

TAF TIMES



March, 2008, Volume II, Issue I (Internal circulation only)

A newsletter of the Truth B-P Church Adults' Fellowship

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17

Welcome to the 2nd edition of TAF Times. I hope readers in particular our members, will be much blessed through this bi-yearly newsletter. The aim of TAF Times remains the same: to edify and build up the saints in the most holy faith for the glory of our most high God. This being our 2nd edition, we have endeavored to make some changes and improvements to the magazine for easier reading while adding more relevant content for our edification and instruction in the Word of God. What haven't change are the 3 main sections of the magazine, which have been retained, namely, the feature articles, news and brief of the AF, and the segment on Christian learning.

There is much in these pages to challenge us to walk closer to the Lord and to instruct us in His Truth. However, knowing what is right and doing what is right is always easier said than done, and yet we must keep plugging at it, with God's help.

Scriptural warnings abound, instructing us to “be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves” (James 1:22); to give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21), and reminding us of the need for every man to bear his own burden (Galatians 6:5). These warnings exhort the believer to check and examine if he is on the

right track, headed for glory, and to keep going in that direction.

If we have failed in doing even after hearing, for one reason or another, at one time or another, or at one place or another, let us confess and repent of our ways, and seek for forgiveness from the Lord while He may yet be found (Isaiah 55:6). To ignore or to refuse to change and repent is foolishness. To continue to rebel and go our own way can only be madness. Only an unregenerate fool (Psalm 14:1) would reject God's eternal and universal Truth, and fall into the trap of calling evil good, and good evil, to his ultimate, and foolish end.

Following the Lord involves the denying of self and much personal sacrifice. Have you done so, and if not, are you willing to do so now, before it is too late? Let us be obedient and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, surrendering our lives willingly, completely and joyfully unto Him because of who He is and what He is to us. May the Lord help us. *editor*

TAF 2nd AGM & Elections... On an important note, the Adults' Fellowship held its 2nd AGM and Election on December 1st, 2007 and returned a new committee to steer the fellowship in 2008. What is notable this time round is the election by Session of Dn. Martin Cheong as our 1st ever Advisor. For the record, Dn. (Dr.) Winston Chew is again the AF president, Eric Toh, the new vice-president, Dns. Alice Tan continues as the AF secretary, similarly, Paul Tan as treasurer, Andy Ho is the new publicity chairman, while Joe Tan, as the new committee member, completes this 6-man team.

In this issue...

we have a bumper crop of articles for our spiritual feasting and edification! Thank God for the various sources for permission to use and reproduce many of their materials.



Feature Articles

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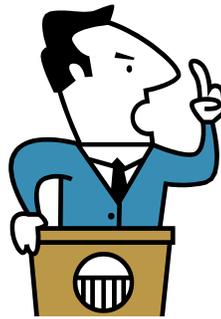
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Remembering Our Membership Vows

This issue of TAF Times coincides with Easter Week. Pastor Dennis writes to remind us what Easter means and the membership vows that some will be taking during this Easter baptismal service.

Not too long ago, we commemorated Truth's 2nd Anniversary on 6th January 2008. And now in March, Good Friday and Easter are just around the corner. It is good and most appropriate to remind ourselves of our membership vows we took in this church. I pray and hope you have not forgotten them. You might not remember every word but you must never forget the main points. We are to keep a vow, and not to break or forget about it. Let us reflect on what we have vowed and strive together to keep it for the Lord's sake.

Vow 1 – I acknowledge before God and this congregation that as a child of Adam, I am a sinner, lost and undone, that apart from the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, I am lost and doomed to Hell.

We do well if we remember the first and most important point of the Five Points of Calvinism: Total Depravity or Total Inability. Total depravity is the condition of sinfulness in all men. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of this original corruption as making all men "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" (WCF Chapter 6:4). It is a downward tread, which is irreversible by human effort, and every person is infected in every dimension of his life – his thinking, his affections, his body, his relationships, and above all, his will. He is incapable of consistently choosing that which is right.

This doctrine does not mean that man is not able to do any good towards his fellow men. It does however mean that man's nature is wholly sinful, corrupt, and perverse to the extent that sin has

affected all his parts rendering him absolutely incapable of saving himself from the judgment to come (Genesis 6:5; Isaiah 64:6-7; Jeremiah 17:9). Even when man performs good works, his motives for doing so are not clean and pure. Since Adam's fall, man is born in sin and is by nature spiritually dead. Given the choice, man will choose to reject rather than obey the gospel (Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Romans 3:10-12; 5:12).

Since sinful man is lost and doomed to Hell, he can never save himself. Only the saving grace of the Lord Jesus saves him. How do we understand the saving grace of the Lord Jesus? Jesus was offered up to God once and for all, against whom they have sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied. He was the unblemished sacrifice, and made complete and full satisfaction to the demands of God's justice perfectly. And therefore by it, sin was put away, finished and made an end of. All those who trusted and believed in Him as the only way, the truth and the life, will rest in Him in perfect peace forever.

Vow 2 – I confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world and my Saviour in particular.

There are many who have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and attended church services regularly. But hearing the good news and going to church regularly do not make you a Christian. You must confess Him. He is not only the God of heaven and earth. He is your personal God. As He is the only Saviour of the world, He is also your only Saviour. There is none else.

However, confession is more than just a personal or private matter. 'I believe Jesus in my heart, isn't that good enough? Why the hassle to go through baptism in which I have to stand before so many people?' The Apostle Paul says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9,10). A heart that truly believes in Jesus will not be ashamed to confess Christ by his declaration of faith in Him before the world.

Sometimes the real test comes when one is stricken with severe sickness, deep trouble or tragic loss. To whom will he turn to? Some have turned to wine. Some took their lives, while others wallowed in their sorrows. Why didn't they turn to God? Is He only capable of saving you but not caring for you? God is waiting and desires His children to go to Him for strength, power and love. Your confession is the key to all the precious promises of God. Peter's answer to the Lord's question, 'Will ye also go away?' (John 6:67) is relevant to us at this point. What is his answer? He said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-70). May Peter's confession be ours as well!

Vow 3 – I knowingly give up all my sinful habits and promised by God's grace to live unto righteousness according to God's Word.

Many professing Christians are simply Sunday Christians. In other words, they behave their best like angels in church every Sunday: they pray, they praise, they serve, and they fellowship. But from Monday to Saturday, they behave their worst like devils: they don't pray, they don't praise, they don't serve, and they don't fellowship. Instead, they gossip, they curse, they indulge in worldliness, and they enjoy themselves in sinful, fleshly pleasures. Are you one of them? Have you really given up all your sinful habits? Do you really mean what you promised, to live unto righteousness according to God's Word?

There is a difference between enjoying and struggling with the old man. The devil's quote: If you cannot win them, join them. Is that happening to you? As sincere Christians, we are fighting the spiritual battles every day. We are battling against sin, which we are determined to forsake, and flee from, the moment we trust Jesus to be our personal Lord and Saviour.

A sinning Christian must be the most miserable person on earth. For the unbeliever, he will not feel miserable because he enjoys his sins and life, ignorant of and ignoring the living and true God. His punishment will come when the time is up and he has to suffer for his own sin and be tormented in the lake of fire forever. It is not so for a born-again Christian. He is saved and will forever be saved. God has given him a new man that enables him to walk in the light and the path of righteousness. However the old man will still be there until his life on earth is ended. The old man will always lead him to the old ways of sin. It is the new man that prompts him to say 'No' to sin. Even if he does fall into sin and temptation, he cannot enjoy it fully. The conscience feels guilty and somewhat not at peace until he yields to the new man and be restored again by God's grace. Do you not agree that a sinning Christian is the most miserable person on earth? Don't be a sinning Christian anymore!

Vow 4 – I promise to be regular in reading my Bible and in prayer, in the worship service and the support of this church.

No one really questions why a man must eat good food in order to be strong and healthy. It is really never an option for us whether to eat or not to eat in the first place. From our birth up until now, we have been eating at least three meals a day because we know that if we want to survive, we must eat. That is true as far as our physical body is concerned. What about our spiritual body, the soul? Sad to say, we have often caused our soul to go hungry and be left dying each day. What then is the proper food for the soul? It is the Word of God. Unless we make up our mind that we will give some time EVERY DAY in the study of the Word of God, our spiritual health will continue to deteriorate. No one can guarantee

that every reading of God's Word is going to be exciting and captivating. However, it is the enduring training and gradual development of the heart and mind, to keep at peace with God that is being put to work here. You may not feel it instantly. But it does not mean that your time is wasted reading God's Word. Just as we may not be completely aware of the physical food being digested in our stomachs, yet we know that our bodies will benefit when we absorb the nutrients from this process of digestion eventually. Much as we need to take our meals regularly, let us also read our Bibles regularly.

We know full well that prayer is talking to God. As God speaks to us through His Word, we speak to God through prayer. But how is your talking to God? Do you only go to Him when you need Him to fill your 'shopping bag'? Do you talk to Him as you would to a close friend whom you don't really mind talking to on the phone for hours? We ensure we are contact-able anytime and anywhere, maybe because we need somebody to talk with. With all the advance technologies today, there are so many ways in which we can communicate with one another, such as through email, hand-phone, SMS, MMS, chat-line, etc. But none can beat the infallible communication line with God. There is no bill to pay, no cable to lay, no modem or wireless broadband needed. Yet how often we took this for granted and failed to talk with God. Let us remember to pray regularly!

Vow 5 – As I join to this church, I promise to keep the purity, peace and unity of this church, meaning to say, I will not disrupt the order of this church by introducing false doctrines, by disobeying her regulations and Constitution or by creating disharmony amongst the members.

When a Bible-believing church maintains and upholds firmly the keeping of the Purity, Peace and Unity of the church, this is a happy, healthy and growing church. To take away any of these three points, you will end up with an unhappy, unhealthy, and a stagnating or regressing church. All three points are important. And I truly believe Purity is the most important of all. It is the foundation. Without purity, peace and unity are absolutely meaningless. Imagine in a common home setup: a father, a mother

and a child or children. Every evening they enjoy short moments over a family dinner cooked by the mother, scene of a simple family with peace and unity. It will be so until the day the husband secretly gets involved with another woman in an affair without the knowledge of his family, especially the wife. But once purity is lost, so what if he comes home as usual to have dinner with the family in peace and unity? That peace and unity become meaningless because purity is gone. And then the day comes when the secret affair comes to light, no more peace, and no more unity. The wife is hurt badly because her own husband has betrayed her trust. The children are affected because of the parent's constant quarreling and fighting, eventual divorce. In addition to this, we can imagine the very serious damage done to the children by the father's bad example. They may grow up thinking lightly of relationships, which may cause them to commit adultery or pre-marital sex in the future. Purity is indeed important. Without purity, all talks about peace and unity are meaningless. As purity is important in every home, it is the same for the church. I am sure every pastor and every church leader will want their church to be always a happy, healthy and growing church. I don't think any pastor would look forward to an unhappy, sick and dying church.

The purity of the church is based on Scriptures alone, the Word of God. The Battle today is the battle for the Bible. Attacks against the Bible do not stop at Inspiration, and such attacks began in the 20th century when modernism and liberalism hot up and swept across the Christian world. The Christian Church at large has stood firm upon Bible Inspiration, with a minority fallen and overpowered by the Modernist. Satan continues to attack God's Word, and now the attack is on the Preservation of the Inspired Word of God. Since Satan has failed to remove God's Word in the hands of God's people, he seeks now to shake their confidence in the Book that is in their hands. This is a smart move, is it not? You keep holding on to your ice-cream no matter how I try to persuade you to throw it away. But now I know you will not let go of the ice cream. And so I will say to you that your ice cream has turned bad

and is contaminated by some germs. You may not believe me totally, but doubts begin to fill your mind. 'Oh dear, maybe my ice-cream really has got germs in it and if I eat it, will I get diarrhea or not?' That is what happens when people come and tell you, 'Yes, this is God's Word absolutely, but there are some scribal mistakes in it, but never mind, all that God wants us to know concerning Him, His gospel truth, doctrines and salvation, all these do not have mistakes at all. But the damage is already done. Once you tell me the Bible contains mistakes, whenever I read it now, I will be wondering whether this passage contains any mistakes or not. I will then be at the mercy of the people who tell me which parts have mistakes and which parts do not have any mistakes. Do you get my point? The purity of the Church rests entirely upon her absolute trust and faithfulness in the Written Word of God. Once purity has been shown the door (e.g. believing that the Bible has mistakes), peace and unity become meaningless. They might as well be shown out the door, too. Satan loves peace and unity based upon his evil propaganda, but hates purity to the core. Never let friendship or fellowship blind our eyes and not see the importance of purity within the church. Without purity, there can be no true peace and unity.

Vow 6 – I promise to obey the leaders whom God has set over this church as well as be subject to their discipline.

Not only do the officers of the Church preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments (Water Baptism and Lord's Supper), they are also to exercise church discipline within the church. Discipline means taking corrective measures as punishments in order to maintain the good conduct of church members. Church discipline is one of the most neglected practices in most churches today. This is probably the reason why church hopping seems to be the trend nowadays. With the availability of so many independent churches today, one can easily pick and choose which church he wants to attend. Before any church is able to mete out any discipline, he is gone and has joined himself to another church. If he runs into trouble again, he can leave and look for yet another church. Church discipline must be upheld for

the sake of correction and restoration. It is also to maintain the purity of the church.

The basis and authority to administer discipline by the church officers is given in Matthew 18:15-17.

- 1) Go to the erring one alone to exhort him to repent. If he resists, take with you two or three others as witnesses.
- 2) If he continues to harden his heart, inform the church leaders.
- 3) If he insists on resisting, consider him as a sinning heathen man.

There are three main occasions for church discipline: false doctrine (Titus 1:13), open sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

The ultimate scenario in church discipline is the exercise of ex-communication. Ex-communication means to deliver the individual to Satan for the destruction of the body (1 Corinthians 5:5). It must be done publicly before the congregation. He will still be welcomed to join the worship service but he will not be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper or serve in any ministries of the church. However, we must not forget that the aim of ex-communication is restoration. If the guilty one shows genuine repentance, we must restore him and receive him back to the community again.

Apart from remembering our membership vows, let us remember we are members of the same body of Christ. We may be different in character, personality and behavior from one another. Nevertheless, we can still have the same mind of Christ, to care for and to love one another. While the Lord tarries, let us continue to grow spiritually together in Him. Amen.

Familiarity with sacred things

(J. C. Philpot, "New Years' Address, 1858", "Grace Gems!")

"Take heed unto yourselves!" Acts 20:28

This was Paul's public warning to the elders of the church at Ephesus. It was Paul's private warning to his friend and disciple, his beloved son, Timothy. And do not all who write or speak in the name of the Lord need the same warning?

Familiarity with sacred things has a natural tendency to harden the conscience, where grace does not soften and make it tender.

Men may preach and pray until both become a mere mechanical habit; and they may talk about Christ and His sufferings until they feel as little touched by them as a 'tragic actor' on the stage, of the sorrows which he impersonates.

Well, then, may the Holy Spirit sound this note of warning, as with trumpet voice, in the ears of the servants of Christ. "Take heed unto yourselves!"



“Cross Bearing”

a message delivered by the Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo, Academic Dean of Far Eastern Bible College. Even as the Son of God bore our sins on Calvary's cross, what is it that we are to bear for Him?

(Preached at Calvary Pandan BPC Sunset Gospel Hour, 25 Oct 1998)

Text: Mark 8:27-38

Introduction

In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Jesus tells us to bear the cross. What is cross bearing? In the Philippines, the Roman Catholics take it literally. Yearly, on Good Friday, there will be those who literally crucify themselves on the cross. This they do to atone for their sins. Their crucifixion is of course not unto death. They hang there for about an hour. The nails used have been soaked in alcohol for a year (thoroughly sterilised). There is no profuse bleeding, there is no danger of infection. Moreover, a lot of fanfare accompany these people who go to the cross; Jesus was mocked when He was on the cross but these people are cheered. They do all this because they think that God will forgive them of their sins if they go to the cross themselves. Can our sins be forgiven in this way? No, not at all. The Bible clearly states it is faith that saves, not works—not even crucifying ourselves on the cross. In order to be saved, we must look to Jesus alone, not to ourselves.

Those who crucify themselves have really compounded their sin, because by so doing they are telling Jesus that what He did on the cross was not enough to save them; that His death was not powerful enough. This is an insult to Jesus, is it not? If you want your sins forgiven just look to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So what is cross bearing? What did Jesus mean when he said anyone who wants to follow Him must take up his cross? It is important that we study the context

of Jesus' words. This is the key to understanding what cross bearing means. Jesus in Mark 8:27-38 tells us that bearing the cross consists of these 3 requirements:

Cross Bearing Requires Us to Know Who Jesus Really Is (8:27-30)

In v27, Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" Please know that by this time, Jesus had already spent two years in ministry. He had taught the people many things about the Kingdom of God. He had done many miracles to prove that He truly was their Messiah. As a matter of fact, He had just fed the 5,000 miraculously with 5 loaves and 2 fishes, and then the 4,000 in a similar way. But after revealing Himself in so many different ways that He was truly their Messiah and Saviour, did the people realise who He really was? Sad to say, the Jews, up till this point, failed to recognise Jesus as their promised Messiah.

Jesus lamented in v21, "How is it that ye do not understand?" It is because they had their minds set on the material and temporal things of life instead of the spiritual and eternal. When Jesus fed the crowds miraculously, they wanted to make Him king. Why? Because of free food! Jesus told them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw (understand) the miracles, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life" (John 6). The multitudes saw the bread that was miraculously produced, but were totally blind to the Producer—the True Bread. We read in John 6:66, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

Then Jesus asked the 12, "Will ye also go away?" Peter gave a most wonderful answer, "Lord, to

whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Others only saw Jesus as one of the prophets, but Peter by God's grace managed to see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. What does "the Christ" mean? The Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah—the Anointed One. In the OT, only special servants of God were anointed, namely, the prophet, the priest, and the king. By calling Jesus the Christ, Peter was in effect saying, "Lord, you are Prophet of prophets, Priest of priests, and King of kings."

Is Jesus the Christ—the Son of the living God; Prophet of prophets, Priest of priests, and King of kings to you? Is He the Lord and Saviour of your life? Some people say, "I only want Jesus as my Saviour, but I don't want Him as my Lord." "I want to go to heaven, but I don't want to surrender every aspect of my life to His Lordship." If you think and behave like this, you are not bearing the cross. Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself." You must no longer be lord of your life. Christ must be Lord.

Making Jesus Lord of your life is the most basic step of cross bearing. If you don't then you won't be able to do the next thing in cross bearing which is to suffer for Christ.

Cross Bearing Requires Us to Suffer for Christ in this Life (8:31-33)

Jesus in v31 tells His disciples that He "must suffer many things, and be rejected, . . . and be killed." Now this is difficult to swallow for Peter. Peter rebuked Jesus openly. He did not want Jesus to go to the cross. He did not want Jesus to die. Why? Didn't Peter just make a remarkable statement that Jesus was the Christ—his Lord and his God, and was commended by Jesus for so confessing Him? Why did Peter rebuke Jesus and dissuade Him from going to His death? It is probably because Peter had big plans for himself. He was Jesus' number one disciple. And he probably thought that the confession he had just made about Jesus had put him in a good position to be Jesus' right hand man when He became King over all Israel. You see, Peter still

thought that Jesus was going to overthrow the Roman government and set Himself up as King. He was looking forward to Jesus' victory over the Romans. He was ever eager to fight for Jesus. Later we find him quick to draw His sword to fight the mob which came to arrest Jesus. Also, if Jesus were to suffer, be rejected, and killed, it would also mean His disciples would suffer the same fate. Peter didn't want to suffer, to be rejected, to be killed. He showed it when he denied the Lord three times.

Peter wanted glory without the suffering! Jesus had to rebuke Him in v33, "Get thee behind me Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Jesus called Peter Satan here. This does not mean that Peter was possessed by Satan for if Peter was demon-possessed, the Lord would surely have cast the devil out. Jesus called Peter Satan because Peter here displayed the sinful ambition and pride of Satan. Satan was once God's archangel Lucifer (light-bearer). He was created very beautiful and was made a chief angel. But pride entered Lucifer, and he tried to usurp God's throne. For this rebellion, he was cast out of heaven. Like Satan, Peter wanted his will to be done, not God's will: "for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Peter wanted the crown without the cross. This was not God's will. The cross must come first before there can be the crown: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross."

Jesus must die first before He can be raised. God's pattern to success is condescension before exaltation, humiliation before glorification, demotion before promotion.

Peter was not wrong to think that Jesus must become King, that He must rule over all Israel, and over the whole world, sitting on the throne of David. The Old Testament talks about Jesus ruling over all the earth, but the time is not yet. Jesus had to come first as a Lamb, before He comes as a Lion the second time. It was not wrong for Peter to want to rule with Christ either. But Jesus had to impress upon Peter that before we can reign with Him, we must also suffer for Him.

No cross, no crown. Spurgeon rightly said, "There are no crownwearers in heaven that were not crossbearers here below." To what extent must we carry the cross? Here is the 3rd requirement:

Cross Bearing Requires Us to Die for Christ if Needs Be (8:35-38)

Jesus said, "Take up the cross, and follow me." "Follow me" in what way? Jesus was on His way to the cross. He is telling His disciples to go by way of the cross. Cross bearing means being willing to lose one's life for Christ or for His sake. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (v35).

Peter and the rest of the disciples have been thinking of great things. Peter wanted power. James and John asked for power. Both wanted to occupy the left and right hand seats of power with Jesus. They were very ambitious. They wanted the world. But Jesus reminded them in v36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (v37). No amount of money in the world can pay the price of a soul. All the money in the world combined cannot buy back your soul from eternal damnation in hell. The only thing that is powerful enough to redeem our souls from eternal punishment is the death of Christ on the cross. The blood Jesus shed on the cross is the only thing valuable enough to save us from our sins. Unless we do as Jesus did, we will be lost. Just as Jesus denied Himself by forsaking His glory in heaven, humbling Himself to be clothed in human flesh, and dying a painful and cruel death on the cross, did He succeed in saving us from our sins. So also, if we want to be saved, we must die to self (our pride, our ambition, our big plans), and live only for Christ. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

As Christians, if we want to be useful to the Lord, we must bear the cross. We must say, "I am ready to die for my Lord." We must serve Him without conditions. To those who are in the full-time

ministry, or who are training to be full-time workers, or who intend to serve the Lord full-time, we must not say, "If only the Lord will do this for me, or take care of this and that, then I will serve Him." I know of a fellow college-mate of mine who was asked to pastor a small church. He told this church, "I will only pastor your church if you can pay me a four-figure salary." Is this the way of Christ? Is this bearing the cross of Christ?

We ought to learn from the martyrs of the Cambodian Church who gave their life for Christ. Jimmy Rim—a missionary to Cambodia, an eyewitness of the Cambodian holocaust—tells us the testimony of 3 Cambodian Christians in the face of death before the Khmer Rouge executioners. Read pp113-4. This is taken from his book—With Christ in the Killing Fields. I urge you to read the whole story. It is a thriller. Copies are available at the book table outside.

The testimony of Jimmy Rim has stirred the hearts of 3 of our Korean graduates to become missionaries in Cambodia. One is working in Phnom Penh among the orphans and slum children. The two others are in Kompong Som, going into the neighbouring villages planting churches. Altogether they have already established 5 B-P churches. This is not an easy thing to do. I have visited them once, and I can appreciate the situation. The Cambodians don't trust people easily. The war has made them very fearful people. But our Korean graduates have learned to bear the cross. They live with the people, eat with the people, and serve the people sincerely. Rev Jonathan Lee lives in the slum area in Phnom Penh, and takes care of the slum children (about 50 of them). They come to him naked, dirty, hungry. He cleans them up, clothes them, cut their fingernails, their hair, and give them food. They can't afford to go to school, so he conducts classes for them teaching them English and the Bible. All of them know Jesus Christ. When he was down with dengue fever recently, they surrounded his bed and prayed for him in tears.

Rev Moses Hahn goes out to the villages preaching the gospel. He has established 3 B-P churches in SW Cambodia. It is dangerous to live in Cambodia. We don't find there the law and order that we find here in Singapore. There was one night, some

robbers with guns came to the mission house. They tried to get in but could not. Since they couldn't take anything from inside, they took all the good furniture that were outside. The robbers went next door, broke in, shot and killed the man inside. He was the Cambodian language tutor of our missionaries. They wrote back to tell us about it, and to pray. They were of course afraid, but there was not one word about wanting to come home. Certain missionaries would have asked their home churches to evacuate them immediately. But our missionaries stayed put. That is cross bearing.

Rev David Koo has his computer ministry. He teaches computer free of charge. All his students (over a hundred of them) attend his Sunday service. The government recognises his good work, and when he applied for official recognition of his church, they approved it without hesitation. He calls his church, Jesus Christ B-P Church, with a huge signboard. Some missionaries may be scared to put up a huge sign board with the name of Jesus Christ especially in a land dominated by Buddhists. But our missionaries are not ashamed of Christ and His name. Our missionaries are not ashamed of Christ and His gospel. They preach Him openly, publicly, and freely. If we don't want Jesus to be ashamed of us in heaven, then we must not be ashamed of Him on earth. We must not be ashamed to bear the cross. The cross is an emblem of suffering and shame. V38 says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." In Rev 2:10 Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." I'd rather have crowns in heaven than crowns on earth. Earthly crowns will not last, only heavenly crowns will. But the cross must come first before the crown. Are you willing to bear the cross of Christ all the way unconditionally?

Conclusion

What is cross bearing? Cross bearing involves these 3 requirements: (1) Cross bearing requires us to know who Jesus really is, that He is not only our Saviour but also our Lord; (2) Cross bearing requires

us to suffer for Christ in this life; and (3) Cross bearing requires us to be willing and ready to die for Christ as His true and faithful disciples.

This poem describes cross bearing well. It is entitled: "God Counted Crosses."

I counted dollars while God counted crosses.

I counted gains while He counted losses.

I counted my worth by the things gained in store.

But He sized me up by the scars that I bore.

I coveted honours and sought for degrees.

He wept as He counted the hours on my knees.

And I never knew 'til one day at a grave.

How vain are these things that we spend life to save!

May the Lord help us to deny ourselves, take up our own crosses, and follow Him till we see Him face to face. There must be the cross first before there can be the crown. Let us pray.

family focus:

NEW! 2 articles with a focus on the family. 1) A look at our priorities in life, a message delivered by the Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo at Life BPC on 12 Dec, 1999, 2) Know the “Secrets of a Happy Home Life” by J.R. Miller, 1894 (“GraceGems”).

(Preached at Life BPC, 10.30 am service, 12 Dec 1999)

Text: Matt 6:19-34, John 14:1-6

Introduction

The year 1999 will end in a few days' time. We are about to enter a new millennium. I think this is a good time for us to reflect on how we have lived our life.

How have we lived our life this year? Have we lived for self or for Christ? Are we living for this world, or for the Lord? Have we been faithfully keeping our personal devotions with the Lord? Have we been praying to Him before making important decisions whether at home or at work? Have we been actively involved in the church or is church for us just a Sunday pastime?

The question I want all of us to think about today is: What do we live for? What should we be living for? But before we can answer this practical question, we must first ask this fundamental question: Whom do we live for?

1. Whom Do I Live For? (Matt 6:24, John 14:1)

Matt 6:24 says, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other, Ye cannot serve God and mammon." John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

What do we live for is dependent on whom we live for. Do we live for self, or for Christ? Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." Are you your own master, or is the Lord your Master? Do you love yourself, or do you love the Lord? No one can serve

Christ and money at the same time. The word "mammon" here means "money." Actually the word "mammon" is used here figuratively to refer to the sinful self, the greedy and covetous heart. Money is not evil. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil.

Jesus wants complete allegiance from us or none at all. Consider the story of the rich young ruler in Matt 19:26-36. This rich young towkay went to Jesus and asked Him what he must do to obtain eternal life. Jesus told him to sell all his goods, give the money to the poor and then follow Him. This rich young ruler though devout was unwilling to part with his riches to be a poor preacher like Jesus. He was unwilling to forsake his position as a CEO to be a lowly carpenter like Jesus. He was not willing to give up being a rich ruler to become a poor preacher.

Now is Jesus trying to say that we ought to live in poverty, that we should only choose low-paying jobs, and live in an attap house. Of course not. The point is this: Are we willing to give up all those things, yes, even our life for the Lord Jesus Christ if He calls us to? If we are not willing, then we do not love Jesus; we love this world. If we love this world, we will not love God. If we love God you will not love this world. It is as simple as that. Test your love for Christ. Ask yourself: If the Lord were to call me into full-time service, to be a pastor, or missionary; am I willing to say Yes!??

One person in the OT who demonstrated true love for God was Job. He was truly tested. He was a very rich man, had good health, and a nice family. But everything was taken away from him—Everything! Health, wealth, family, friends. His wife even told him—"Curse God and die." But what did Job say? "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Are you like Job?

Dear friends, do you know Jesus Christ? Do you believe in Him? Do you trust Him a hundred percent? If you believe in God, believe also in Christ. Some of you may say, "I don't believe in Christ, I believe only in myself." "I will do things my way." "I am bright and intelligent." "I am a good citizen in Singapore," "I am sure I am good enough for heaven." But you are wrong. No matter how good we think we are, we are all not good enough. In the eyes of man, we may be good. But in the eyes of God, we are all full of filth. We fall far short of God's standard. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Jesus said there is only one way. He and He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. No man can enter heaven except through Him.

Unless we first believe in God and trust in Christ completely, it is useless to talk about what to live for in life. If Christ is not in our heart, life will be full of darkness. Christ is the light of the world. If we do not have Christ, we live in darkness. We live our lives without meaning and purpose. We live our lives just like the animals. We live just to survive. We live simply to gratify our carnal desires. So we work our tails off just to get more and more money. We become enslaved to money. What a miserable life! It is a life that brings death! Dear friends, you don't want this kind of a life.

All of us need Christ in our lives. When we believe and trust in Christ, life becomes truly lively! That is because Jesus saves! Jesus gives life. He came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. In Christ, we know where we come from, why we are here, and where we will be at the end.

God did not make us to live like animals. God did not create us like the animals. He made us very special. He made us in His image. He made us to have a fellowship with Him. The animals cannot commune with God. We can! So what is man's purpose on earth? It is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. The primary goal of our life should be to live for God—to glorify Him. In everything that we do, our central thought should be: Will this glorify God? It is when we seek to glorify that we enjoy Him. When we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us.

Once we know whom we are living for, then what we should live for comes naturally.

2. What Do I Live For (Matt 6:19-21, John 14:1-3)

Matt 6:19-21 tells us, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

What is our philosophy of life. If it is to live for Christ then we would not want to live for the treasures of this earth but for treasures of heaven. What do we live for? A person may accumulate millions or billions of dollars in his lifetime, but when he dies, the money will not go with him. Is it therefore not foolish to live for the things of this world? To work so hard for things that are temporary and transient? The material things of this world are easily destroyed or lost whether it be by fire, flood, moth, worms, termites, or thieves. You must have read in the papers a few days ago about a man who took out his life savings from the bank for safekeeping in his home. He was afraid the Y2K bug eat up all his money. But then there was another danger—thieves. He lost all his money. This is the kind of world we live in. It is not worth working for the treasures of this earth. They are easily lost, stolen, or destroyed.

Work instead for the treasures in heaven. Your treasures in heaven are safe in God's hands. Moreover, your treasures there will last forever. Nothing can destroy your treasures in heaven, and nobody can take them away from you. What are these treasures in heaven? The treasures in heaven are eternal rewards God gives to those who live for Him and who serve Him faithfully. Please note that the treasures in heaven are not earned in heaven but on earth. The only opportunity for us to be rich in heaven is here and now while we still have breath. The chance ends when we die or when Christ returns.

There will be two judgments in the future: the judgment of the Great White Throne for unbelievers, and the judgment seat of Christ for believers. At the judgment of the Great White Throne, all unbelievers will be judge for their sins and cast into the lake of fire. You do not want to be in this judgment. The only way to escape from it is to believe in Christ who will forgive you of all your sins. The other judgment—the Bema or judgment seat of Christ—is a judgment for believers. Christ will judge them not according to their sins, but service.

Paul tells us that we are all in a spiritual marathon. In 1 Cor 9:24-25, he says, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." An incorruptible crown. A crown that will not rust away. What are these crowns? It has been called a (1) crown of righteousness for all those who love the Lord's return (2 Tim 4:8), (2) crown of life to those who endure temptations, trials, and troubles (Jas 1:12, Rev 2:10), and (3) crown of glory to those who serve Him faithfully (1 Pet 5:4). These will be presented at the Bema of Christ. If you have build upon the foundation of Christ gold, silver, and precious stones, you will receive a reward, but if your works are wood, hay and stubble, they will all be burned up and you will suffer loss. So don't think that every one in heaven will be equal. There will those who will have more rewards. There will be those who have less rewards. And there will be those who have no rewards.

How to get rewards? Not how much you serve the Lord, but how well you serve Him. Note: it is not how much but how well. Not the quantity of service but the quality of service. Please do not think that it is full-time workers, missionaries, and pastors who will get the most rewards. It all depends on how we serve Him. If we serve Him with selfish motives, we will lose our reward. An ordinary member of the church may get more rewards than the full-time worker if he serves the Lord sincerely, faithfully,

cheerfully, lovingly. It all boils down to our motives and attitudes.

When we concentrate on serving the Lord, He will pay attention to our physical needs. Look at vv31-33, "Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? Or What shall we drink? Or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all the things shall be added unto you." What a wonderful promise, and a comforting thought. I have a Father in heaven who takes care of me. The problem with some of us is that we doubt this promise. So we don't put God first in our lives. My career is first. We don't make our work fit into God's plan. We make God fit into our career plans. God is my assistant to help me get what I want in my career—promotion, success, better pay. It should be the other way round. My career must fit into God's plan. What can I do for the Lord and for His kingdom in the area of my occupation? The question is not what God can do for me, but what I can do for God. And it is when we honour the Lord, that the Lord honours us. Put God first, and then He will put you first.

When we put God first in our lives, He will bless us with a happy life. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Happiness in life is to be free from worries and anxieties, isn't it. The Lord here tells us not to worry. He knows that we worry too much. We worry unnecessarily. So to drive the point home, He tells us not to worry three times (vv25, 31, 24). Do not worry, do not worry, do not worry, O ye of little faith. The Lord knows what you need, and He will provide it. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. Do you know exactly the number of hairs on your head? Some of us may know because we have none. But do you know exactly the time each strand fell off? No we don't and we can't. God knows. Every single strand is numbered. Not one single hair drops without Him knowing. If God takes note of all these little things about us, will He not take note of all the important things that we need, like food and clothing. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow

is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" You are much more important than the grass that God takes care of. Why do you doubt the Lord by pursuing after mammon and not after God?

The Lord has provided for all my needs in life. I am very happy with what I have. Some people need to wear designer clothes to be happy in life. They need all those expensive things to boost their self-esteem. They are told that if they have a high level of self-esteem, they will be happy. My shirts cost no more than \$20 each. In fact many of them are hand me downs. I am happy to accept them. This coat I am wearing is bought from a Salvation Army thrift store for \$5.00. I am contented. I am happy. Why worry about food and clothes. There are more important things in life to worry about. I want to concentrate on serving the Lord—seeking first His kingdom, and His righteousness. It is not self-esteem, but Christ-esteem that will bring happiness to our lives. What is Christ-esteem? It is this: Not I but Christ. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Conclusion

For whom should we live? For self or for Christ? We should live for Christ. For what shall I live? For wealth, power, material goods, earthly pleasures, or for treasures in heaven by serving the Lord faithfully wherever we are? We should serve the Lord faithfully, and let our chief aim in life be to glorify Him, and enjoy Him forever.

The road to Heaven is not so pleasant, and comfortable, and easy, and flowery—as many dream. It is not a bright, sunny, flowery path. It is not paved with triumph—though it is to end in victory. The *termination* is glory, honor, and immortality; but on the *way*—there is the thorn in the flesh, the sackcloth, and the cross. *Recompense* yonder—but *labor* here! *Rest* yonder—but *weariness* here! Joy and security *yonder*—but *here* endurance and watchfulness, the race, the battle, the burden, and oftentimes the heavy heart. (*Horatius Bonar*)

“Secrets of a Happy Home Life”

The biblical path to a happy and God-honoring home life, an essay by J.R. Miller, 1894.
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Home is among the holiest of words. A true home is one of the most sacred of places. It is a sanctuary into which men flee from the world's perils and alarms. It is a resting-place to which at close of day the weary retire to gather new strength for the battle and toils of tomorrow. It is the place where love learns its lessons, where life is schooled into discipline and strength, where character is molded. Out of the homes of a community comes the life of the community, as a river from the thousand springs that gush out on the hillsides.

We are all concerned in the making of some one home—our own home. One instrument out of tune in an orchestra mars the music which breaks upon the ears of the listeners. One discordant life in a household mars the perfectness of the music of love in the family. We should make sure that our life is not the one that is out of tune. We do not need to worry about the other lives; if each looks to his own, that will do.

When our Lord sent His disciples out to preach, one of His instructions was—"Into whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house." Peace is a good word. It is more than a salutation; falling from the Master's lips, it is a divine benediction as well. Peace, too, is a fruit of grace, which includes all that is sweetest and most divine in Christian culture. It is especially suggestive of the harmony of love, which is the perfection of beautiful living. Christ's peace is a blessing, which comes out of struggle and discipline. Well, therefore, does the salutation "Peace!" befit a Christian home, which ought to be the abode of peace.

What are some of the secrets of happy home life? The answer might be given in one word—Christ. Christ at the marriage-altar; Christ on the bridal journey; Christ when the new home is set up; Christ when the baby is born; Christ when a child dies; Christ in the pinching times; Christ in the days of plenty; Christ in the nursery, in the kitchen, in the

parlor; Christ in the toil and in the rest; Christ along all the years; Christ when the wedded pair walk toward the sunset gates; Christ in the sad hour when farewells are spoken, and one goes on before and the other stays, bearing the unshared grief. Christ is the secret of happy home life.

But the lesson may be broken up. The making of a home begins before there is a home—it begins in the days when the life-choices are made. There are many unhappy marriages. There are families sheltered in houses, which are not homes. A happy home does not come as a matter of course because there has been a marriage ceremony, with pledged vows and a ring, and the minister's "Whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder," and a benediction. Happiness does not come through any mere forms or ceremonies; it has to be planned for, lived for, sacrificed for, prayed for, and oftentimes suffered for.

There must be a wise choosing before marriage, or it may be impossible to make a happy home. At few points in life is divine guidance more severely needed than when the question of marriage is decided. A mistake then will cast its shadows down all the years to the close of life. Many a career is blighted by a foolish marriage. Wedded happiness depends greatly on reverent, prayerful, deliberate, wise choosing before marriage.

But now the choices have been made—carefully made—we will say. The happy day has come. The plighted lovers stand at the marriage-altar. Taking the woman's hand, the man says to her—"I take you to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge you my fidelity." Taking the hand of the man, the woman says to him, with slight verbal variations, the same words. The two are pronounced husband and wife,

and go forth to begin their wedded life together, no more twain, but now one.

The happy pair are in their own home. It may be a fine, great house, with rich furniture, costly pictures, and all the elegance of wealth; or it may be a little house, with four rooms, cheap furniture, homemade carpets, and empty of adornment. It makes very little difference what the size of the house, or what its furniture may be. The happiness of the home does not depend on the house or on what it contains; the people who live in the house MAKE the happiness,—or MAR it.

The HUSBAND has his part. He must be a good man. Not every man who marries thinks of the responsibility he assumes when he takes a young girl away from the shelter of father-love and mother-love—the softest, warmest nest in the world, and leads her into a new home, where henceforth his love is to be her only shelter. Well may the woman say as she goes to the marriage altar—

"Before I trust my fate to you,

Or place my hand in thine;

Before I let your future give

Color and form to mine;

Before I peril all to thee,

Question your soul tonight for me.

Does there within your dimmest dreams

A possible future shine

Wherein your life could henceforth breathe

Untouched, unshared by mine?

If so, at any pain or cost,

Oh, tell me before all is lost."

No man is fit to be a husband who is not a good man. He need not be great, nor rich, nor brilliant, nor clever, but he must be good, or he is not worthy to

take a gentle, trusting woman's tender life into his keeping. Of course he must love his wife; without love there is no real marriage, and ceremony and ring and vows and prayer are only empty formalities. He must love his wife and be always her lover. The world has read and heard quite enough moralizing about a wife's duty to be always winning and attractive, retaining the charm of girlhood amid all cares, toils, and sorrows. Of course; but is a husband under less obligation to love his wife and always to be lover-like? This is a good rule, which should work both ways.

But affectionateness, however desirable, is not all that is needed in a husband who would do his full share in happy home making. Life is not all sentiment. We cannot live on ambrosia. Happiness must have a very practical basis. A good husband must be a man. He must be a good man—manly, true, worthy, brave, generous, a man whom a noble woman can respect and honor all the days of her life. He must be a sober man; no man who comes home under the influence of intoxicating drink, even occasionally only, is going to do quite his share in making happiness for the woman who has trusted her all to him. He must be a man of pure, unblemished life, whose character is above suspicion, whose name will always be an honor and a pride in his own home. The husband has a great deal to do with the question of home happiness.

The WIFE, too, has a responsibility. The prosaic arts of housekeeping are far more important factors of home happiness than many people without experience imagine. John Ruskin talks to young women of the etymology of the name 'wife'—"What do you think the beautiful word 'wife' comes from?" he asks. "It means 'weaver.' You must either be house-wives or house-moths; remember that. In the deep sense, you must weave men's fortunes, and embroider them, or feed upon them, and bring them to decay. Wherever a true wife comes, home is always around her. The stars may be the canopy over her head, the glow-worm in the night's cold grass be the fire at her feet, but home is where she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far around her,—better than houses with ceilings of cedar, or with paintings

of the masters, shedding its quiet light for those who else were homeless."

Home is the true wife's kingdom. There, first of all places, she must be strong and beautiful. She may touch life outside in many ways, if she can do it without slighting the duties that are hers within her own doors. But if any calls for her service must be declined, they should not be the duties of her home. These are hers, and no other one's. Very largely does the wife hold in her hands, as a sacred trust, the happiness and the highest good of the hearts that nestle there. The best husband—the truest, the noblest, the gentlest, the richest-hearted—cannot make his home happy if his wife be not, in every reasonable sense, a helpmate to him.

In the last analysis, home happiness depends on the wife. Her spirit gives the home its atmosphere. Her hands fashion its beauty. Her heart makes its love. And the end is so worthy, so noble, so divine, that no woman who has been called to be a wife, and has listened to the call, should consider any price too great to pay, to be the light, the joy, the blessing, the inspiration of a home.

Men with fine gifts think it worth while to live to paint a few great pictures which shall be looked at and admired for generations; or to write a few songs which shall sing themselves into the ears and hearts of men. But the woman who makes a sweet, beautiful home, filling it with love and prayer and purity, is doing something better than anything else her hands could find to do beneath the skies.

Some marriages are unhappy. How can husband and wife live happily in their wedded life? Wedded happiness is a lesson that must be learned. No two lives brought into this close relation can blend into one without self-discipline. "Marriage is the beautiful unfolding of many years."

Ofttimes it takes a long while for a wedded pair to learn the lesson of living happily together. They are discouraged because such love as theirs does not yield perfect happiness from the very first day. It always costs to learn the lesson. The block of marble must wane, as the statue is sculptured and grows.

There must be the cutting away of much in both lives; there must be restraint, self-denial, self-effacement, while they are being trained to live one life rather than two. Love is always discipline.

Paul lays down the basis for happy wedded life in the words—"Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3:18-19). Perhaps these instructions are not always well understood. Sometimes one of the counsels, and sometimes the other, is unduly emphasized. Some men insist upon the first—"Wives, be in subjection to your husbands." They interpret the words somewhat harshly, as if a wife were to be only as a child to her husband, or even as a servant, whose duty is to minister to his desires, to please him, to run at his every call and command. This is in accordance with heathen notions of the marriage relation, but it is not after Christian teaching.

It is to be particularly noted that Paul nowhere says—"Wives, obey your husbands." In our Common Version the word "obedient" occurs in one place; but in the Revised Version the counsel is that wives should be "in subjection to" their husbands. Indeed, however, the spirit of love is always that of subjection, of yielding, or serving, in all life's relations.

In another place, where Paul gives like instruction, his words are—"Wives be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:22-23). No doubt the husband is the head of the household; but what a responsibility this teaching puts upon him! His wife is to be in subjection to him, "as unto the Lord." He is to be to her what Christ is to the Church.

If a man will insist on his wife fulfilling her part, he must also insist on honestly fulfilling his own part,—all the sacred duties which are his as a HUSBAND. What, then, is the husband's share in this happy home making? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). A husband is to love his wife. Is

love despotic? Does love put its object in a servant's place? No; love serves. It seeks not its own. It desires "not to be served, but to serve." It does not demand attention, deference, service, subjection. It seeks rather to serve, to give, to honor.

The measure of the love required by the husband is to be well noted—"Even as Christ also loved the Church." This is a lofty standard. How did Christ show His love for His Church? Think of His gentleness to His friends, His patience with them in all their faultiness, His thoughtfulness, His unwearied kindness. Never did a harsh word fall from His lips upon their ears. Never did He do anything to give them pain. It was not easy for Him at all times to maintain such constancy and such composure and quietness of love toward them; for they were very faulty, and tried Him in a thousand ways. But His affection never wearied nor failed for an instant. Husbands are to love their wives even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it. He loved even to the cost of utmost self-sacrifice.

There are men, however, who would do this, whose love would sacrifice even life itself for a wife, but who fail in daily and hourly tenderness, when there is no demand for great self-denial. Hence the other counsel must be remembered—"Love your wives, and be not bitter against them." More wives might complain of the lack of love in the little tendernesses than in great acts and manifestations.

A true woman's heart craves gentleness. It is hurt by bitter words, by coldness, by impatience, by harsh criticisms, by neglect, by the withholding of the expressions of affection. Love craves its daily bread of tenderness. No husband should deny his wife the little things of affection, the amenities of love, along the busy, trying days, and then think to make amends by putting a flower in her cold hand when she lies in the coffin. Will not conscience then whisper love's reproach?

"You placed this flower in her hand, you say,

This pure, pale rose in her hand of clay?

Methinks, could she lift her sealed eyes,

They would meet your own with a grieved surprise.

When did you give her a flower before?

Ah, well, what matter, when all is o'er?

But I pray you think

That love will starve, if it is not fed

That true hearts pray for their daily bread."

No true wife will ever quarrel with the divine law that makes the husband the head of the household, if she has a husband who loves her up to the measure of the divine requirements for husbands—"Even as Christ also loved the Church." Such love never demands obedience, never demands anything; it seeks not to be served, but to serve.

On the other hand, true love in a wife also lives to serve. Love always serves, or it is not love at all. The greatest in Christ's kingdom are those who serve the most unselfishly. Husband and wife vie with each other in loving and serving. They mutually bear each other's burdens. The husband is the head, but he never says so; never reminds his wife of it; never claims authority; and defers to her in everything.

The wife recognizes her husband as head, honors him, looks up to him with esteem and confidence—all the more because he never demands subjection. Thus true love in husband and wife never has any trouble about rights or place. Side by side they stand, these two wedded lovers, each a part of the other, each incomplete, a mere fragment without the other, but strong in their happy union in love.

But there are other elements in the composition of the home. Among the blessings which make happiness are the CHILDREN, who come with their sweet life and their holy gladness. Children bring cares and troubles, and demand toil and sacrifice, oftentimes cost pain and grief; yet the blessing they bring to a true home a thousand times repays the care and the cost. It is a sacred hour in a home when a baby is born and laid in the arms of a young father

and mother. It is the final seal upon their wedded love. It is the closing benediction of the marriage ceremony. It draws fragments of heaven trailing after it to the home on earth. Few deeper, purer joys are ever experienced in this world than the joy of true parents on the birth of their first child. Much of home's happiness along the years is made by the children. They are also great blessings to their parents. Ofttimes they teach more lessons than they are taught. We say we train our children; but they train us, also, if we think of them as we should,—as immortal beings come from God to be prepared by us for their mission. A reverent mother sings softly over her child's cradle—

"My child, I fear you; you are a spirit, soul!

How shall I walk before you?

and keep my garments whole?

O Lord, give strength,

give wisdom for the task.

To train this child for You."

Jesus said of little children, that those who receive them in His name receive Him. May we not, then, surely say that children bring great possibility of blessing and happiness to a home? If we receive them as Christ's messengers, as sent to us in His name, and entertain them as we would entertain Him if He had come in place of them, we shall get from them deep and rich good and joy.

A true mother is one of the holiest secrets of home happiness. God sends many beautiful things to this world, many noble gifts; but no blessing is richer than that which He bestows in a mother who has learned love's lessons well, and has realized something of the meaning of her sacred calling.

A FATHER also should be a blessing to a home. The modern tendency to put upon the wife and mother all the responsibility for the making of the home and its happiness is not sanctioned by Christian teachings. The divine commands for the building of the home and the training of the children are given primarily to

the man, although meant for both husband and wife. He cannot evade the responsibility; his position as the head of the family puts upon him the obligation. Besides, it is not manly that a man should want to put the whole burden on her whom he calls "the weaker vessel." If his wife is weak and he is so strong, let him remember that it is the privilege and the duty of strength to bear the heavy part of life's burdens.

There are parts of the home duty which a woman can do infinitely better than a man. Men's hands are clumsy, and often hurt gentle hearts, when it was meant that they should give healing and help. The man has the heavy care of providing for the household. There are tasks, too, for which woman's gentler hands are better fitted. But let no husband nurse the notion that he has no responsibility for the happiness of his home beyond providing food and clothing and other comforts. His strong life should be the secure shelter beneath which his wife and children may safely abide. His character should be a continual revealing of the love and truth and holiness of God. He should live so that, seeing him day after day, his family shall learn to know the beauty of Christ. He is the priest of his house, and as such should both speak to God for his family and speak to them for God. Through him blessings should come to his home every day.

BROTHERS and SISTERS have their part in making the home happiness. Yet not always do they live together so as to make the music of the home one glad, sweet song. Sometimes there is a lack of congeniality in their dispositions. Then oftentimes there seems to be the feeling that home affections do not need the culture that other friendships require. We cannot be brusque, curt, or crude with other people, and expect them to bear patiently with us in spite of our unmannerly behavior. But we are sure of our 'home friends',—so we let ourselves feel,—and do not need to be gentle and thoughtful towards them. So it is that in too many homes brothers and sisters live together year after year under the same roof, mingling in the household communion, yet never forming close friendships, soul never knitting to soul, strangers to each other's inner life. Thus

many rich possibilities of close and holiest friendships are missed.

Another thing that too often mars the home life of brothers and sisters is a spirit of 'commanding' and criticism. Faults are seen, and openly, and not in a gentle way, pointed out and reproved. What one does the others are apt to do; and thus the habit grows, until little but 'sharp speech' and 'inappropriate wrangling' is heard in the home where the conversation might have so much in it of sweetness and profit.

These are suggestions of ways in which, in too many homes, one of the secrets of happiness is lost. It is possible for brothers and sisters to live together in a home so as to add greatly to the happiness and the richness of the household life, and to be comforts and helps to each other. It is said that the poet sisters, Alice and Phoebe Cary, had a secret of happy living together which it were well if all brothers and sisters could learn. "Whatever one felt or endured, because of it she would not inflict any suffering upon her sister! no, not even if that sister had inadvertently been the cause of it. If one sister was out of sorts, she went into her own room, shut her door, and had it out by herself."

These are good rules to be adopted in other homes. If we are feeling uncomfortable from any cause, we have no right, according to the law of love, to diffuse our irritations through the household. If we are in any unhappy mood, in which we cannot suppress the ill-humor, we have no right to vent it in the circle of our loved ones, and would far better go to our own room, or out into the fresh air, alone, somewhere, and stay until we have gotten back our sweet spirit again, so that we can scatter roses, not thorns, among our loved ones.

The possibilities of happiness and blessing among brothers and sisters can be realized only by cultivating the love that seeks not its own, that is not provoked, that bears all things, endures all things, and never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Love's first lesson is that of giving up one's own way, denying one's self, suffering in silence. Where this lesson has been learned, or is being learned, in a household of

young people, each thinks of giving to the others, not of taking from them. Each cultivates gentleness and kindness. The speech of the home grows quiet and tender, is never loud nor angry. The Golden Rule is the law of each life. There is love, and love that reveals itself in a thousand little ways of courtesy and thoughtfulness—nameless things, but things that make up a home happiness on which heaven's angels look down with delight.

Not very long can any family life go on unbroken. Death will visit every home. While we may, we should live together sweetly, patiently, loving and serving each other in all beautiful and Christly ways.

The daily home-life of the household carries in it many possibilities of happiness which are not always realized in families. Some SUGGESTIONS may be made.

1. One is that love must prevail in all the family life. Let parents keep the confidence and affection of their children as long as they live. One of the ways to make sure of this is never to tire of the little marks and tokens of love which children naturally give. The time never comes when it is unmanly for a man to kiss his mother. In the ideal home every child has a good-night kiss for the parents before parting for bed. Let the children do their part, too, in showing affection. There are homes, chill and cold, which could be warmed into love's richest glow in a little time, if all the household hearts were to grow affectionate to each other.

2. Another suggestion is, that all family strife and contention should cease. Why should parents discourage their children by continually nagging and finding fault with them? Why should children dishonor their parents by disobedience, by crude and unfilial treatment, by lack of respect, by refusing to yield to the order of the home? Why should brothers fail in the duties of civility and courtesy to their sisters? Why should sisters show no loving interest in their brothers, and fail to overshadow them as with angel-wings? Why should brothers wrangle and quarrel, separate their interests, and not stand together? Why should sisters have their miserable

little disputes, their envies, jealousies and resentments? Let there be peace in all the home-life.

3. Another suggestion is, that we should not grow discouraged, even if our homes are not yet what we crave. There are some who feel that the battle is hopeless; that they can never grow into beautiful life and character in their present circumstances. That is a mistake. It is possible to grow into all the beauty of peace wherever we may be placed. A lily finds its home in a black bog, but blooms into perfect loveliness.

Suppose that your home-life is discouraging, even to the last degree; yet you may live sweetly in the midst of it, through the grace and help of God. And who knows but that your sweet life may become the power of God to change the home-life into heavenliness? Perhaps God has put you as leaven there, to leaven the whole lump.

I have known a girl go out of a godless, worldly home to college, to find Christ and return home a beautiful earnest Christian. Then I have seen that home transformed in a few years, by that daughter's quiet influence, into an ideal Christian home.

At least, though our home be not what we would like it to be, though it lack warmth and tenderness and congeniality, still, while it is our home, it is our duty to stay in it contentedly, and grow in it into beauty. We know that Jesus lived until thirty years of age in a humble peasant home, with but little culture and education, amid the privations of poverty and hard toil. Yet He was not discontented there. He did not complain of the narrowness and the littleness. He did not chafe under the limitations and the burdens. There His life grew into that marvelous sweetness, that wondrous beauty, that richness and greatness, which we see in Him, when, at thirty years of age, He went out to begin His ministry. Wherever we are planted, we, too, can grow into strength, nobleness and loveliness.

4. Patience is another lesson in learning to live happily together at home. The children of a family have not all the same tastes. It is very easy to fall into the habit of criticizing each other. We know how

nearly Martha spoiled her home happiness, and her sister's also, by criticism. Criticism never fosters affection; you never loved any one better for criticizing you. Usually the best service we can do to a brother or sister is to live a sweet, patient, beautiful, Christly life ourselves, leaving to God the fashioning of their lives. If they are true Christians, He is teaching them and putting His own image on their souls. We might mar this divine work by our criticism.

Suppose you went into an artist's studio and saw a picture at which he had been working for months, yet unfinished; would you, not being an artist, take up his brush and begin to put touches here and there on the canvas? Each life of husband or wife, child, brother or sister, in your home is a picture which God is painting, and which is yet unfinished. Beware that you mar not His work! So let us be patient with one another at home. We all have our faults, we all make mistakes—but we can help each other more by loving patience, than by scathing criticism.

5. True Religion is the great master-secret of all happy home life! The spirit of Christ alone will enable us to live together in perfect peace and love. The presence of Christ in the home is a perpetual blessing. We cannot be selfish, we cannot wrangle and strive, we cannot be bitter and unkind, we cannot be irritable and unreasonable, when conscious of the presence of Christ. If only we can make Christ an abiding guest in our home, and if we can keep ourselves aware of His being with us, our household life cannot help but grow wondrously sweet!

Into every home, at some time, SORROW comes. Then it is that the blessing of religion is specially revealed. We do not see the stars until the sun goes down. The comforts of Christian faith do not reveal themselves to us in their richest light and peace until the darkness of sorrow rests upon our home. But there is light in the darkness when Christ is the guest. Indeed, it is true that when Christ is in a home, even sorrow itself becomes one of the secrets of happiness. Our Lord's beatitude says—"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

Homes that have never known grief may be very happy in love, and very bright with sweet gladness; but after sorrow has been a guest within their doors, and has left its messages and blessings, there is a depth of quiet joy never experienced before. The family fellowship is sweeter after there has been a break in the circle. The love is tenderer when tears have come into its gladness. A vacant chair is a new and sacred bond in the household life.

But it is only when Christ is in the home that sorrow sweetens the life. There can be no rainbow without cloud and rain; but neither can there be a rainbow, even with cloud and rain, unless the sun is shining through the falling drops. The rarest splendors of happiness can be known only when sorrow's clouds have overshadowed the home and the rain of tears is falling; but unless the light of divine love is pouring through the tears there can be no splendor of peace and comfort; nothing but darkness and cloud.

Few things we can do in this world are so well worth doing as the making of a beautiful and happy home. He who does this builds a sanctuary for God and opens a fountain of blessing for men. Far more than we know, do the strength and beauty of our lives depend upon the home in which we dwell. He who goes forth in the morning from a happy, loving, prayerful home, into the world's strife, temptation, struggle, and duty, is strong—inspired for noble and victorious living. The children who are brought up in a true home go out trained and equipped for life's battles and tasks, carrying in their hearts a secret of strength which will make them brave and loyal to God, and will keep them pure in the world's severest temptations.

We may all do loving service, therefore, by helping to make one of the world's homes,—the one in which we dwell—brighter and happier. No matter how plain it may be, or how old-fashioned, if love is in it, if prayer connects it with heaven, if Christ's blessing is upon it, it will be a transfigured spot! Poverty is no severe trial if the home is full of bright cheer. The hardest toil is light if love sings its songs amid the clatter.

"Dear Moss," said the thatched roof on an old ruin, "I am so worn, so patched, so ragged, really I am quite unsightly. I wish you would come and cheer me up a little. You will hide all my infirmities and defects; and, through your loving sympathy, no finger of contempt or dislike will be pointed at me."

"I come," said the moss; and it crept up and around, and in and out, until every flaw was hidden, and all was smooth and fair. Presently the sun shone out, and the old thatched roof looked bright and fair, a picture of rare beauty, in the golden rays.

"How beautiful the roof looks!" cried one who saw it. "How beautiful the thatched roof looks!" said another. "Ah," said the old thatched roof, "rather let them say, 'How beautiful is the loving moss!' For it spends itself in covering up all my faults, keeping the knowledge of them all to herself, and by her own grace, making my age and poverty wear the garb of youth and luxuriance."

So it is that love covers the plainness and the coarseness of the lowliest home. It hides its dreariness and its faults. It softens its roughness. It changes its pain into profit, and its loss into gain.

Let us live more for our homes. Let us love one another more. Let us cease to complain, criticize and contradict each other. Let us be more patient with each other's faults. Let us not keep back the warm loving words that lie in our hearts until it is too late for them to give comfort. Soon separations will come. One of every wedded pair will stand by the other's coffin and grave. Then every bitter word spoken, and every neglect of love's duty, will be as a thorn in the heart.

Thomas Carlyle, that gifted author, when he passed the spot where he had last seen his wife alive, would bare his old head in wind or rain, his features wrung with bitter, unavailing sorrow. "Oh", he would say, "if I could see her but for five minutes, to assure her that I really cared for her throughout all that time! But she never knew it—she never knew it!"

We must give account for our idle silences as well as for our idle words.

"Happy the home when God is there,
And love fills every breast;
When one their wish, and one their prayer,
And one their heavenly rest.
Happy the home where Jesus' Name
Is sweet to every ear;
Where children early lisp His fame,
And parents hold Him dear.
Happy the home where prayer is heard,
And praise is used to rise;
Where parents love the sacred Word
That makes us truly wise.
Lord, let us in our homes agree,
This blessed peace to gain;
Until our hearts in love to Thee,
And love to all will reign."

—Henry Ware

Home Trials

(J. C. Ryle, "[Without Clouds](#)") ("*GraceGems!*")

What careful reader of the Bible can fail to see that Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Samuel --were all men of many sorrows--and that those **sorrows chiefly arose out of their own homes!**

The plain truth is, that **home trials** are one of the many means by which God sanctifies and purifies His believing people.

These trials are **spiritual medicines**, which poor fallen human nature absolutely needs...

By them He keeps us humble.

By them He draws us to Himself.

By them He sends us to our Bibles.

By them He teaches us to pray.

By them He shows us our need of Christ.

By them He weans us from the world.

By them He prepares us for "a city which has foundations," in which there will be no disappointments, no tears, and no sin.

The believer looks forward to the final gathering of a **perfect family** in which there shall be . . .
no unsound members,
no defects,
no sin,
no sorrow,
no deaths,
no tears.

news & brief

TAF PROGRAM

The Truth Adults' Fellowship meets every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 7.00 p.m., in Room 3.7. All adults are welcome to join us, and if you like to find out more about our activities, please contact Dns. Alice Tan (AF secretary), Andy Ho (publicity chairman) or the church office.

DECEMBER, 2007... Annual General Meeting & Election

TAF's 2nd AGM and Election were held in December, 2007. Elder Sim Siang Kok of Pandan BPC reminded AF'ers of the blessings and pitfalls of "Serving together in the Lord." A new committee was voted in for 2008 and Dn. Martin Cheong became TAF's 1st ever Advisor.

JANUARY, 2008... TAF 2nd Anniversary & Members' Night

We celebrated 2 years of God's goodness to the AF on 5th January. Pastor Dennis delivered the Lord's message, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam 7:12) to encourage AF'ers to keep looking to the Lord as we continue to serve Him in 2008. Members turned out in their brand new TAF t-shirts and it was truly a sight to behold!



The AF Members' Night was held on 19th January and our President, Dn. (Dr.) Winston Chew expounded on our theme for the year, "Stedfast, Unmovable, Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord", taken from 1 Corinthians 15:58. Members were also briefed on the theme, objectives, program and activities for 2008, and the president led members present in reciting the AF members' pledge on the night.

DATE	PROGRAM	SPEAKER
Jan 5th	2nd Anniversary	Rev. Dennis Kwok
Jan 19th	Members' Night	Dn. (Dr.) Winston Chew
Feb 2nd	Glory in Understanding & Knowing God	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Feb 16th	Clay in the Potter's Hand	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Mar 1st	Observe & Do	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Mar 15th	3 Steps Forward, 2 Steps Back	Bro. Dominino de la Cruz
Mar 29th	Truth Combined Fellowship	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Apr 5th	AF Gospel Month: Prayer Meeting	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
Apr 19th	AF Gospel Month: Love Incomparable	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
May 3rd	The Tabernacle Part 1	Rev. Stephen Khoo
May 17th	The Tabernacle Part 2	Rev. Stephen Khoo
May 19th	AF Retreat: The Tabernacle Part 3	Rev. Stephen Khoo
May 31st	Truth Combined Fellowship	(to be announced)
Jun 7th	Spurgeon's Archive 1	(to be announced)
Jun 21st	Spurgeon's Archive 2	(to be announced)
Jul 5th	Book Study: 1 Peter	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Jul 19th	Book Study: 1 Peter	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Aug 2nd	Book Study: 1 Peter	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Aug 16th	Video Night	(to be announced)
Aug 30th	Church Quiz	(to be announced)
Sep 6th	Book Study: 1 Peter	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Sep 20th	Book Study: 1 Peter	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo

Upcoming Program... The AF 2008 calendar is filled with an exciting spread of programs and activities for the rest of the year. Some of these are as follows:

MARCH ... Truth Combined Fellowship Meeting

On March, 29th, we will have our 1st combined fellowship meeting of the year. The theme for this meeting is: "Do we really know our Bible?" With the VPP issue raging strong, and the points of contention at a high, threatening to displace and diminish, if not to destroy altogether, the voices of those who would speak out, and stand for the truth of God's holy, inspired and preserved Word, is God's Word winning in, or waning from our hearts? Are we melting away before the "Goliath" of unbelief, or will we continue to stand firm, rooted as David were, in the sure conviction of God's truth and deliverance?

APRIL... TAF Gospel Month

April is Gospel Month for the AF. The Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy, pastor of Gethsemane B-P Church will first prepare us for the gospel meeting on the 5th, and then present the good news of salvation in the second AF meeting of the month.

It is said that the one of the greatest mission field is right in the local church. Many churchgoers for a variety of reasons fall into the trap of thinking that churchgoing or "church working" equals regeneration. For sure, a true, born-again believer will come to church to worship and fellowship, and will engage in holy living and good works, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Consider what is said about the work of conversion by the Holy Spirit: "Regeneration is a change wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the understanding, will and affections of a sinner; which is the commencement of a new kind of life, and which gives another direction to his judgment, desires, pursuits, and conduct."

Too many followers of the Lord have had little change in the fundamental make-up of their being even after many years of churchgoing. For sure, spiritually-speaking, all of us grow differently, and there are Christians who simply choose to ignore God's will for their lives and just go on living the way they want to. However, it is to the ones who may not know that they have never been brought into the kingdom of God, even now, that we are most concerned about.

We must state very clearly at this point that it is not the intention of the magazine to judge if anyone is truly saved or not. What we intend to do though, is to provide some answers to help deliver some who has yet to come to a genuine and saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also needful to dispel the deception of the devil that salvation, while being free, is also "easy", or that it does not matter if Jesus is not Lord of our lives, so long as He is our Savior. Please turn to pages 38-39 for more thoughts on the matter by godly servants of the Lord. May the Lord grant that His Word will help us see the Truth, and that His Truth will indeed set us free.

MAY... Study on "The (OT) Tabernacle" & TAF Retreat

Rev. Stephen Khoo, lecturer at FEBC and pastor of True Life B-P Church, will lead us in the study of The (OT) Tabernacle. He will bring us through, in 3 meetings (2 evening Saturday meetings and during our TAF Retreat on Monday, 19th May), the various aspects of the Old Testament Tabernacle. This includes the Tabernacle itself, the Offerings, the Priesthood and the Festivals tied to this wilderness temple.

Why study the Tabernacle? Is there any relevance for us in the NT Church Age to spend time in such a study? David M. Levy in the preface to his book, The Tabernacle, pages 5-6, gave 10 reasons for studying the Tabernacle:

- 1) Study of the Tabernacle is necessary for a proper understanding of God's redemptive program, which is progressively revealed throughout Scripture.
- 2) An understanding of the Tabernacle informs sinful people about the holiness of God.
- 3) Knowledge of the Tabernacle is foundational to an understanding of Christ's fulfillment of God's redemptive program.
- 4) The Tabernacle demonstrates how a holy God can rightfully manifest His grace and mercy to sinful people.
- 5) The priestly ministry in the Tabernacle reveals how sinful people can approach a holy God with acceptable worship.
- 6) Study of the priesthood is foundational to an understanding of Christ's priestly ministry.
- 7) Understanding the function of Israel's priesthood enables Christians to have a greater appreciation of their own role as believer-priests.
- 8) The sacrificial system within the Tabernacle teaches the great importance God placed on the need for a blood sacrifice to atone for sin.
- 9) A proper understanding of the Levitical sacrifices gives Christians a greater understanding of God's view of the various degrees of sin in the Old Testament.
- 10) A good grasp of the Tabernacle is necessary to understand more than half of the Book of Hebrews, as well as other portions of the New Testament.

When we know and understanding how a holy and most powerful God condescends to dwell amongst sinful man, and how we may approach Him through the Lord Jesus Christ prefigured in the various types, ceremonies and pattern set out in the OT Tabernacle, we may better appreciate how we ought to approach unto God, and how we ought to present our bodies, the temple of the Holy Ghost, as living sacrifices, wholly, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

JUNE... Spurgeon's Archive

Sandwiched between the Church Camp from 10th to 14th June, the AF will, God-willing, hold 2 cottage meetings in which we will be listening to the Prince of Preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon, on tape. Watch out for more news on this in the coming months.

JULY to SEPTEMBER... Book Study on 1 Peter

We look forward to the months from July to September, as the Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo will be going through the book of 1 Peter with us in 5 meetings, covering 1 chapter at each meeting. Bookmark these dates and join us in what will surely be a time of great blessing and learning from God's Word.

christian learning

Westminster Larger Catechism

In the 1st publication of TAF Times, we studied questions 97 to 149 of the Westminster Larger Catechism. We continue our study with questions 150 to 196 in this issue. Let us pray that the Lord will help us understand His perfect truth, and to allow His truth to permeate our thinking, and being, so that we may learn to do all that is written in the Law of God in our hearts.

Question 150: Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?

Answer: All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Question 151: What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

Answer: Sins receive their aggravations, From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other,

and the common good of all or many. From the nature and quality of the offense: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

Question 152: What does every sin deserve at the hands of God?

Answer: Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserves his wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come; and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ.

Question 153: What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us by reason of the transgression of the law?

Answer: That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, he requires of us repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.

Question 154: What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?

Answer: The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.

Question 155: How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

Answer: The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

Question 156: Is the Word of God to be read by all?

Answer: Although all are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves, and with their families: to which end, the holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar languages.

Question 157: How is the Word of God to be read?

Answer: The holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the

very Word of God, and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them; with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them; with meditation, application, self_denial, and prayer.

Question 158: By whom is the Word of God to be preached?

Answer: The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.

Question 159: How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?

Answer: They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season; plainly, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers; zealously, with fervent love to God and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.

Question 160: What is required of those that hear the Word preached?

Answer: It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine: What they hear by the Scriptures;

receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

Question 161: How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

Answer: The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

Question 162: What is a sacrament?

Answer: A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.

Question 163: What are the parts of a sacrament?

Answer: The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

Question 164: How many sacraments has Christ instituted in his church under the New Testament?

Answer: Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his church only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Question 165: What is Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ has ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

Question 166: Unto whom is Baptism to be administered?

Answer: Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.

Question 167: How is our Baptism to be improved by us?

Answer: The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Question 168: What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed;

testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

Question 169: How has Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

Answer: Christ has appointed the ministers of his Word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.

Question 170: How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?

Answer: As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a

spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

Question 171: How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

Answer: They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

Question 172: May one who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?

Answer: One who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account has it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to

bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

Question 173: May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it?

Answer: Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ has left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

Question 174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?

Answer: It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their

covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

Question 175: What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider: How they have behaved themselves therein, and with: What success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.

Question 176: Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree?

Answer: The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Question 177: Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?

Answer: The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

Question 178: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Question 179: Are we to pray unto God only?

Answer: God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfil the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshiped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to him alone, and to none other.

Question 180: What is it to pray in the name of Christ?

Answer: To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his

command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

Question 181: Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?

Answer: The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

Question 182: How does the Spirit help us to pray?

Answer: We not knowing: What to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helps our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and: What, and: How prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

Question 183: For whom are we to pray?

Answer: We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth; for magistrates, and ministers; for ourselves, our brethren, yea, our enemies; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter;

but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Question 184: For what things are we to pray?

Answer: We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the church, our own or others good; but not for anything that is unlawful.

Question 185: How are we to pray.?

Answer: We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon him, with humble submission to his will.

Question 186: What rule has God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

Answer: The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Savior Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

Question 187: How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?

Answer: The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces

necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Question 188: Of how many parts does the Lord's Prayer consist?

Answer: The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts; a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

Question 189: What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, Our Father which art in heaven), teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.

Question 190: What do we pray for in the first petition?

Answer: In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, and: Whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and: Whatsoever is

dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

Question 191: What do we pray for in the second petition.?

Answer: In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

Question 192: What do we pray for in the third petition?

Answer: In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven), acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to

rebel against his Word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

Question 193: What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

Answer: In the fourth petition (which is, Give us this day our daily bread), acknowledging, that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are

contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

Question 194: What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

Answer: In the fifth petition (which is, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors), acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.

Question 195: What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

Answer: In the sixth petition (which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil), acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside,

and ensnare us; and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations, but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them: we pray, that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh, and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin; or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation: or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof: that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.

Question 196: What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.), teaches us to enforce our petitions with arguments, which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God; and with our prayers to join praises, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty,

omnipotency, and glorious excellency; in regard whereof, as he is able and willing to help us, so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would, and quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfill our requests. And, to testify this our desire and assurance, we say, Amen.

Christian Resource: Recommended Websites

The following websites are rich in spiritual content and resource. We recommend these to our readers with the proviso that they need to exercise discretion and spiritual discernment in what they read or use from these sites. We like to add that our recommendations does not signify our agreement with everything that is written in these sites. Like the noble Bereans, we hope readers will search the Scriptures for themselves to see “whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). May you be richly blessed as you seek to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

www.sermonaudio.com

Category: Sermons

For those who have the time, we recommend this site for your spiritual profit. A treasury of rich and spiritually uplifting sermons from Bounds, Tozer, Spurgeon, Murray, A.W. Pink, Whitcomb, Paisley and many, many more. (**Recommended)

www.gracegems.org

Category: Devotional

Home page of “Grace Gems” reads: A Treasury of Ageless Sovereign Grace Devotional Writings. **Our Purpose:** To humble the pride of man, to exalt the grace of God in salvation and to promote real holiness in heart and life. A real gem for the soul (**Highly recommended)

www.spurgeon.org

Category: Inspirational and devotional

Site dedicated to the works and writings of the Prince of Preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon. Of special use and benefit is the link to the daily devotional site at: <http://www.spurgeon.org/daily.htm>. (**Recommended)

www.myutmost.org

Category: Devotional

Written in Home page: Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) was a Scottish minister and teacher whose teachings on the life of faith and abandonment to God have endured to this day.

This daily devotional is a collection of his teachings compiled by his wife into a daily devotional format. It's presented here in the original English. His wife's comments may be found in the Foreword.

We publish this with the prayer that Oswald Chambers' teachings will help you grow in your walk with Christ. "Men return again and again to the few who have mastered the spiritual secret, whose life has been hid with Christ in God These are of the old time religion, hung to the nails of the Cross." (Robert Murray McCheyne.)

This is really one of the utmost of devotional readings. Follow the daily reading and you will see why this is so. (*Recommended for those who can endure the really spiritually tough stuff!)

www.febc.edu.sg

Category: Learning and resource

If you have not bookmarked this site yet, you should do so right away! Great resource site for many bible study guides and subjects: “Fundamentals of the Christian Faith”, Book of James, Hebrews, Thessalonians, Galatians, many more. Get up to date also with what’s in store at FEBC.

A good link in this site is the one to sermons by the Rev. (Dr.) Timothy Tow and the Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo: http://www.febc.edu.sg/treasury_of_sermons99.htm (**Highly recommended)

www.deanburgonsociety.org

Category: Resource

This site is dedicated to the defense of the Divine Inspiration and Preservation of the Bible. Many articles defending VPI and VPP, and educating believers by explaining, instructing from God’s Word the twin doctrines of Verbal Plenary Inspiration and Verbal Plenary Preservation. (**Recommended)

www.biblebelievers.net

Category: Resource

Purpose of this site, as written in its Home page: (1) to reach the lost with the truth of God's Word, that precious lost souls might be saved for Christ, (2) to edify believers that they may contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). (*Recommended)

www.trinityfoundation.org

Category: Resource

Sourced from website: 1) Motto of foundation, “The Bible alone is the Word of God.” 2) “It is the first duty of the Christian to understand correct theory, correct doctrine, and thereby implement correct practice. This order, first theory then practice, is both logical and Biblical.”

“The half of knowledge
is knowing where to find it.”

Rev. (Dr.) Timothy Tow

A whole Christ with a whole heart

(Thomas Brooks, "[Touchstone of Sincerity](#)"), reprinted with kind permission from "Grace Gems!" at www.gracegems.org.

The terms upon which Christ is offered in the gospel are these: that we shall accept of **a whole Christ with a whole heart**. Now, mark--a *whole Christ* includes all His offices; and a *whole heart* includes all our faculties.

Christ as mediator is prophet, priest, and king.

Christ as a **prophet** instructs us.

Christ as a **priest** redeems us and intercedes for us.

Christ as a **king** sanctifies and rules us.

A hypocrite may be willing to embrace Christ as a **priest** to save him from wrath, from the curse, from hell, from everlasting burning--but he is never sincerely willing to embrace Christ as a **prophet** to teach and instruct him, and as a **king** to rule and reign over him. Many hypocrites are willing to embrace a *saving* Christ--but they are not willing to embrace a *ruling* Christ, a *commanding* Christ. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring *them* hither, and slay them before me." Luke 19:27

Hypocrites love to share with Christ in His happiness--but they don't love to share with Christ in His holiness. They are willing to be redeemed by Christ--but they are not cordially willing to submit to the laws and government of Christ. They are willing to be saved by His blood--but they are not willing to submit to His scepter.

But a true Christian receives Christ in all His offices. He accepts Him, not only as a *saving* Jesus--but also as a *Lord* Jesus. He embraces Him, not only as a *saving* Christ--but also as a *ruling* Christ. He received Christ as a king upon His throne, as well as an atoning sacrifice upon His cross.

A hypocrite is all for a saving Christ, for a sin-pardoning Christ, for a soul-saving Christ--but has no regard for a ruling Christ, a reigning Christ, a commanding Christ, a sanctifying Christ; and this at last will prove his damning sin.

Be Diligent!

From Spurgeon's sermon, "Particular Election"

"...make your CALLING and ELECTION sure." 2 Peter 1:10

Be diligent in your faith. Take care that your faith is of the right kind - that it is not a creed but a credence - that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a reception of doctrine into your heart, and the practical light of the doctrine in your soul.

No man has any right to believe himself elect of God, unless he has been renewed by God; no man has any right to believe himself called, unless his life be in the main consistent with his calling, and he walk worthy of that whereunto he is called. Out upon an election that lets you live in sin! Away with it! away with it!

The true Christian desires that day by day he may grow more holy; that hour by hour he may be more thoroughly renewed, until conformed to the image of Christ, he may enter into bliss eternal.

True Conversion

Spurgeon, IS CONVERSION NECESSARY?

The Spirit calls men to Jesus in diverse ways- Some are drawn so gently that they scarcely know when the drawing began, and others are so suddenly affected, that their conversion stands out with noonday clearness. Perhaps no two conversions are precisely alike in detail- the means, the modes, the manifestations, all vary greatly. As our minds are not all cast in the same mold, it may so happen that the truth which affects one is powerless upon another; the style of address which influences your friend may be offensive to yourself.

"The wind blows where it will. " Yet in all true conversions there are points of essential agreement- there must be in all a penitent confession of sin, and a looking to Jesus for the forgiveness of it, and there must also be a real change of heart such as shall affect the entire life thereafter. Where these essential points are not found, there is no genuine conversion. Where there is true faith, there is the new birth, and that implies a change beyond measure, complete, and radical. Any man who is united to Christ has experienced a great change. This change is a thorough and sweeping one, and operates upon the nature, heart, and life of the convert. There must be a divine work, making us new creatures, and causing all things to become new with us, or we shall die in our sins. Our condition before God, our moral tone, our nature, our state of mind, are made by conversion totally different from what they were before. In a word, if we are in Christ Jesus we are new creatures; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. In conversion, infidels become believers, Roman Catholics forsake their priests, harlots become chaste, drunkards leave their cups, and, what is equally remarkable, Pharisees leave their self-righteous pride, and come as 'sinners' to Jesus. Conversion may be known by the fact that it changes the whole man. It changes the 'principle' upon which he lives- he once lived for self, now he lives for God. He once did right because he was afraid of punishment if he did wrong, but now he shuns evil because he hates it. He once did right because he hoped to merit heaven, but now no such selfish motive sways him- he knows that he is saved, and he now does right out of gratitude to God. His 'objects in life' are changed- he once lived for gain, or worldly honor; now he lives for the glory of God. His 'comforts' are changed- the pleasures of the world and sin are nothing to him now, he finds comfort in the love of God shed abroad in his heart. His 'desires' are changed- that which he once panted and pined for, he is now content to do without. And that which he once despised, he now longs after as the deer pants after the water brooks. His 'fears' are different- he fears man no more, but fears his God. His 'hopes' are also altered- his expectations fly beyond the stars. The man has begun a new life. A convert once said- "Either the world is altered or else I am. "Everything seems new. Beloved hearers, may we all meet in heaven. But to meet in heaven we must all be converted, for inside yonder gates of pearl none can enter but those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

REGENERATION

"Regeneration is a change wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the understanding, will and affections of a sinner; which is the commencement of a new kind of life, and which gives another direction to his judgment, desires, pursuits, and conduct."

A Warm Welcome

We bid all members and friends of Truth B-P Church a very warm welcome! We hope you have been much blessed by the articles in this issue of TAF Times. Most of all, we hope you can take the time to join us in our many programs and activities, which have been planned for our spiritual benefit and mutual edification in the Lord.



We meet every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 7.00 p.m. in Room 3.7. We hope you will join us in our fellowship meetings as we worship the Lord together and listen to the preaching of His Sacred Word. What better joy than to gather with like-minded brethren to encourage,

challenge, and strengthen each other in the most holy faith? Let us make the most of this means of grace, which the Lord has granted to us, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We look forward to seeing you soon! God bless, editor.



Truth Adults' Fellowship

Motto:

"To live is Christ, to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)

Theme 2008:

"Stedfast, Unmovable, Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord"

Theme Verse:

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Objectives:

- 1) To glory in understanding and knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)
- 2) To observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord (Nehemiah 10:29)

Ministries 2008:

- 1) Prayer ministry(ic Dns. Alice Tan)
- 2) Evangelism ministry(ic Paul Tan)
- 3) Word ministry(ic Andy Ho)