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Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

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Some Thoughts On Prayer

Prayer is one of the great blessings that has been reserved for the Christian. This is one of the reasons why one should want to be a child of God. If the non-Christian had access to prayer even as the Christian has, then why should he see the need for being a Christian. But when he realizes that as a non-Christian he cannot pray for himself and for his loved ones in times of great need, then this may be one of the reasons that would prompt him to obey God.

There are those who would have us to believe that God is the Father of all. He created all, but spiritually he is not the Father of all. Christ told some Jews of his day, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." (John 8:44, 45).

But someone is ready to say that these people were unbelievers. Then they want to know about believers. They would reason that surely the Father would hear a believer's prayer. But one is not a child of God just because he believes. When he believes to the point that he is willing to obey the Lord then he becomes a child of God. We read of Philip preaching to a man from Ethiopia. He became a believer but he was not able to go on his way rejoicing until he had obeyed the Lord. (Acts 8:26-39). Then and only then does one have access to the Father through prayer.

Even as a child of God one must strive to live a pure and Godly life to remain on praying terms with the Father. If one purposely sins then sin can come between him and the Father and make it impossible for the Father to hear his prayer. The prophet said in the long ago, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1, 2). On the other hand, James says that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16).

If we are children of God, and we are faithful to him, can we expect him to hear our prayers? He will not only hear our prayers but he will grant our requests if we will pray according to his will. John said, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14, 15). Please note that the key to our prayers being answered is that we pray according to the will of the Father. We must realize that we are God's children and he is our Father. We know that in dealing with our earthly children that we always hear all of their requests, but that does not mean that we grant all of their requests. We want to if at all possible, but with us as human beings we may not be able to, or we may feel that it would not be for their good and welfare to grant certain requests. Now if that be true with us then how much the more is it true with our spiritual Father in dealing with us as his spiritual children. He has the power to do all things, and to give all

things, but that does not mean that he will do that. If our prayers are according to his will, and for our good, then he will certainly grant our requests. But if we ask for things that are contrary to his will, or that would not be in our interest, and would not be in the interest of others, then he will not answer our prayers. Although we might be disappointed to know that, but actually this is in our own interest, and it shows that the Father loves us to the point that he would not give us something that would harm us or even destroy us. We must have faith in our Father as being one who knows what is best for us, and then we must accept his decision on it.

Sometimes we may pray for a job, for good health, and for many other similar things. Suppose these requests are not granted. Then we may feel that God didn't hear our prayer or that it doesn't do any good to pray. But think again. Suppose we had gotten that job we asked for at the time. We might have been so happy but in the end it might have brought destruction to us or might have prevented us from getting a job. You see, we don't always know what is best. Or it may be that we were expecting the Lord to do everything and we were unwilling to put forth any effort ourselves to get the job. If we are not willing to do our part, then why should we expect the Father to do everything? The same is true with our health. Maybe we are asking the Lord to bless us with good health, and yet we are eating things or doing things that would damage our health. Why should we expect him then to give us good health when we are not interested enough in our health to do that which is necessary to have good health?

But then you may wonder in the end if prayer is not just all in the mind and thinking positively about things or believing in it so strongly that it comes to pass. No, that is not true. Our problem is based on the fact that we are human beings and we cannot look into the background and see God and his power at work. The scriptures gives us some background on some of these things. Do you remember the time that Peter was in prison and the Lord's people were praying fervently for his release? (Acts 12). Then the record tells us how that an angel of the Lord came and released him. Finally Peter made his way to the place where the Christians were meeting and when he knocked on

the door the disciples were amazed to find him there. Now of course this was a miraculous occurrence but still it shows how God worked behind the scenes to answer prayers. Although we cannot expect God to do miracles today, since such would not be according to his will, still he can and does work through the laws of nature and through his providence to answer prayers. For instance, he can work through doctors, nurses, medicines, etc., to help the sick get well. Wouldn't that happen anyway? Not necessarily. You see, you must have faith in the Father and that he is there listening and caring and wanting to help his children in every way possible. For example, many a plane load of people may have been spared a crash because of a Christian being on that flight and because of the prayers being said by him and others for the safety of that flight. But what about a plane that crashes when some faithful Christian was on it? Again, we cannot always see all that the Father sees and neither do we know all that the Father knows. We must leave such things in his hands and never doubt his wisdom in such matters.

How often should the Christian pray? If he is in need of help or desires something then he may pray again and again for that. Does it make a difference when you pray all that often? Consider the story that Jesus told. The record says, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because the widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8). As fathers, we know that sometimes our children may ask us for something and in the beginning we do not respond to the request. But they go on and on asking and pleading, and there is no particular reason why we shouldn't, so we grant their request. However, if they had not continued

to ask then we might have never done anything. The same is true then with our heavenly Father. When we are persistent in our prayers then we are demonstrating our faith in Him, that we sincerely need his help, and that he will be given the praise if such a request is granted. Therefore, if he can at all, then he will reward us by answering our prayers.

Yes, it is so wonderful to be a Christian and to have a Father who loves us and cares for us and one that we can go to with our problems and needs. How could one then, who is aware of all of this, think for a minute that he can go through this life on his own and without being in this kind of relationship with Ghd? It is a terrible risk for even that one who contemplates becoming a child of God sometime later in life. When one tries to live without God then he has nothing in this life and no hope in the world to come. Please re-think your situation and your spiritual condition. Determine now that you are going to obey God, becoming his child, and have all the blessings that he has stored up for you. It will be the wisest decision that you have ever made.

These are just a few thoughts on prayer, and the importance of being in a praying relationship with God, that I pass along to you. There are many other things to say but we'll save those for some other time.



**associate
editorial**

The Godhead

No. 2

The Bible declares that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all three Personalities, are one God. Concerning the

Father we read, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ : Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." (1 Peter 1:2. Also read John 6:27; 8:41; Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 1:1; James 1:27, 3:9; Jude 1). Not only does the Bible speaks of the Father as God but the Son, the Bible says, is also God. At Hebrews 1:8 we read, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Notice, he said unto the Son, O God. (Read also John 1:8, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5). Then the Bible says concerning the Holy Spirit that He is God. We are going to read now from Acts 5, where we read about Ananias and Sapphira who lied concerning the money they had promised to give for the Lord's work. In verse 3, and 4 we read, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of land ? While it remained, was it not thine own ? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power ? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Here notice the fact that Peter told Ananias in verse three that he had lied to the Holy Ghost but in the next verse he told him that he had lied to God. What a man does against the Holy Spirit he does that against God, because the Holy Spirit is God. Read also in your Bible 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. Then by reading from John 3:16; 14:26; 16:13, 14; 17:8, 18, 23 one can see that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are personally distinct from one another, distinguished by personal pronouns, able to send and to be sent by one another, to love and honour or glorify one another.

At the very beginning of Christ's ministry on earth the three persons of the Godhead are brought together, when the Son of God was baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan to fulfil the righteousness of God. Matthew wrote, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him : And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased." (Matthew 3:16, 17). Notice here, the Son, Christ who was being baptized in water, came up out of the water, and the Spirit, as a dove descending and lighting upon him, and thirdly, a voice from heaven declaring that this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Now, friends, if this is not enough to show us that there are three distinct personalities in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, then what else is needed to prove this eternal truth? Here, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are together exhibiting their unity and distinctiveness. In fact there is no lack of such passages which confirm this truth again and again. The apostle Paul wrote, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13:14). Then at Jude 20, 21 we read, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Thus we come to know that the one God of the Bible is the Spirit, (John 4:24), and because He is Spirit therefore he is boundless, eternal, unchangeable, and infinite. (1 Kings 8:27). He is three personalities, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who in essence is one eternal God. This then helps us to understand why Jesus commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations and baptize the believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He did not say to baptise in the names but in the NAME. Because the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are not three different Beings but are one Being, one substance. The name carries the idea of authority of power. It is the power of God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, which saves man from sins. Baptism is for salvation. (1 Peter 3:21). But there is no power in the water to save one. The power to save an individual is in God. He and only He can save sinners. Thus they were to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, or by His authority. About name, W.E. Vine, in his well known book, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, says, "For all that a name implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the name

covers." The baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, is the baptism which is by the authority of the triune God.

Now, there are passages of the scriptures where we read that the apostles told certain people to be baptised in the name of Christ or in the name of Lord Jesus. But yet, as we have seen, Jesus had commanded them to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Is there a contradiction? Did the apostles teach some thing Christ never taught or contrary to what he had taught? Not at all. Because the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost, knew that Jesus is God, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ means to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, since the three are one, one in essence, one true God. Now, it is interesting to note, that Christ commanded to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and the apostles commanded people to be baptised in the name of Christ, but there is not a single instance or example in the entire New Testament where we read what a preacher or the baptizer said when he baptized a candidate for baptism. Because that was not the intention of the Lord and neither of his apostles, in giving the command to be baptised, to tell the one what he should say at the time of baptizing someone. Here we must understand the fact, that the command of baptism must be obeyed for salvation, (Mark 16:16), for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). But salvation does not come to the one being baptised by what has been or has not been said by the man who does the baptizing, he is simply assisting the candidate or the believer in his obedience to the Lord's command. The one who is being baptized will be saved; he need to submit himself to the authority of Christ. He is the one who need to understand why and by what authority he is being baptised. This is why one need to be taught before baptism. At Matthew 28 where we read of the great commission, in verse 18 we read, Christ said, All power or authority is given unto me, and on this basis in verse 19 he told them to, Go and teach all nations, baptizing them, the ones taught, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 8 chapter we have the story of eunuch. He was a religious person. He was travelling in his chariot and was reading the scriptures. The Spirit told Philip, the preacher, to "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Philip ran toward the chariot and heard eunuch reading from the book of Isaiah. He questioned eunuch if he was understanding what he was reading? The eunuch said, "How can I except some man should guide me? and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." They began to talk some more, and the record says, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:35-39). Here is a person who was baptised. He was taught before his baptism; he was asked if he believed with all his heart what he has been taught concerning Jesus, and when he confessed, saying, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then both he and Philip, the preacher, went down into the water, and he baptised him. He simply baptized him. Notice. Was there any thing said? We don't know. But we know that they both went into the water and Philip baptized eunuch. Now if the Lord wanted to give us a formula of words which may be used at the time of baptizing someone then surely he should have given us in this case. But he has not.

There are some people today who are making a big issue about the name. They are telling people that they must be baptized in the name of Jesus only, and a sect has been born from this teaching, known as "Jesus Only". These people are saying that the Father is Jesus, and the Son is Jesus and the Holy Spirit is Jesus; they believe Jesus is the only person in the Godhead. They reason and say that since the apostles

commanded people to be baptized in the name of Jesus, therefore we must baptize people today, saying, "I baptize you in the name of Jesus." They further teach that any one who was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost has never been baptized scripturally, his baptism is wrong. Now if this is true, then what about eunuch? Philip said nothing, as far as we know, when he baptized him. Moreover, Christians are commanded to do **EVERYTHING, IN WORDS AND IN DEEDS**, in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:17). Now from this we understand that we must do everything, as Christians, by the authority of Christ. We do not go about uttering the name of the Lord Jesus while saying and doing every thing, because the Bible says, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **DO ALL IN THE NAME OF LORD JESUS.**" Why not do the same about baptism in the name of Lord Jesus? There is only one baptism authorised by Christ, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, or as the apostles declared, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Once again, we should remember that the Bible teaches that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three different Beings or three different Deities. But three personalities, yet one in essence, one substance, one eternal being. Jesus on several occasions said, I and my Father are one. Christ shed his blood on the cross, yet Paul wrote, God has purchased the church with his own blood. (Acts 20:28). The Bible is the word of God but it is also the word of Christ and the word of the Holy Spirit. Elohim, God, the Deity "Spake in the time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person..." (Hebrews 1:1-3). God has spoken, but he has spoken through the Son. Likewise the Holy Spirit, the Bible says, has inspired the writers of the scriptures to write God's word. We read, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21). All through the scriptures the unity and the distinctiveness of the three personalities of the Godhead are clearly evident. And

today it is the same also. The Father is in control of the world; and the Son is the mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5); and the Holy Spirit is involved today in convicting men of sin through the word.

The Authority of God's Word

Guy N. Woods

Jesus said : "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." (Matthew 5:18). The law was designed to escort the Jews unto Christ : "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:24, 25). The "schoolmaster" (Greek *paidagoogos*) was not an instructor, but a person, usually a slave or freedman, to whom the boys of a family were committed, whose duty it was to conduct them from and to the schoolroom, exercising at all times superintendence over their conduct and safety. Without doing violence to the apostle's argument, we may paraphrase thus : "Wherefore the law was our [the jews'] *school bus driver* to bring us [the jews] to Christ." Having escorted the jews to Christ, it had accomplished its purpose and was removed. (Colossians 2:14-17). Before it had done this, heaven and earth would sooner pass than its most insignificant portion. Though these words were spoken of the law which came from Sinai, the principle is applicable to all of his word.

The "jot" is the Hebrew letter *yod*, the smallest in the Hebraic alphabet. The "tittle" (Greek, *keraia*) is the hornlike projection, or apex, which is used to distinguish Hebrew letters, which greatly resemble each other. Several of the Hebrew letters (*beth* and *caph*, *cheth* and *he*, *resh* and *daleth*, for example) differ only in the slightest degree, the difference being indicated by the use of the "tittle"; and to disregard these slight, but highly significant markings is to alter radically the meaning of many words and sentences. As an example, consider the Hebrew words *chalal* and

halal. These words differ only in their first letters. *Ch* in Hebrew is expressed by one letter, even as *h*, the only difference being a very slight break in the left limb of the latter. To appreciate how slight the difference is between these letters, take a pencil and draw a short line from left to right, make a right angle, and extend the line downward until it is about one-fourth longer than the line it meets at a right angle. Next, place your pencil just under the point where you first began to extend the horizontal line, leaving only the very smallest space; draw it to a point equal in distance to the perpendicular line on the right. This is the Hebrew *h* (*he* pronounced *hay*). To make the *Ch* (*cheth*), draw another letter identical with that just drawn, and *close up the slight opening*. This is the difference between these two letters. The point used to close up the space is the tittle. (Any good dictionary, under the word "Alphabet", will list the Hebrew characters. The *he* is the fifth letter; the *cheth*, the eighth). Such is the difference between the words *chalal* and *halal*. A variation too trifling to notice in our alphabet; *and yet let the line be broken where it should be continuous*, and "Thou shalt not profane the name of thy God" becomes "Thou shalt not praise the name of thy God"! (Leviticus 18:21).

The Hebrew *daleth* is a horizontal line and a perpendicular line meeting at a right angle, the horizontal line being drawn a bit heavier than the other. The letter *resh* is very similar, differing only in the lines meeting in an arc, instead of a right angle. Yet let the latter be changed into the former, and Exodus 34:14, which reads, "Thou shalt worship no other God," becomes "Thou shalt not worship the only God." The *beth* and *caph* differ only in that one has square corners and the other slightly rounded ones; yet if the latter is changed into the former, 1 Samuel 2:2 reads, "There is no holiness *in* the Lord," instead of "There is none holy *as* the Lord." The Old Testament abounds with instances of such. This demonstrates how indissoluble are the *thoughts* and the *words* of the Sacred Writings, and that whatever affects the one, imperils the other. The adage, "The bottles are not the wine; but if the bottle perish, the wine is sure to be spilled," finds apt illustration here.

A Pattern For Preachers

For fifty-one years the people of judah languished in Babylon, while their land lay desolate from the ravages of war and the depredations of their conquerors. When Babylon was no more, contingents of them were allowed to go back to begin the work of restoration. Among the leaders was Ezra, a scribe. Determined to bring vividly to the consciousness of the people their obligations to jehovah, he arranged for a public reading of the law, an account of which may be seen in Nehemiah 8:1-8. Numerous ones assisted him in the reading, and the manner in which it was done is thus designated by the sacred historian: *"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."* (Nehemiah 8:8). Here is a perfect pattern for all who propose to preach and to teach the word. (1) They read; (2) they read in the book in the law of God; (3) they read distinctly; (4) they gave the sense; (5) they caused the people to understand the reading.

(1) To read well is indeed a rare achievement. Any teacher or preacher who reads well, instantly attracts attention and holds the interest of his hearers. To be able "to add to the beauty of" the text "the rhythm of the voice" is a goal well worth striving for. The great jewish rabbis insisted on their pupils reading aloud, because such reading is a powerful aid to mental retentiveness. Reading aloud helps the listener to understand the text. A monotonous, singsong, artificial reading deprives the word of its meaning and prompts the mind to wander fruitlessly away.

(2) They read in the book in the law of God. However skilled the reader, if that which is being read is ephemeral and worthless, no value is derived. He who presumes to bring to people the bread of life sustains a solemn obligation to be able to discern between bread and a stone. While people perish is not time to dally with the trivia of life.

(3) Ezra's compatriots not only read, and read from the law of God; they also read distinctly. Impressed with the weighty responsibility that was theirs, the words of the texts were pronounced soberly, pointedly, distinctly.

(4) Further, they gave the sense—they explained the significance of that which they read, and expounded the vital truth which God had given. To be able to open up the truth of God's word and bring from it treasures both new and old is surely life's greatest achievement. Much of the Scripture we may grasp without help. Every fundamental duty of man is set forth with such clarity that the intelligence which establishes responsibility is all that is necessary to understand it. These facts, like air and light and water, are available to us, and may be had without help. But just as there are many things in the material realm which can be seen only with a telescope or microscope, so there are depths and beauties and powers and blessing only an experienced interpreter can point out. Occasionally we find a book which makes portions of the text sparkle with great brilliance where before our unaided eyes caught only a feeble gleam. Every once in a while this writer reads interpretations of the text which open up vast fields of hitherto undreamed possibilities in the Sacred Volume.

(5) Finally, Ezra's readers caused the people to understand the reading. Here is the apex, the ultimate goal, the only design of all teaching and preaching. Unless this be achieved, the time is lost, the effort useless. Much of that which parades under the guise of teaching is far short of it. We *teach* only when people *learn*. Unless instruction is actually imparted, and edification results, whatever the effort may be designated, it is not teaching. Learning is an essential correlative to teaching. When one is absent, the other is nonexistent.

Christian Be Watchful

Curtis R. Dowdy

The reason parents instruct their children to be careful and watchful is because there are hidden dangers all around. No doubt this is the reason that watchfulness is a theme running through the New Testament.

Jesus said to the disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here and watch". (Mark 14:34). Why did Jesus want them to watch ? Was it because he looked for an opportunity to escape the coming mob, or was it something else ? One does not need to go beyond verse 38 for the answer. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." In short, if one is not watchful he will be overcome of temptation.

Paul wrote the Thessalonians, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober". (I Thessalonians, 5:6). There is a contrast here between the "children of the day" and the "children of the night" (v. 5). They are of the night who do not watch. Paul is, therefore, urging the Christians not to sleep. Sleep is certainly an appropriate way to describe those who forget spiritual values and have a false sense of security. Now it is true that real security belongs to those who have been begotten unto a lively (living) hope and who have an inheritance reserved in heaven. (I Peter 1:3, 4). But who are they ? Peter replies, they "who are kept by the power of God through faith." (I Peter 1:5). Faith is the means by which they are kept, and faith is the basis of their security. Therefore, it is those who watch that have this faith.

We believe that there is need that every Christian be watchful ! Jesus had John write to the church at Sardis : "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee". (Revelation 3:2, 3). Here is instruction to watch, else one will be unprepared. Therefore consider some areas in which we need to watch.

1. Faith—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?" (Matthew 14:31b). Faith must be fed and exercised or it will diminish. Faith comes by hearing the word of God and it is strengthened in the same manner. (Romans 10:17). With so much being written and said for the purpose of destroying faith it behooves us to spend much time "strengthening the things which remain."

2. Emotions—"be ye angry, and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath". (Ephesians 4:26). How often have emotions run out of control because one failed to watch ! The results are sometimes tragic ! Purity has been marred, friendships have been destroyed, homes have been broken up, churches have been divided, and souls have been lost because of a failure to watch over the emotions.

3. Morality—"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephesians 5:11). There is a new attitude toward immorality in today's society; it is often approved. We see it being pushed at us through the media on every hand; seemingly it is an effort to brainwash the moralist. Should we fail in our watchfulness, our own convictions could be weakened to the point of saying nothing against the evils that belong to darkness. In the end, you see, our morality will have been compromised.

4. Speech—"...for thy speech betrayeth thee". (Matthew 26:73). Peter had the speech of a Galilean. We must watch our speech else the language of the world will issue from our lips. How can our claim of following the Christ be considered valid if our speech says otherwise. Have you listened to yourself lately ? It may be that we have allowed the world to squeeze us into its mold of speech patterns.

5. Dress—"...that women adorn themselves in modest apparel...(which becometh women professing godliness)". (I Timothy 2:9, 10). Fashion changes from season to season, but the person who professes to be godly must dress the part. So much of that which passes as fashionable was never designed with the Christian in mind. As in so many other areas, the Christian must discriminate and dress in such a manner as will be considered modest.

Therefore, watch your clothing selections, especially during the summer months.

May we ever heed the admonition of Paul to the Ephesians when he wrote, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication

in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints". (Ephesians 6:18).

In The Land Of Wine

W.A. Holley

In the minds of many the land of France is known as the land of wine. It is said that Frenchmen consumed 4.2 gallons of alcohol in their wine, cider, and hard liquor during 1978.

The French drinking problem has become so devastating it is killing 55 people each day. According to French Government statistics every 53rd Frenchman is a registered alcoholic and that 19,000 to 21,000 die an alcoholic-related death each year. What a tragedy ! What an awful price to pay !

But more. Drinking is the cause of France's biggest medical problem, costing the nation \$24 billion a year in medicine, welfare and lost economic productivity. What could \$24 billion do to improve the lives of the French people, if spent on worthy objectives such as education, food and clothing for the poor, and medical programs for the ill.

For generations the French have deceived themselves through delusory arguments regarding the merits of alcoholic beverages. In France, it is said, "It is part of our society." They try to excuse drinking by saying, "There are many more old drunks than old doctors." Even Louis Pasteur, the famous French Chemist, the inventor of the process by which milk is pasteurized, declared : "Wine is the healthiest of drinks." Peer-drinkers in France exert such strong pressure that even teetotalers feel compelled to order a glass of wine rather than to face the waiter's raised eyebrow.

A few years ago (1954), the French Premier, Pierre Mendes-France, tried to persuade the French people to drink milk and, as a result, lost his position. Apparently, the French do not mind their brains and livers' being destroyed by alcohol, but they will

not stand for milk's doing the same thing, according to their notion. In France it is widely believed that milk damages the liver. Oh, well, one can rationalize anything !

According to the Alabama Beverage Control Board, more than 80 million gallons of beer, canned and in kegs, were sold to Alabama citizens last year. That came from 26,559,804 cases of canned beer and 1,901,233 gallons of draft beer. Just try to estimate the cost to Alabama citizens in terms of crime and wrecks on the highway and hungry children. This huge amount of money could better have been used to relieve the needs of suffering humanity.

Most drinkers will not admit that alcohol is a drug and that this drug is stupefying, and it makes one dull and insensible to others. This drug does release inhibitions so that one will do things when he is under the influence of alcohol that he would be ashamed to do when he is sober.

The drinking of alcoholic beverages is a sin whether we wish to admit it or not. We may seek to rationalize the evils of alcoholic beverages away, but they will not go away ! (Daniel 1:8; Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 31:5; 23:29-30, 31-32; 4:17; Isaiah 28:7).

One night in October

When I was far from sober,

And dragging a load with manly pride;

My legs began to stutter,

So I laid me down in the gutter,

And a pig came and parked by my side.

Then I began to warble,

"It's fair weather when good fellows get together,"

Till a lady passing by was heard to say :

"You can tell a man who boozes

By the company he chooses,"

Then the pig got up and slowly walked away.—Anon,

We suggest that the following Scriptures be read and studied :
Leviticus 10:8-10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-32; Daniel 1:8; Isaiah 28:7.

Our Strength

Roy Fuller

A story was told about a young lad who was helping his father to clear a field for planting. As he laboriously went about his task, he came upon a sizeable boulder which he attempted to remove all by himself. He pulled and tugged at the huge rock but without success. It was just too much for his strength. At last, he gave up. As he sat resting and contemplating his next move, he heard a voice behind him; "Son, have you used all your strength?" "Yes sir", the young man replied. "No you haven't son, I've been here all the time and you haven't asked me for any help." Is it not true that we, like the young lad, too often try to fight the battles of life alone with our own strength? When we fail to achieve our goals, or we are unable to accomplish our immediate objectives, we become disillusioned, disappointed, and frustrated. We have momentarily forgotten our real source of strength. We have forgotten that God is still there, waiting to help, wanting to help, if we would only give him the opportunity.

Following the crossing of the red sea, Moses and the children of Israel sang jubilant praise to God; "The Lord is my Strength and song, and he is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; My father's God, and I will exalt him." (Ex. 15:2). Surely, the experience of their miraculous delivery through the red sea should have been sufficient to humble an entire nation, but soon they had forgotten. So soon were they complaining to Moses and longing again for the fleshpots of Egypt. The Psalmist declared: "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. (Psa. 62:7). "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psa. 138:3). The great Apostle Paul, a man well acquainted with more than his share of problems, opposition, and sorrows, set forth the vital principle of truth which makes life livable, and survival possible when he stated: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to

abound : in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me". (Phil. 4:11-13). The secret which Paul had learned was really no secret at all; it was simply that he had come to recognize the truth of what the psalmist had affirmed many centuries before : "Be not thou far from me, Oh Lord, Oh my strength, haste thee to help me". (Psa. 22:19).

Like the apostle Paul, I too have learned that apart from God, there is no strength. Christ is my spiritual survival kit. Prayer is my life line. "Pray without ceasing" becomes a reality for the man who realizes that inner strength must come from an outer source. I know that our strength is in God, and his strength is sufficient for all of our needs when we are willing to humble ourselves before him and submit to his will. With the psalmist I can humbly pray; "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins : let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent of the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, Oh Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer". (Psa. 19:13-14). Yes, like the psalmist, in the day when I cried God answered and strengthened me in my soul, God is our strength.

The Great Physician

Raymond Elliott

On the occasion of calling Levi to become his disciple, Jesus associated himself with the publicans and sinners, eating and drinking with them. This invoked the wrath of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. In answer to their criticism, Jesus replied. "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:29-32). Luke, the physician, wrote of the great physician Jesus Christ. Jesus had to be great because of the nature of the disease called sin. There are times when a general practitioner is all that one needs; however,

there are occasions whenever a specialist is required because of the seriousness of the disease. In combating the malady of sin, there is no other one to whom man can go save Jesus Christ.

We can best understand how effective Jesus is when we view the horribleness of sin. First of all, the seat of this sickness is the heart. This is where sin originates in the individual. Jesus knew this fact and stated it in this fashion: "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man. . ." (Matthew 15:19,20). The wise man wrote, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7). We can readily see the need of following Solomon's admonition to "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23).

Second, sin is universal in its scope. Paul declared: "As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one." (Romans 3:10), "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Jesus was the only person who has lived on this earth who has not been tainted by sin.

Third, sin is contagious in nature. Paul expressed an external truth when he wrote in I Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals." How many young people, guilty of transgression, have cried, "I fell in with the wrong crowd."

Fourth, there is a deceitful nature of sin. It has a way of appearing good and acceptable when in reality it is evil and damnable. "But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13).

Fifth, the eventual consequence of sin is death to the one who is afflicted with this awful malady. Paul made it clear in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." A person may die physically with a terminal disease but be saved eternally through Jesus Christ; however, the individual who dies with the disease

called sin is forever separated from God in eternal punishment. "Death" in this passage of Romans 6:23 is in contrast to the expression "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus, Paul has reference to eternal death or separation. We can readily see the awful nature of the disease called sin.

One can readily see the greatest of the diseases is called sin; therefore a physician is needed who will be able to cope with and cure such a malady. Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, possesses all the qualifications of such an one to whom the sin-sick world can turn for healing.

The first qualification that we want to mention, is that Jesus has the proper endorsement. God the Father confessed at the baptism of Jesus that "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17). Again, at the Transfiguration, the Heavenly Father declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5). The goodness of the life of Jesus, the lessons he taught, the miracles he worked and his victory over death, all testify to his divine Sonship and the endorsement of heaven.

Second, Jesus possesses a sympathetic attitude toward mankind. He heard the cry of distress and came. He suffered with and for mankind. Matthew records such a scene that displayed this attitude: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed, and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36). His death on the cross was an expression of his matchless love (See Isaiah 53:4, 5).

Third, Jesus possesses all knowledge of human nature and the disease, sin. It is stated in Holy Scripture that he "knew what was in man." (John 2:25). Though Jesus was never afflicted with the malady of sin, he knows all about it. He even mentioned that sin originates in a man's heart (Matthew 15:18,19). Jesus knows that eventually the consequence of sin leads to spiritual death (James 1:13-15).

Fourth, the Lord always maintained perfect moral and spiritual health. Unlike other physicians who often contract diseases and die, Jesus never knew sin in his life. The Hebrew writer spoke of this fact when he mentioned that Jesus was tempted in all points like we are "yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:14-16). In reference to Christ, Peter wrote : "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22). Had he been a sick man, he would have endangered the life of his patients.

Fifth, the Great Physician has the remedy for sin, regardless of how dark and base it might be. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). The apostle Paul declared that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." (Romans 1:16). The remedy is of proven worth. By it countless numbers have been saved from death and prepared to live in a better world.

Though the remedy is infallible, restoration to health is conditional to the patients's attitude toward it. One may spurn it or neglect it; the result is the same. Faith in the Great Physician and a willingness to follow his instructions are necessary; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21).

The prophet Jeremiah raised the question. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? (Jeremiah 8:22). Jesus is that balm, that physician. He is the one who can save. But one's heart must be submissive to his will as found in the words of Jeremiah : "Heal me, O Jehovah and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved : for thou art my praise." (Jeremiah 17:14).

The prescription that the Great Physician has given for healing is that one must believe in him as being the Son of God, repent of sins, and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Mark 16:15,16).

“The Wolf Shall Dwell With The Lamb”

Bob Duncan

Isaiah 11:6-9 says : “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters over the sea.

General Agreement on Messianic Application. There seems to be general agreement that the passage finds its fulfillment in the Messiah. The “rod out of the stem of Jesse” and the “Branch” mentioned in verse 1 of this chapter, and described in verses 2-5, is the Christ. So the conditions mentioned in verses 6-9 are conditions which will characterize the reign of Christ. But exactly what the language means and when these conditions would obtain are matters that are debated.

The View of the Premillennialist. The Premillennialist understands this passage to be literal in application and descriptive of conditions upon the earth after Jesus comes and establishes his earthly kingdom. But Jesus has already established the only kingdom he will ever establish upon this earth; that kingdom is the church. Mark 9:1 clearly shows that the establishment of the kingdom upon the earth could not be yet future. Matthew 16:18,19 makes plain the fact that the church is the kingdom. Both Paul (Colossians 1:18) and John (Revelation 1:9) affirmed by inspiration that they and other saints of the first century were already in the kingdom.

That Jesus will not establish his kingdom, or anything else, upon the earth when he comes again is abundantly evident from

the fact that when Jesus comes again there will be no earth. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (II Peter 3:10).

The Most Reasonable Explanation. That Isaiah 11:6-9 is a beautiful picture of peace is undeniable, but that it describes literal conditions is unreasonable. How much better off would the human race really be if the wolf literally dwelt with the lamb, and if the leopard should lie down with the kid? How many of your own problems or the problems of the world centre around the fact that a calf, a young lion, and a fatling will not lie down together? How much sleep have you lost over the fact that a lion will not eat straw like an ox? You see, there is nothing especially attractive about the conditions here described if they be understood literally.

In commenting upon these verses in the *Annual Lesson Commentary* (December 24, 1933), brother John T. Hinds wrote "No book abounds more in figurative language than the Bible; no writer has more beautiful examples than the prophet Isaiah; perhaps there is no example more forceful than the verses used in this section. . . . In foretelling the peace that the Messiah would bring to the world. . . what could more elegantly and fittingly represent it than the picture of animals with warring natures living peaceably at the same place together?"

But what kind of peace is the prophet foretelling? Is he saying that a time would come when all the nations of the earth and all the people in the world would literally be at peace with one another? The answer is No. It is true that those who submit to the gospel of Christ, though they may have been the "lions" and "wolves" of the world, will be rendered completely harmless, and will be at peace with all others who faithfully serve the Lord. But this is not primarily the peace which the gospel of Christ brings.

In reading the book of Isaiah does one get the impression that man's major problem stems from the fact that men are at

enmity with their fellow men? Well, the people of God had that problem all right, but it was just an outgrowth of the real problem, *enmity with God*. In chapter 1, verse 2, God said, "they have rebelled against me." In verse 4 he said, "they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger." It is for this reason he said in verse 7: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." In verse 24 God refers to those who had transgressed his law as his adversaries and his enemies.

Look at some other statements that show enmity with God to be the number one problem in the book of Isaiah: "Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them. . . ." (5:25). "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." (48:22). "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (57:20-21).

The problem of the book of Isaiah is enmity with God, which came about as a result of the iniquities of the people (59:1-2). It is no wonder that the one who was to come to take away the guilt of sin would be called the Prince of Peace (9:6). It is this very kind of peace which is embraced in the song of the angels to the shepherds in Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Jesus came that men might be at peace with God. This is the peace that is depicted in Isaiah 11:6-9.

Happiness In The Home

Wayne Cobb

Most homes of today are not the kind of homes God would have them to be. Men and women have turned away from God's ideal and the results are tragic. Instead of the home providing the basis of joy, comfort, satisfaction and security there has been a flood of disappointment, emptiness and despair.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young Americans. One out of nine ends up in juvenile court by age eighteen. A million teenagers run away from unbearable home conditions every year. Many of the problems that we are facing; in our nation and world have their roots in the breakdown of the home. Many homes are but pathetic empty shells and not what God intended them to be.

The God of heaven who instituted marriage and the family provided that home should be a blessing and joy, a refuge of peace and happiness, a heaven from trouble and strife. But happiness in the home is no accident; it requires work, planning and cooperation. There are certain principles which must be respected if we are truly going to have happy homes.

First, there must be a sense of permanency. In marriage two people commit themselves "for better or for worse, until death do us part." Marriage is and has always been intended for life (Rom. 7:2,3; I Cor. 7:39). God never intended the startling number of divorces that we are presently having. Too many people today are entering into marriage with little or no intention of it's being a lifetime commitment.

A movie star who had been married to the same wife for over thirty years was once asked to what he attributed the endurance of his marriage. His answer was that when he and his wife married they made a commitment. Marriage must have the quality of an absolute lifetime commitment. That is the divine concept of marriage.

Second, a happy home is one that is bound by cords of love. No couple should ever think about marriage except upon the basis of deep love and affection for each other. Paul says that husbands are to love their wives "as Christ loved the church." (Eph. 5:25), and that the older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:4). If love does not form the foundation of a marriage, then the home rests upon a shaky foundation.

The wise man penned, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Pro. 15:17). In

other words, it is better to have a plain bread in a home where there is love than to have curry and fried rice and live in a state of hatred and turmoil. Parents are to love their children; children are to love their parents. Husbands are to love their wives; wives are to love their husbands. What a heaven men and women have when they can go home where love abides!

Third, togetherness is an essential ingredient of a happy family life. Unfortunately, families today are not living as families. A few years ago *NEWSWEEK* magazine stated that the average father spends less than fifteen minutes per day with his child and the average mother spends less than twenty minutes per day with her children. Family life is being stifled in our modern society partly because many families have ceased being families.

There is the story of the Texas millionaire who called the television repairman to his beautiful house. As the repairman was admiring the mansion, the millionaire replied, "Yes, I gained this and lost my family." Then he added, "It just wasn't worth it. I'd give it all up if I could get back my family." How often is the same story repeated today?

Finally, happy home is a home where God is. Faith in God is essential to a happy successful home. It is old cliché but, nevertheless true: "The family that prays together, stays together." As the Psalmist wrote, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." (Psa. 127:1). Paul admonished fathers in Ephesians to nurture their children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4). The fact that so many marriages are failing and homes broken is testimony to the fact that most people are leaving God out of the home.

Around the home circle we can experience the greatest joys that life has to offer, or we can experience the greatest sorrow. Our home can either be a heaven on earth, or the nearest thing to a hell on earth. To have a happy, successful home is no accident. A strong family life demands the best of all of us and the only way we can be the best daughter, the best son, the best mother, father, husband, wife is by following Christ.

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