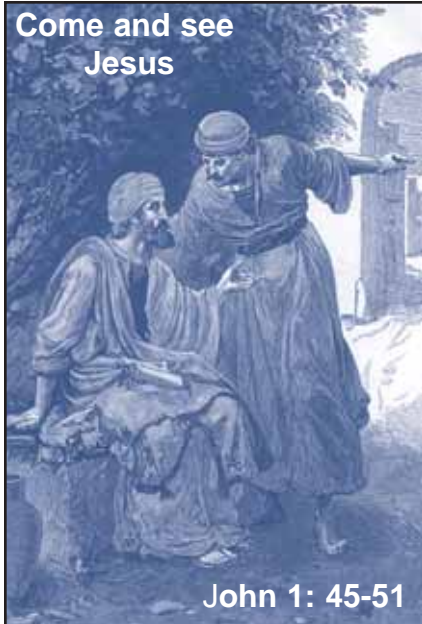
piece of paper that was previously folded along a certain line and you say, “Now, I’m going to fold it differently.” You find that it is harder to crease it anew than it was at first when you had a plain sheet of paper with no pleats, because the tendency is to go according to that old line. That is the way with our human minds and our previously formed habits. We are apt to follow along the same old sinful lines, but we must change those wrong lines of thought. We must redirect those improper lines of thought into right channels that are in a different direction. We should lay aside the wrong lines of thought and develop new lines of thinking. Hence, we have a certain tendency against anything new. The older you get, the harder it is to change. Have you ever heard, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks?” We get in a habit and it is hard to change the older we get. Why? Because we repeated it more and more until it has become nearly indelible. Moreover, if you take that sheet of paper, the more you repeat the crease in the same place, the more it becomes very difficult to begin to fold it in a different direction.

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

There is a natural tendency not to go into anything new, not to look for new understandings of God’s Word. There is what we call prejudice that says, “No. This is the way that I have always been raised up to believe. This is what I believe. I distrust any presentation that is new; I do not want any change.” That would be prejudice whether good or bad. You remember Nathaniel had prejudice when Philip said he had found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathaniel said, (paraphrasing) “Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I have already made up my mind. No good thing could come out of Nazareth! Could any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said, “Come and see!” Philip gave good advice. Nathaniel, you may be prejudiced against Samaria, you may be prejudiced against Nazareth, but do not allow that prejudice to become such a crease in the paper, that you cannot make a change for the right.

Come and see. Nathaniel overcame his prejudice and he came, and he saw (John 1: 45-51). Likewise, it is with us. Those old creases, if they are incorrect, erroneous, we need to cast them aside—get rid of them, those old lines of thought. The Lord expects us to change according to the instructions in His Word (2 Tim 2: 15). We have to change if we want His words of “Well done good and faithful servant, enter into my joy.” Sometimes prejudice may stand in the way and we must brush it aside in order to be faithful.

Come and see
Jesus



John 1: 45-51

BAD HABITS

Can the Christian's new heart and mind develop bad habits? Yes! The new heart, mind, and will, that inner man of the heart that you have submitted to the Father in your consecration is now in process of being worked on by God; that inner man of the heart that can develop bad habits. Moreover, it *will* automatically develop bad habits if you are not busy in developing good habits. The old mind will go back to the old creases and if you are not busy in developing good habits and making the mind think in avenues that are right, just and true, it will go back to the old way automatically. After awhile your inner man of the heart will be working along the same lines of the old mind that you are supposed to lay aside. Therefore, it is so easy to develop these wrong habits. We are as prone to sin as the sparks that fly upward, as we read in the Proverbs. In addition, we are apt to think that *our* way is right. You see, we can get a wrong habit and think it is right and be puffed up in our own opinion to the point where we think we are right and the others are wrong. Humility of mind will help us along this line.

Habit develops a fondness for the deed performed. If you begin to form good deeds, you will begin to love those deeds. Your habits will develop a fondness for those deeds that you are practicing. For instance, if you never attend the Bible study meeting and then you say, “Here! I must not allow this. I am going to go to the service.” You attend the Bible studies—after awhile you say, “You know, I am beginning

to like it! I thought at first that I would not enjoy the meeting.” For instance, some of the brethren do not like a testimony meeting. They say, “It is alright to go to a study, a Berean study, but I don't like to stand up and talk about my experiences and praise the Lord in a testimony meeting. I just do not like testimony meetings.” What will you do? The new will, will come to your rescue and say, “Here! I am going to develop the habit of doing what the Lord tells me to do, not to forsake the assembling of myself together with others of like precious faith; especially as that day draws nigh. Maybe I need the testimony meetings more than what I have realized; so I am going to go.” The first time you do it is the first crease in the paper. That is the hardest; to stand up the first time and give a testimony, that is the hardest. If you do not believe it, try it; and then the second one, it is a little easier; the third one, still a little easier.

GOOD HABITS

When you develop correct habits, the good habits make the deeds that are right easier for you to perform. Habit is your best friend, if you direct it along true lines. On the other hand, it becomes your worst enemy if it is not. Habit begets fondness for the good things if you develop good habits and habit controls the speech, the carriage, the dress, the manner; habit controls you more than what you realize. Watch out for your bad habits, not only the spiritual ones along the disgraces of the Holy Spirit, but the natural habits. Sometimes you can improve yourself a great deal in the Lord's service if you are a deacon or an elder in the congregation and you learn how to impart instruction or you learn how to speak in public.

Some will say, “But I've got some habits that I've developed to the point that I don't think I can ever break them.” Do not be disheartened. It is true that bad habits, if you keep on cultivating the bad habits, and do not correct them, they will become indelibly a part of your finished character by and by. The Lord could never say, “Well done good and faithful servant” if you do not fight these bad habits. In addition, the Lord shows us this, for instance, in Jer. 13: 23. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil.” Accustomed! Habit! Habit is the custom. You who have the habits of doing evil and keep on doing evil and following those evil habits, you will not be able to change if you finally become indelibly fixed in those wrong things. Then you cannot change. The Ethiopian, can he change the color of his skin? Can the leopard change his spots? No! They are indelibly fixed.

Therefore, the Lord says, "I will scatter them like stubble that passes away by the wind of the wilderness." Is that the fate that we want? No! That would mean eventually second death. God cannot save wicked sinners that persist in their wickedness until their conduct is unchangeable. You see, a bad habit is a very, very dangerous thing. In addition, the more it develops, the more dangerous it becomes.

That is just the way it is with a bad habit. Take it in time and you can get rid of it easily. If it has developed into your character to quite an extensive degree, you may have to struggle, and struggle, and struggle in the Lord's strength, but you can get rid of it. On the other hand, if it becomes indelibly fixed so that you cannot erase it or wipe it out, then you are fit for destruction. See how vital habit is!

DEVELOPING NEW HABITS

We will have a struggle. Paul said, "There are within me two members warring, one against the other; so I cannot do the things that I would"; this hindrance he had to fight against in order to accomplish the good which is desired. In addition, in developing habits, you are going to find it at first very awkward. There is a likeness about this work, that is similar to a child learning to walk. In fact,

the Lord put a little child in the midst of his disciples as we read in Matt. 18: 2, 3 and he said: "Except you be converted, and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of heaven." Hence, the new mind, that canvas on which we plan to paint the beautiful character that God gives us; using the graces of the



Matthew 18: 2, 3

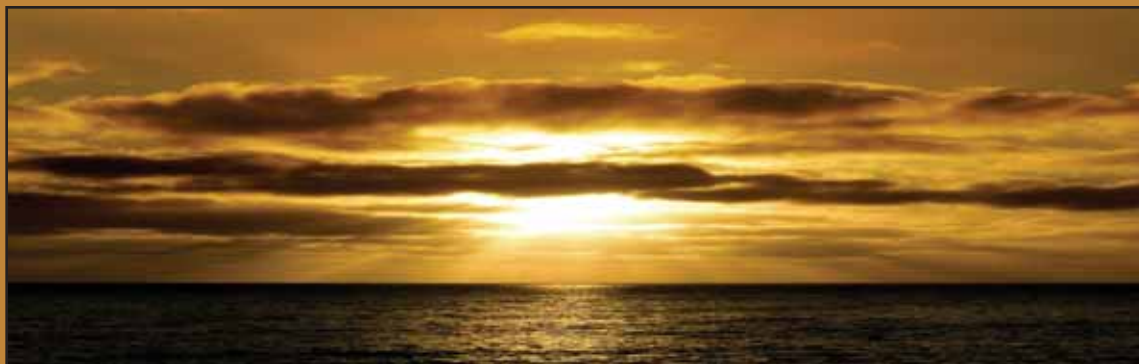
Holy Spirit with which to build; is like the child's mind and we have to work very carefully, and at first it will be rather awkward. For instance, the little child is about to learn how to walk. The child, after taking a few steps, is tired out and mother says, "Well, that is enough, for today." Later they have another lesson, the next day. The little child tries again. All right, how do you walk? You say, "I don't walk like that anymore." Why not? It is because you have developed the habit that takes care of walking. You walk right along and you can talk about other

things and never think about walking at all. Therefore, habit is a wonderful tool, a wonderful friend, to release us from the intense attention that is needed by the mind if we have not acquired the habit, but by having the habit of good walking, we can now use our mental forces in other things. They are set free for more important things. We can see how valuable a good habit is. We automatically do the good things that we learned to develop which at first were very awkward. Finally, it becomes automatic. It becomes a habit. It becomes subconscious and we walk without ever thinking of it. Thank God for the habit; that we have the habit of walking and that it becomes subconscious and that it releases from deep concentration, the habit releases our vital mental forces for greater things. Therefore, efficiency depends on habit. Let us get that straight. Our efficiency in the Lord's service, our efficiency in our development in Christ-likeness depends directly upon habit. What habits have we? These habits automatically free the will for employment elsewhere, and we can do far more because of having developed good habits. What a wonderful blessing good habits can be.

Now, in forming these new habits, we must be activated as we read in the verse 2 Cor. 3: 18 "by the Spirit of the Lord." We are to be renewed in our mind, but it must be under the Spirit of the Lord. That new will must use God's Holy Spirit in connection with our transformation, and if we do not have the new will activated by God's Holy Spirit, we will never accomplish the needed renovation.

We ask that the God of all grace will bless us as we endeavor to develop good habits, that will assist us in our Christian walk toward the Kingdom.

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In what way will the Lord take His great power and reign?

continued from last issue...

PREPARATIONS FOR CHRIST'S REIGN

The Scriptures indicate to us very clearly how this will be. We see that there is a time for the Parousia and Presence of the Lord. That time began in 1874 according to Bible chronology. Since that date, we have been living in the Parousia of the Son of Man. Is there anything to corroborate this? Yes. We look for how the Lord dealt with His people, the Church, while they were still on earth and in the flesh. We should expect that at the time of our Lord's Coming His people would have heard His "knock"—the knock of the prophecies, and whoever would open his heart and receive the things in a consecrated attitude of mind the Lord would gird Himself as a Servant and would come forth and serve him—with Spiritual Truth.—Revelation 3: 20.

All of the special blessings that we, as Bible Students, have recognized during this Harvest time have been the result of the Lord's Presence. He has been our Servant and has been bringing forth things new and old out of His storehouse (Matt. 13: 52 NIV). These old revelations have been coming forth in a new way—not because of human ability or skill, but because it is the Lord's due time for them to become clear. Explanations have come forth for the doctrine of Redemption, the Ransom, the meaning of the term Body of Christ, and the explanation of how the death of Christ is justification for our sins. What does the imputation of His merit for the Church indicate, and the giving of the merit to the world, what does the sanctification of the Church really mean, what do the Scriptures explain regarding the begetting of the Holy Spirit? Who were the begotten ones and how did they become New Creatures in Christ, what does this term, a New Creature, signify, how did the New Creature differ from the old creature? How has the First Resurrection brought this New

Creation glorious privileges and Divine blessing—glory, honor and immortality?—SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. II., page 103; Vol. V., page 421; Vol. VI., pages 59-84.

Our Lord's invisible Presence, has brought us light along every feature of the Divine Plan, not only respecting those things that were of old—justification, sanctification and redemption—but also respecting the philosophy of God's dealings with His Church—how our Lord became flesh and dwelt among us, (John 1: 1, 14). How He was holy, harmless and undefiled, and yet was born of an earthly mother (Heb. 7: 26). All these things which were once confusing to us, but which are now brought to light, are evidences that the Lord is here serving His people (Luke 12: 37). We know that we have received these things. We do not believe that we have received them from any human tongue or pen, but from the Lord, who is giving us "meat in due season" (Matt. 24: 45, 47). The result of receiving this spiritual food is that many people are sanctified—have experienced a transformation of mind that leads them to rejoice in laying down their lives in consecration to God and in walking close to Jesus (Rom. 12: 1).

A gentleman recently called on us, and made the remark that after studying the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION he got his first glimpse of God's character and learned to love God. Although he is a very talented man, he is doing what he finds to serve the Lord—helping to fold the volunteer literature. The first intimation we had of his interest was his giving of a donation for the work. After understanding the PHOTO-DRAMA, he had gotten so much good from it that he wished to help it along.

If we ask Christian people whether they have given up everything they have to the Lord, the majority of them will say, "No, I want to live a good Christian

life; but I never made a full consecration to the Lord.” All these blessings enumerated are the result of the very precious Truth that has come to us, and to others. These have been very greatly blessed and helped, even though they have not been completely dedicated to the Lord. This is good evidence that something unusual has occurred within the period of the Harvest time, for among the Lord’s people there are not many rich, not many learned (1 Corinthians 1: 26-29).

THE TIME OF HARVEST

Our Lord indicated that at His Second Coming all His servants who would be in the right condition of heart would hear His knock; and that if they would open to Him, He would come in and dine with them (Rev. 3: 20). What does this statement signify? It means that His knock showed that the time for the great Representative of God, our glorified Lord had come; and that all who were ready would hear the knock, the prophetic knock, calling attention to the Scriptural testimony that, henceforth, we would recognize Messiah’s Presence.

Was everything accomplished within twenty-four hours? Surely not, did everybody awake at the same minute? Have we not been getting awake all through this time? In addition, some of us have not been awake to the message of Truth very long. We may not have heard the knock when first our Master returned; but just as soon as we did hear and opened our minds and hearts, we received the blessing; for we were in the proper attitude to receive it. This is true in the United States, in Canada, in Great Britain, in Africa, Australia; true everywhere.

What has occurred during this time? We have had a Harvest period, and the work of the Harvest has been going on silently, gradually. The Lord has been judging amongst His people, just as He said He would. He said that He would call His own servants first and reckon with them. Of course, none of this was from anything that we saw with our eyes, but it came from an unfolding of God’s Word.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

Through the testimony of God’s Word we understand that the Resurrection of the Church began in 1878 in fulfillment of 1 Thes. 4: 16. Not that anything was seen by the natural sight of the eyes, but rather through the eyes of understanding, thereby recognizing that the time had come for that great transaction, the beginning of the First Resurrection, as far as the sleeping saints were concerned. In addition, we understand that there commenced the time mentioned by the writer of Revelation, when he declared, “Blessed

are the dead who die in the Lord from now on,” marking a particular time, before which it would not be a blessing to die, but after which it would be a blessing. “From now on: Yes, says the Spirit that they may rest from their labors; and their works follow them.” (Rev. 14: 13).

That particular time came, we believe, in 1878; then, not only were the Apostles awakened from the tomb, but all the faithful in Christ Jesus, all the sleeping members of the Body of Christ (1 Thes. 4: 16). Many do not recognize that there are two parts to the first resurrection of the Church. That was the beginning of the Resurrection of the Body of Christ—the Lord judging among His people first, before the judgment of the world. He foretold that when He would come, He would call His own servants and reckon with them. This was not for the world but the giving of the special reward to those of His Church who had gone before, giving them part in the First Resurrection. Then afterward dealing with the remaining, last ones, “who are alive and remain,” so that each one who were of the Little Flock, may at death be “changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” during the sounding of the last trumpet—the Seventh (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52).

We are living now under the sounding of this great Trump of God; not that we are hearing its sound with our natural ears, but that we are hearing with symbolic ears of our understanding that God’s time has come, and that the great institution which He is arranging for the future is now being inaugurated.

The next prophetic period is the Time of Trouble. While outwardly proclaiming at the Geneva Peace Conferences from 1872-2007, that all the nations would band themselves together and advocate the peaceful settlement of difficulties, and while yet crying “Peace! Peace!” Nevertheless, notwithstanding all this, the nations of the world have progressed in the building of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

We will not go into details further; we merely wish to impress the thought that these fulfillments of prophecy did not come suddenly, but gradually—that they had a particular time for beginning, and were sure of accomplishment. In view of these lessons from the past, what should we think about the future? We should not conclude that everything would be transformed inside of one hour, or one day, but gradually taking years to fulfill. *To be continued:*

* * *

THE LITTLE FOXES

“Catch us the foxes,...that ruin the vineyards” (Song of Solomon 2: 15).

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS is indicated as being essential many times in God’s Word. The act on which hung the most stupendous issues for mankind was seemingly very small—that of eating a little fruit in the Garden of Eden. How small the act; but how tremendous the consequences! It was not the outward act, however, but the underlying principle—*disobedience to the Almighty*—*sin* that brought about the fall of man, plunging the whole world into chaos and death.

This same principle lies back of many small transgressions today. In Bible symbols, foxes are used to represent a person’s faults of belief and practice. Both are included in the meaning of the foxes of our text, though it refers, especially, to faults of behavior or conduct. These faults are often manifested in the more or less depravity of the religious sentiments of the Christian and others; like unbelief, discouragement, being easily manipulated, lack of self-restraint, irreverence, unbrotherliness and being unsympathetic. These disgraces are present in persons who act along the ideas of direct selfishness, through the selfish qualities like pride, pretentious display, laziness, cowardice, contentiousness, insincerity, covetousness, lack of self-control, excessive self-preservation, hatred, ill will, evil surmising, etc. They are also present along avenues of not having proper social behavior as to the opposite sex, husband, wife, children, parents, brothers, sisters, friends, home and native land; and in addition, along the lines of selfishness combined with faults in the selfish, religious and social sentiments. In fact, there is more sin committed by combinations of depraved qualities than by faults exercised singly. Hence, covetousness works in combination with superstition, defiled faith or depraved love of home or friends; contentiousness works in combination with sectarianism, defiled family relations, erroneous ideas, etc.

When our simple and compound faults are full grown, they correspond to the foxes of our text; but when they are still comparatively small, they correspond to the little foxes. These foxes, great and small, our text charges us to catch hold of them, in the interests of one another and of ourselves. “Catch hold of, or take hold for us.” This means that each one of us in the interests of the whole congregation, as well as in our own interests, is to capture and make impotent and as nearly non-existent as possible, the faults, large and small. We do this because our faults do not injure

merely each one of us that possess them, but they also work toward injuring our brethren, on the principle that a contagious disease in one often infects others. Let us look at a few of these foxes, great and small, and see how dangerous they really are:

PRIDE is a sly one—with many disguises. It is exaggerated self-esteem, consisting of overdone self-confidence and self-respect, and of self-satisfaction. It is seen best at a distance, or in our neighbor’s figurative vineyard. It takes humility and careful self-examination to discover it in self, and this is why it is often overlooked in one’s own vineyard. It eats the very core out of the Christian’s heart and life. God hates pride (Prov. 6: 16, 17; 16: 5). To shelter it is surely disastrous, so far as our usefulness to Him is concerned. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5: 5, 6).

DOUBT is very destructive—It is the opposite of faith—the opposite of mental appreciation and heart’s reliance upon God and Christ (Heb. 11: 1). It destroys faith, which is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5: 4); without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11: 6). It is an insult to God to doubt Him or His Word of Truth. How important then it is to lay hold on that little fox called DOUBT, for it will surely destroy our faith if allowed to go on unhindered!

FEAR (dread) is closely related to DOUBT; for one dreads and regards with apprehension one in whom he has little or no confidence. Mistrust and suspicion breed fear. “God is love” (1 John 4: 8, 16); and in proportion as we believe in Him and love His glorious character as revealed to us in His precious Word, we learn to love and reverence Him and not to be afraid of Him or dread Him. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4: 18).

DISCOURAGEMENT may seem to some to be such a nice little fox that it needs little guarding against. Many will valiantly resist and pursue other foxes while fondling this one in their bosom, little realizing how dangerous it is. Many people are filled with self-pity, like to feel that they are much misunderstood and abused, seem to enjoy emphasizing their trials, not considering them “light afflictions” (2 Cor. 4: 17), and seem to like to “feel blue.” However, how can we “be of good cheer [courage]” (John 16: 33) and

“endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2: 3), if we become discouraged, and our morale is low? Courage in action spells victory; discouragement tends to bring defeat. Let us watch out for this little fox; it is so small and so innocent looking that it creeps undetected into almost every Christian’s life at one time or another. Therefore, this fault appears when things go differently than expected, when we are depressed over our own or other’s faults and their manifestations, or when an answer to prayer is delayed. This sly little fox paid a visit to Jonah under the gourd vine (Jonah 4: 4-11), and to Elijah under the juniper tree (1 Kings 19: 2-18).



PLEASURE-LOVING and **WORLDLINESS** are foxes that, if allowed to do their spoiling work, will surely destroy the spiritual fruitage. It takes courage to stand for that which is right and true, and usually unpopular, against the opposition of the many. It is so easy to “go with the crowd.” The pleasures and attractions of the world usually appear very alluring to the fleshly mind. Many become “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3: 4). “She who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives” (1 Tim. 5: 6). “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2: 15). “The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4: 4). “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12: 2).

FLESHLY-MINDEDNESS. Immature and unwary Christians allow this little fox many privileges; it is utterly ruinous to spiritual growth and contrary to the Word of God. We are to “flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2: 22). We are to “put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4: 22). We are to “crucify the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5: 24). We are to “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13: 14).

DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM and **FAULT-FINDING** are ugly affronts frequently used to cover one’s own deficiencies. They breed self-righteousness, self-justification and hypocrisy. They injure those who see a mote in a brother’s eye but are blind to the beam or rafter in their own eye (Luke 6: 41, 42).

ENVY and **UNWARRANTED JEALOUSY** are “cruel as the grave” (Cant. 8: 6). They breed covetousness, discontent, ill will and hate.

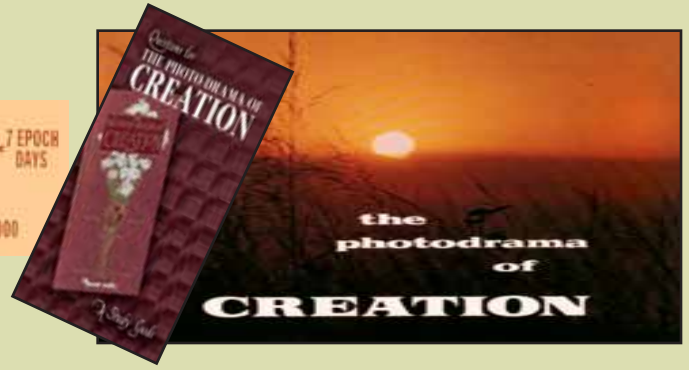
CONTENTION, QUARRELING and **WRANGLING** where meekness and humility are lacking, these may be found. In such cases both parties think themselves right, but both are wrong in their attitude—since God forbids these disgraces. God will render “unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (Rom. 2: 8). “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory” (Phil. 2: 3; 1 Tim. 6: 3-5).

RESENTMENT and **RETALIATION** are closely related. How crafty are these little foxes. How natural and easy for imperfect humans to harbor them. They are very destructive to the fruits of the Spirit. If we do not catch them and suppress their efforts in time, they will breed unrighteous anger and hatred and murder (1 John 3: 15). “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die” (Rom. 8: 13).

GOSSIPING, BACKBITING and **TALE BEARING.** What a trio of mischievous foxes these are. What damage they may do to one’s figurative vineyard as they do their destructive work, singly and in combination! God’s judgments are pronounced against them (Lev. 19: 16; Prov. 26: 20-22; 2 Cor. 12: 20), and they must be dealt with in no uncertain way by those who would stand among the overcomers (Psa. 15: 1-3).

Numerous other foxes that spoil the vineyards could be described, but we will mention only one more: **BUSYBODYING.** Here is another real mischief-maker. The Apostle Peter exhorts, “Let none of you suffer as . . . a busybody in other people’s matters” (1 Pet. 4: 15). It seems that sometimes the Lord’s consecrated people are more inclined to be busybodies than are others. They have higher standards than most others have and are more conscientious. Their love of righteousness is greater than before their Christian association, also their hatred of iniquity is greater. There is, therefore, continually a temptation not to be content with the minding of *one’s own* business, but in almost all cases to give advice whether it is desired or not, and to seek to regulate everybody and everything. Some become conscientious meddlers in others affairs.

The Apostle Paul urges the brethren “that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business” (1 Thes. 4: 10, 11). Apparently, some in the early Church were inclined to be... *continued on page 46*



THE SECOND DAY OR EPOCH

The expressions “evening and morning” and “day” cannot be understood to signify twenty-four-hour days, for neither Sun nor Moon was visible until the Fourth Day. The Earth was swathed in impenetrable darkness.

The word “day” applies to any period, or Epoch, as for instance, the “Day of temptation in the wilderness”—forty years. (**Psalms 95:8**.) Note again, that we read of the “Day of Christ,” evidently referring to the thousand-year Day in which Messiah is to be King over all the Earth. (**Isaiah 2:11**.) In the common affairs of life, we use the word “day” similarly, when referring to Caesar’s day, Napoleon’s day, etc.

We follow the theory that *each* of the Seven Days of the Creative Week was a period of seven thousand years. This, seven times seven thousand, equals forty-nine thousand (7 x 7,000=49,000) years, ushering in a grand Jubilee Epoch.

As one after another, the encircling rings of water and minerals approached the Earth they would spread out like a great canopy, but would not be permitted to fall upon the Earth because of the circumambient air, referred to in Scripture as a “firmament.” Saturn’s rings have not yet fallen.

God made the firmament in the second, or Paleozoic Day, and separated the waters, which were under the firmament from the waters, which were above the firmament. (**Genesis 1:7**.) The strongly mineralized waters above the Earth, held off by the “firmament” and centrifugal force, greatest at the equator, gradually concentrated at the two poles, where later they broke and then reached the Earth, forming layer after layer of mineralized earth deposited by the water which rushed from both poles toward the equator.—**Genesis 7:11,18**.

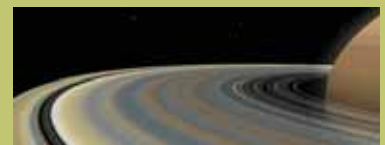
These rings, or belts, of water and minerals followed each other as great deluges upon the Earth—perhaps thousands of years apart. The Deluge of Noah’s day was the last, of pure water only, heavier minerals being attracted first. Hence, minerals are generally under several layers of shale and soil.

Second Day or Epoch

Genesis 1: 6-8

1. Do the expressions "evening and morning" and "day" signify 24 hour days?
2. How may we be sure the Genesis days do not signify solar days? Par. 1
3. Is a "day" when mentioned in the Bible always of the same length? Give proof. Psa. 95 : 8; 2 Pet. 3: 8
4. How long a period was "The day of Christ"? Rev. 20: 6
5. How long was each of the seven creative days? Par. 3
6. In what day of the creative week are we now living? At what part of the day? See Lesson 7, paragraph 4.
7. What was the condition of the earth before the great rings fell? Studies, Vol. 6, page 31.
8. Have Saturn's rings fallen yet? Par. 4
9. What did God accomplish in the second day?
10. Explain the Valian theory. See Lesson 2, paragraph 2.
11. What is meant by the Paleozoic Day? See Encyclopedia.
12. Did the rings or belts of water and minerals all fall at the same time?
13. When did the last ring-canopy break? Par. 6
14. What was its effect on the earth?

SATURN'S RINGS



The Photo Drama of Creation along with the helpful Study Guide may be purchased separately or as a set. Photo-Drama \$7.50; Study Guide \$5.75 or \$12.00 for the set. The two books would make a nice gift that keeps on giving year after year as one learns more about God’s wonderful plan of salvation. Suitable for study by an individual, a family or in a Bible study class. See order form on the back page.

continued from page 44 ...meddlesome, even as some of the Lord's people of our day are inclined to interfere in other people's affairs. "He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears" (Prov. 26: 17)—he is apt to be bitten. It reminds us of the man who entered a house and tried to get the husband and his wife to stop throwing things at each other, only to have them both throw things at him, with disastrous results to him for meddling in their affairs. Busy-bodilying in other people's matters always brings suffering and sorrow to the one who does not quietly mind his own business, if not in his relationship with others, at least in his relationship with God.

Observation in life leads one to believe that many of the world are meddlesome busybodies, and that many of their trials result from this weakness. Quite often, someone takes advantage of a situation and without authority steps in and rules the home. Usually in such cases there is much injustice done. Those who take this position often seek to justify their wrong course by saying, "If I did not take the reins in hand, things would not run properly." Such do not perceive that they are busybodies. Similar power-grasping and usurpation of authority is to be found also in various institutions, organizations, clubs and even among the Lord's people in their religious assemblies.

This course of conduct demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the principles of justice and a lack of faith in God. We should do our duty and leave the rest to Him. If a brother and sister in the Ecclesia have a difficulty, mind *your own* business, and allow them to settle the matter between themselves. When related as parent and child, let them adjust the matter by them-

selves, and learn whatever lessons the Lord, as their Judge, Teacher and Shepherd will give them. If they are husband and wife, the matter is the same. Let them alone. Do not busybody. Even if one of them were to come to you and ask advice, be slow to give it—decline to hear the case—follow the Lord's counsel.

Advise the complaining one that the Lord has given instructions, and that it is not your province to interfere and that Matt. 18: 15-17 directs the course to pursue. See that you have nothing to do with such a case, unless it comes to you directly in line with this arrangement which the Lord has provided. If called into a family mix-up, decline participation therein and be not eager to nose into their affairs. Advise them first, in the best way you know how, to adjust matters between themselves, reminding them of the words of Jesus, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19: 6), and then see that you do nothing to put them asunder or to help to complete the separation of spirit which already has started. God has not called us to be *troublemakers* but *peacemakers* (Matt. 5: 9; Heb. 12: 14).

The word vineyard, in the Bible, is used to represent God's people, real and professed, in relation to their sphere of service and development (Isa. 5: 1-7; Matt. 20: 1-16; 21: 33-46). Let us then, seek out, take hold of, grapple with, capture, incarcerate and kill all the foxes, great and small, that we find in ourselves—however cuddly and attractive they may seem; they are not our friends, but our enemies. Let us fight and overcome these disgraces lodged in our minds and hearts and thereby become eligible for the place our Lord has marked out for us in His Kingdom. * * *

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Nigeria: *Osusu Amukwa, June 22-24;*

Umunkiri, September, 30; Lagos, September 28-30;

Aba, Abia State, November 11

Poland: *Bydgoszcz, July 10-12; Katowice, July 14-16;*

Rzeszow, July 17-19; Susiec, July 20-22; Krakow, August 24-26

Ukraine: *Orlowka, June 29, 30 and July 1;*

Lwow, August 17-19

United Kingdom: *Hyde, August 3-5; Sheffield, October 27 and 28*

United States: *New England: Windsor Locks, CT, May 18-20; Athens, Ohio, July 20-22; Minneapolis, MN, September 21-23*

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CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE

**WHEN ALL THY MERCIES, O MY GOD,
MY RISING SOUL SURVEYS,
TRANSPORTED WITH THE VIEW I'M LOST
IN WONDER, LOVE AND PRAISE.**

**O, HOW CAN WORDS WITH EQUAL WARMTH
THE GRATITUDE DECLARE
THAT GLOWS WITHIN MY INMOST HEART?
BUT THOU CANST READ IT THERE.**

**THROUGH ALL ETERNITY, TO THEE
A GRATEFUL SONG I'LL RAISE.
AND MY ETERNAL JOY SHALL BE
TO HERALD WIDE THY PRAISE.**

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**HYMNS
OF THE
MILLENNIAL DAWN**

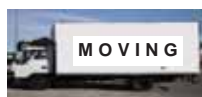
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