

The
PRESENT TRUTH
 and
Herald of Christ's Epiphany

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 A NEW YEAR PRAYER

"The Lamb opened the seventh seal." "Ye have approached Mount Zion, and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . saying . . . 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven' . . . Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle . . . obtained eternal deliverance."—Rev. 8: 1; Heb. 12: 22, 25, 26, 28; 9: 11, 12.

MOTTO TEXT FOR 2016

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”

Jeremiah 15:16

When we have the opportunity to sit at the table of Truth and eat from the Word of God, this brings joy to our hearts and if we have faith in the Word of God it will rouse us to activity. And just so, any man who appreciates fully and believes the exceeding great and precious promises of God to the fully consecrated will make haste and run for them; and he will closely observe the directions, too, that he may not run in vain.

Now if Christ be formed in him, those established principles of Christian character will hold him firm and steady in the midst of temptations and error, and he will not be easily moved either from the practice of righteousness or from sound Scriptural doctrine. He will

demand a “Thus saith the Lord” for every doctrine, and on that sure word he will dare depend. And the language of his heart as expressed in his daily life will be, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.” “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.” “Thy words were found and I did eat them!” This must be the personal condition of every heir of the Kingdom.

Our experiences in the study of the Word in this expanded Harvest time of the Gospel Age, the new beauties and rich depths of the Divine wisdom, love and power which our wondering hearts behold, are illustrated well by the experiences of the French electrician, Ampere. He was nearsighted without being aware of it. When he became conscious of his defect of vision, through the casual use of a friend’s eye-glasses, he burst into tears as he realized how much he had missed throughout his life of the wonderful beauty of the world.

The Prophet, representing the LORD’s people of a future day, cries, “Thy words were found and I did eat them” (Jer. 15:16; comp. Rev. 10:8-10). This represents a double thought: first, it implies that the Word of the LORD would be lost and would need to be searched for; secondly, it implies that when found it will avail us nothing unless it be appropriated to our needs, unless its testimony be received into good and honest hearts and be put into practice. The Word of the LORD was lost in a most important sense during the Dark Ages. Forms and ceremonies and the decrees of councils took the place of the testimony which the LORD declares to be sure. The result was increasing confusion and deterioration of spiritual vitality among those professing the name of Christ. Not only was the Word of the LORD lost in the sense of not *being followed*, but in a very important sense was lost also by not *being studied*.

The finding of the Word of God seemed to begin afresh with the introduction of the art of printing, about 1440 A.D., at a time when certain of the LORD’s people were aroused to inquire more particularly for the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16). In Luther’s day, when printing was considerably advanced, history tells us that although he had been in a religious college for years, and was a professor and teacher, he never saw a copy of the Word of God until



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Free from all sects, parties, organizations, and creeds of men, but bound to God as it understands His Word, this magazine stands for —

- The defense of the Parousia Truth, given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as basic for all further development of the Truth;
- The defense of the arrangements, charter and will given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as binding on controlling corporations and associations among Truth people; and for
- The exposition and defense of the unfolding Epiphany-Basileia Truth, as meat in due season for the Lord’s people, as He is pleased to provide it.

he was twenty years of age. Thank God, conditions are so changed now that *His Word is found* in the sense of being easily accessible to all the people, and in the sense, too, that, under His providential care, in this “time of the end,” knowledge has been increased so as to be universal in Christian lands (Dan. 12:4). Thank God that today His Word is abundantly distributed in all civilized lands and is obtainable in all heathen lands and in all languages, and even in a multitude of dialects.

With all that is available, the Word of the LORD is in one sense still hidden. It is covered with a thick coating of false teaching and human tradition, so that in the homes where the book is to be found there is often so much blindness upon the eyes of the understanding

that the Truth of God cannot be appreciated (Matt. 13:15). Brethren, it is still necessary for us to pray with the Apostle, for ourselves and for others, that, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we might be able to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God, which passes human understanding (Eph. 3:18, 19). It is only as our eyes of understanding open that we really see the wonderful things of God’s book “Thy words were found” and that we really get the wonderful blessings which He intended only for those who in reverence seek in truth and in sincerity “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. 7:7, 8).

The Prophet (Amos 8:11) speaks of a famine in the land, not for bread or for water, but for the hearing of the Word of the LORD. There was such a famine in the Dark Ages, and to a large extent the Reformation movement was a supply of the heavenly food and drink, spiritual nourishment. But, as we have just seen, there is still a famine, though of another kind. Although there are churches in every direction, Bibles in every home, many are beginning to find that they are starving—that with the Word of God in their hands they are famishing, because they have been feeding upon the husks of human traditions, creeds and theories of men, which will not

stand the tests of present-day enlightenment. Some are feeling lank and hungry spiritually. We wish more felt their need, for the LORD today, as ever, it is as good as His Word, assuring us that they that hunger and thirst after righteousness [Truth] shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). To all who now come into the right relationship to the LORD and to His Word there is refreshment such as has never

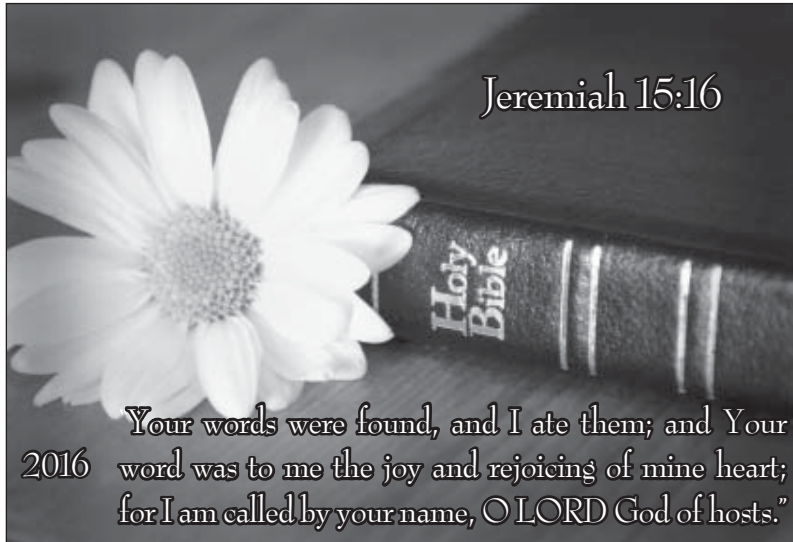
before been known by His people. His Word, always precious, is a hundredfold more precious now than ever before; its beauty, its true meaning and its reasonableness are more and more manifest to those who have the hearing ear and the eyes of their understanding opened, to those who are freed from the bondage of human traditions and are seeking the bread from

heaven, the testimony of the LORD that is sure and makes wise the simple, the humble (Psa. 19:7).

Now is the time for those who have tasted that the LORD is gracious and who have found His Word to be meat indeed, who realize that the Lord Jesus has girded Himself, and is serving the household of faith with meat in due season (Luke 12:37, 42-44)—now is the time for these to seek for and to assist those who are coming to an appreciation of their lankness and their hunger and thirst. May the LORD more and more give us wisdom and grace in presenting His Truth that we may testify not only with our lips, but with all the conduct of life, the power and grace of the Word of Life.

It is our privilege to allow God’s Word to become a joy and rejoicing to us as truly consecrated believers of His Word. Let us examine some of the many Scriptures that speak of joy and rejoicing. Israel over David’s victory in his fight against Goliath “And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick” (1 Sam. 18:6).

The shepherds, angels and Magi over Jesus’ birth “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10, 11).



Jeremiah 15:16

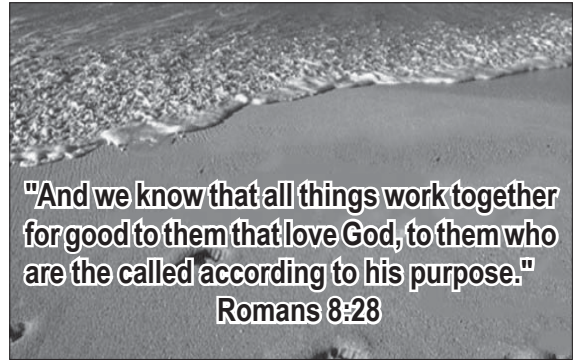
2016 Your words were found, and I ate them; and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by your name, O LORD God of hosts.”

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Matt. 2:10). The disciples over Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, His resurrection and ascension “And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matt. 21:8, 9). “And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?” “And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:41, 52, 53). Let us also “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4).

Joy may be defined as *gladness of heart and mind, exultation of heart and mind, happiness of heart and mind*. All will at once recognize the propriety of these definitions; and the passages and examples cited in the preceding paragraphs abundantly prove the Scripturalness of the definitions. And all of us who are Disciples of Christ by our experiences of joy know that the above given definitions properly portray our feelings of joy. But all are not joyous; for the bulk of humankind are, generally speaking, usually given to sorrow rather than to joy. It could not be otherwise under the reign of the Adamic curse; for pain, suffering, sickness, losses, disappointments, enmities, dying, death and mourning abound on all sides and make the race sorrowful; for humankind have been living in the night of sin in which weeping has been enduring “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa. 30:5). Joy is not the usual and enduring experience of the race under the curse. But it is the privilege of God’s people to be joyous.

Joy, being a tertiary grace, is, of course, *the compound of a number of graces as its constituent elements*; for it naturally springs out of the exercise of these. The first of these is *faith*, which is a mental appreciation of, and heart’s reliance on God and Christ in their persons, characters, words and acts. It arouses joy in mind and heart by the revelation that it gives to the mind and by the peace and satisfaction that it gives to the heart as they rest on these from the four standpoints just given. *Hope* is another ingredient of

joy; for it inspires happiness in the desire and expectation of good. Above all other graces, *love*, which delights in good principles and characters, which is in sympathetic oneness with these and delights to sacrifice in spreading these, in its very nature is the chief ingredient of joy. *Obedience* to God and Christ—as good principles require this—has an exultant effect upon the heart and mind and arouses joy. *Piety* as duty love to God furnishes the chief basis of a just joy, as *brotherly*



love—duty love to one’s neighbor—conduces to joy from the fellow-feeling that it arouses toward others. *Peace*, too, is an especial ingredient of joy, as it is a necessary basis for its exercise.

God’s words of joy and rejoicing come to us in several kinds. (1) The kind of joy that the sinner experiences in the indulgence of his depraved tastes; but such joy is transient, like the light of rockets and fireworks, which are brilliant for a while and then fade into darkness on the dissolution of their parts; it is like the freshet that rapidly gathers its volume, overflows the land, but is roily and ruinous, and it is like dancing over a flower-covered trap, whose beautiful cover gives way under the dancer’s weight, and he drops with destructive effect to its bottom. In a moral order of affairs how can it be otherwise than that those who delight in unbelief, error, disobedience to superiors, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, slander, covetousness, malice, hatred, evil-surmising, evil-speaking, *etc.*, are made miserable after indulgence in these evils?

There are (2) selfish and worldly joy in the indulgence of one’s natural selfish and worldly propensities—along the lines of self-esteem, the esteem of others, physical comfort, life and food, along the lines of concealment of the disadvantageous, resisting and attacking of the injurious and along the lines of sex, the natural family, home, friends and native land. While such joys are capable of indulgence apart from sin, and are by the better of mankind actually and often indulged apart from sin, at best they are transitory, not wholly satisfying and often disappointing. They can be used as servants of truth and righteousness, and give a higher joy than their indulgence gives the naturally selfish and worldly; but in their best expressions *they fall short* of the spiritual joys that God gives His faithful children.

These are the joys that God calls “the joy of the LORD” “And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink,

and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them” (Neh. 8: 10, 12). They center in our spiritual assets, *e.g.*, in God’s and Christ’s persons, characters, words, works and offices.

The joy and rejoicing of mine heart centers in our blessings and privileges in relation to (a) God as our Creator, Provider, Redeemer, Teacher, Justifier, Sanctifier and Deliverer, (b) to Jesus as our Prophet, Ransomer, Priest, Advocate, Justifier, Head, Savior, Captain, Physician, King, Lord, Judge, Purifier, Refiner and Shepherd, (c) to God’s family as His sons, brethren of Jesus and the saints, (d) to the steps of salvation—enlightenment, repentance, faith, justification, our calling, victory in our battles, the hope of seeing and being with Christ in the Kingdom, (e) to the world as their present enlighteners and future deliverers from the curse, (f) to the final overthrow of evil principles and their agents, (g) to the final triumph of good principles and their agents and (h) to the everlasting life and bliss of the good. These are not transient, unsatisfying and disappointing; rather, they are eternal, satisfying and triumphant.

Are there blessings in partaking of the Truth? O yes, in performing His office as Sanctifier our LORD works on the heart through more of His promises and other parts of the Bible and also otherwise, in bringing the tentatively justified one to consecration and in helping him to carry it out. He works also on the mind, instructing him in additional features of the Word of Truth, giving him sufficient understanding to enable him intelligently to make and carry out his consecration. Sanctification and Spirit-enlightenment come by “thy word is truth” (John 17: 17; see SITS 1, pp. 196-198). Sanctification continues daily throughout the consecrated course, and by continually tasting the good Word of God one is instructed as to the times, the seasons and other features of the Truth “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you” (1 Thes. 5:1) and learns how to grow in Christlikeness and to serve God acceptably. “This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification” (1 Thes. 4:3); and He would have us worship and serve Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23, 24). “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17); and we are to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18). The Apostle Paul also includes both the heart and the head in 1 Tim. 4:16: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine;” and again in 2 Tim. 3:16: “All scripture given by inspiration of God is indeed profitable

for doctrine, for reproof [refutation of error; these first two pertain to the head], for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” [these last two pertain to the heart in its qualities and resultant conduct; see E 8, p. 81]. The Truth and the Spirit of the Truth, or Truth and righteousness, are connected also in many other Scriptures. Oh, dear brethren “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”

We see then that partakers of the holy Spirit must also be persevering partakers of the good Word of God, including, at least measurably, “the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10), if their sanctification is to continue and be completed. To stop with the first enlightenment, as it is obtained in the condition of repentance and tentative justification, means that one’s sanctification could not be completed. All Jesus’ disciples must continue in His Word if they would be His disciples indeed, and have the continued knowledge of at least that measure of the Truth that is necessary to sanctification (John 8:31, 32). They must continue to walk in the light of His Word, as He by His Spirit teaches them “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13). “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8). See PT ‘45, pp. 2-6. They must grow in knowledge, understanding and grace as time goes on after consecration “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45, 1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 1:17, 18; 2 Tim. 2:7; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18; 1 John 5:20).

As “the good Word of God” is tasted more and more, it is found to be “sweet as honey”; and the more it is “eaten” the sweeter it becomes, though the after-effects are always more or less of a blending of the bitterness of persecution with the sweetness (Ezek. 3:1-3; Jer. 15:16).

Our Lord declared, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63, 68). “Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?” (Micah 2:7; Psa. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:18, 19; 1 John 1:7). It is absolutely useless for fully consecrated to pray, LORD, give us the Spirit of understanding, if they neglect the word of Truth. “Sanctification [is] by the Spirit, through the belief of the Truth” (T 46, par. 3). “Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart”: Joy’s stages correspond to the stages of the Christian life; *i.e.*, joy varies in kind and degree according to the planes of the

Christian life. These planes are those of *enlightenment, justification, sanctification and deliverance*. Each of these has its peculiar joys.

In *enlightenment* the Christian's joys have their foundation in the Truth made clear to him in its doctrines, precepts, promises, exhortations, prophecies, histories and types. He sees in these teachings truth, clarity, harmony, beauty, sublimity, satisfactoriness and utility, which make his joys increase in each advancing stage of the Christian life, as he finds its understanding to enlarge in these qualities for him with every advancing stage of that life, and as also each stage's joys continue with the joys of the subsequent stage or stages, causing his joys to gather depth and breadth, like a river that ever deepens and widens as new streams enter and unite with it.

In *justification* one's joys root in the assurance that God has reckonedly forgiven him his sins, that Christ has tentatively imputed His righteousness to him, that God fellowships with him and grants him growth in righteousness.

In *sanctification* one's joys root in the fact that he is privileged to be dead to self and the world and alive to God, that he is privileged to lay down his life on behalf of the advancement of God's Plan, and that in spirit he is enabled to cultivate the affections, the graces and then strengthen, balance and crystallize them. His joys of sanctification also find their ground in his hopes for the elect and the non-elect and reach their height in his relations to God and Christ.

In *deliverance* the Christian's joys lodge in the assurance and the fact that Christ leads him to victory in his warfare with sin, error, selfishness and worldliness, as these are manipulated against him by the devil, the world and the flesh, both as to his individual battles and as to the warfare as a whole, as well as will lead him to victory over death and the grave.

It is reasonable that the Christian experiences joy in both the toward and in the untoward circumstances of life. What is more reasonable than that he should rejoice in view of the stages of the Christian life in which he is privileged to enter and remain? And how unreasonable it is, if he does not rejoice at and in each of such stages. How appropriate it is for him to rejoice in God as his Father

in His nature, attributes of being and character, words, works and offices! How fitting it is that he rejoice in Jesus Christ in His natures, attributes of being and character, words, works and offices! How behooving it is for him to rejoice in his own privileges, in learning, spreading and practicing the Truth and in the faithful endurance of the incidental experiences! How beseeming it is that he rejoice in the privileges that his brethren have, the same as he has! How becoming it is for him to rejoice in the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love

God. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:16-17)!

How proper it is for him to rejoice that, instead of eternal torment being the future portion of the poor blind world, God's provision for it is restitution to the original Divine image and likeness to whoever wills in the Millennium! How suitable it is for him to rejoice that eventually all evil and all irreformably evil persons will be forever blotted out, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul,

which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23) and that eventually only good and the good will forever remain, and that in eternal bliss! And, finally, how responsive to the conditions it is that he rejoice at the prospect that every created thing in heaven and earth, even such as had been in the death state and in rebellion against God, will unite in the grand Hallelujah Chorus, ascribing by thought, motive, word, act and condition "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13)!

Our text exhorts us to *rejoice* always and indicates when we are to rejoice [when thy words were found]. This implies the times as well as the circumstances of our rejoicing; for our circumstances are indissolubly bound to time, since we can be in no circumstance detached from time. Our circumstances so far as our flesh is concerned are favorable or unfavorable, easy or hard, pleasant or unpleasant, toward or untoward; but to our holy hearts and minds all our circumstances should be regarded as favorable, easy, pleasant and toward. It is true that we

Enlightenment

The Truth made clear to him in its doctrines, precepts, promises, exhortations, prophecies, histories and types.

Justification

When one accepts Jesus as his savior. God has forgiven one's sins,

Sanctification

God sets you apart for holy living to do His will not yours.

Deliverance

One's assurance that Christ leads him to victory in his warfare with sin, error, selfishness and worldliness.

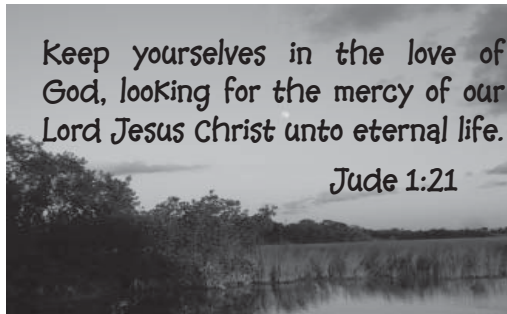
cannot rejoice at our unfavorable, hard, unpleasant and untoward experiences and situations “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11); but if we look not at the things seen—the selfish and worldly—but at the things unseen—our present and future spiritual blessings—we can and do rejoice amid, even if not at our untoward experiences “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18, Rom. 5:3-5).

It is, of course, easy to rejoice in our pleasant experiences—only abnormal people do not then rejoice; but it is our privilege to rejoice in the LORD when everything goes, from the human standpoint, dead wrong; and the strong and instructed Christian does then rejoice; for he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28); and if we are wide awake, we will be energetic to rejoice in the humanly unfavorable, hard, unpleasant and untoward experiences. When we do not then rejoice, it is because we look at the things seen, and not at the things unseen, which proves that we are living below our privileges, and are giving room to the devil, the world and our flesh. Let us, therefore, earnestly strive to be rejoicing Christians at all times and under all circumstances, regardless of whether they are favorable or unfavorable, easy or hard, pleasant or unpleasant, toward or untoward.

Joy is necessary for God’s sake, for our sake and for others’ sakes. We should be joyous, because God exhorts to it, and is pleased with it; for He recognizes it as the proper response that we should make for His sake for His many benefits toward us, since it is unseemly that His children should go around mourning all day long. Our sorrows, except sorrow for sin, do not reflect credit upon God; rather they discredit the family whose Head He is. So, too, it is necessary for our sakes. Sadness chills the genial currents of the soul; but gladness warms them.

Our dear Bro. Johnson prayed for the penitent who

would seek to have God’s holy Spirit renewed within them (Psa. 51:10) and under God’s corrections would maintain their position in the sphere of the Truth and its Spirit. He prayed for the Spirit-begotten, and for the



Youthful Worthies who came out of Adamic condemnation reckonedly by repenting for sin and accepting Jesus as their Savior unto justification by faith, and through consecration to God, desiring that His character, honor, reputation, office, *etc.*, might be stamped on their hearts and minds under His ministering power and delivering strength. Bro. Johnson

prayed that when they approached God in prayer and in harmony with His Epiphany arrangements God would hear them and grant their petitions for the same law that applies to new creatures applies to Youthful Worthies “One law shall be to him that is home-born, and to the stranger that sojourneth among you” (Ex. 12:49).

This was to be done in harmony with God’s will and their needs in order that they [Youthful Worthies] together with the Ancient Worthies, the Little Flock and the Great Company, may be prepared by making their calling and election sure, to assist in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, that the restitutionists may come to know God and His glorious character and learn to reverence Him and that, incidentally, they may recognize the Epiphany organization of God’s people in their separate classes and in their ministrations as being God’s true servants that they may know “that this house which I have built is called by thy name” 2 Chron. 6:33.

We have now been given to understand of another prominent class that has entered into a covenant relationship with Jehovah, called Consecrated Epiphany Campers, with the higher order spoken of as the Queen of Sheba class. This class is being called under a special call during a time while sin is still in the ascendancy, consecration is still unto death and as pre-millennial seed of Abraham they will receive a resurrection of the just. They also are now tentatively justified by faith in Christ and are accepted by God in consecration (Prov. 23:26) as of the pre-Millennial seed of Abraham under the earthly features of the Oath-bound Covenant, and they also have the privilege of prayer to God and fellowship with Him. God will highly honor them, for they are proving themselves faithful under greater trial than restitutionist in general will have. They will be privileged to be the special assistants of the Worthies and will be very able

helpers to the world of mankind as they with them come up the Highway of Holiness. What a wonderful Heavenly Father we have! How gracious He is to us all! Let us keep ourselves in the love and joy of God (Jude 21)!

There is not a grace but can be helped in its usual expression by joy. Under the influence of joy we can do our best, as we certainly, at the time at least, cannot do our best in most of our activities when sad. Then there is a spiritual magnetism in joy that makes it helpful to others. Our states of mind have more or less effect upon those with whom we deal; especially is this true if our characters are strong and influential. The strong characters when sad depress others; but the cheerful strong characters influence others to good by arousing the best in them into activity. If we watch the operation of this principle, we will recognize its truth and worth, which will help us for others' sake to practice it. In our setting forth the necessity of joy we at the same time set forth its function; for God made it a part of our characters so that it may exercise in us the office of doing our best Godward, selfward and toward others; for this is just what it is designed to be and to do—to bring out the best in us and to make us do our best unto God's glory and others' profit.

Let all who aspire to a place in the Kingdom make sure that they have Christ's character formed in them, that the principles so notable in Christ's character are established in them. Let us each see that we do not hinder the development of this character by giving our time, our vitality, our means, *etc.*, to the pursuit of the things of this world. Have you *love*? Is it manifested in fervent

zeal for the honor of God, the spread of His Truth and the blessing of His children? Are you seeking and finding opportunities for showing the LORD how much you have love? Have you *faith*? Is it unmistakably manifested, not merely in profession, but in bold and definite acts of faith? Does that faith rouse you to activity? And just so, any man who appreciates fully and believes the exceeding great and precious promises of God to the fully consecrated believer will make haste and run for them; and he will closely observe the directions, too, that he may not run in vain.

And if Christ be formed in him, those established principles of Christian character will hold him firm and steady in the midst of temptations and error, and he will not be easily moved either from the practice of righteousness or from sound Scriptural doctrine. He will demand a "Thus saith the Lord" for every doctrine, and on that sure word he will dare depend. And the language of his heart as expressed in his daily life will be, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. . . I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people." "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart" (Psa. 57:7, 9; 119:111). While such must be the personal condition of every heir of the Kingdom, the special work of every such one should be to help those fully consecrated by the Word of Truth to arrive at this condition of a fixed Christian character.

How fortunate is the child of God that can state: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination."

Leviticus 18:22

As Bible students we have long known God's stand (the Biblical teaching) on homosexuality and His strong condemnation on the practice of same-sex activities. God's Word states that homosexuality is an abomination directly against Him! Acting against God's Word, society has rapidly moved to make homosexuality socially acceptable and is now rapidly moving to make same-sex marriage acceptable. We do not intend to answer the question, why someone is or becomes a homosexual but only to restate what the Holy Scriptures teach on this matter and what has been published in our writings.

Since our lawmakers have been generating new laws regarding discrimination against homosexuals, these laws will affect us sooner or later. It will first affect topics we

can write of in our magazines. At some point, it could even affect what we can say or do in our conventions and eventually perhaps in our meetings. Of course, we must obey the laws of the land.

Bible Standard Ministries, a Christian movement, cannot condone any behavior not in harmony with the LORD's design. We do not condone sexual immorality including all its forms. Living willfully in sin (particularly the grosser sins) is not Christ-like. As Christians, we should all be doing our best to avoid sin and learn to love righteousness and become more righteous every day!

GOD'S TEACHINGS ON SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Before entering into our study on homosexuality, we

refer the reader to God’s teachings on sexual immorality of all variations, including homosexuality, lesbianism, masochism, incest and child sex exploitation. Valuable references on these topics are found in Present Truth 1980, p. 7, Present Truth 1984, p. 8.

In an article published in The Bible Standard 1980, p. 70 about homosexuality under the sub-heading “**HOMOSEXUALITY FORBIDDEN BY GOD**” we read:

Homosexuality is *not just an acceptable alternative* lifestyle. It is emphatically forbidden by our great Creator. He declares it to be an abomination in His sight: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination” (Lev. 18:22). For this great sin the penalty in Israel was death to both offenders: “And if a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Lev. 20:13).

The New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, strongly condemns homosexuality. Note in Rom. 1:22-28 how men professing to be wise became fools. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image of corruptible man and of lower animals. Therefore God gave them over, through the lusts of their hearts for impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves; who exchanged the Truth of God for falsity, and revered and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is worthy of praise forever. We quote from the Diaglott vs. 26-27 “On this account God delivered them over to infamous Passions; for even their FEMALES changed the NATURAL Use for that which is UNNATURAL; and in like manner also the MALES, leaving the NATURAL Use of the FEMALE were burnt up with their furious LUST for each other; Males with Males committing INDECENT acts and receiving back among themselves that RECOMPENSE of their ERROR which was proper.”

Bible Standard Ministries recognizes the scriptural doctrine of “Love the sinner and hate the sin” as taught in the Word of God, however we cannot justify the revisionist view of Scripture that would interpret homosexuality *as just another* lifestyle available to Christians. This act against God’s righteous law is very evident through the Divinely inspired writings of the Bible as they have

Leviticus 18:22
You shall not lie
with a man
as with a woman.
It is an
abomination.
—GOD

LOVE THE
SINNER
HATE THE SIN

referred to homosexuality with such abhorrence. If it were not an evil practice in the eyes of God; these many cautions would not have been given for our admonition.

MAINLINE CHURCHES ACCEPTING HOMOSEXUALITY

Many organized religions and for many years now have been trending to be open to homosexuality and sometimes appointing homosexuals to the pulpits as we see in this reference in Present Truth 2005, p. 22.

Recognizing some members opposed the church’s position, the Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, said the church had always been “open and welcoming. We all know that there have been gay priests in history, some celibate and holy and some not. The Scottish Episcopal Church

is just recognizing that lesbian and gay people are made in God’s image and have gifts to share.”

We wonder if these very learned theologians have read the Bible’s statements in both Old and New Testaments; *e.g.*, Lev. 18:22, and the Apostle’s words in Rom. 1:26-28, “For this reason God gave them up unto vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another; men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” (NIV)

We now will consider the Catholic Church’s attitudes on homosexuality. It is well known that there were a number of homosexual priests in the clergy. In a Present Truth article (2006, p. 9) we published that Pope Benedict denounced homosexuals in the seminary.

Its message was: to reaffirm a ban on homosexuals entering the seminary. Benedict, who a month before his election denounced the “filth” in the church, may have been convinced that a thorough cleaning up of the priesthood was at the top of his “to-do” list.

One can’t help but wonder where he found the evaluators to sit on the bench as judges of the new recruits to the priesthood, as to whether they were homosexual or not? It might be prudent to, first of all, put a process in place to evaluate the evaluators. And even though the interviewers themselves may have a correct sexual orientation, in all

fairness, how can they tell, unless the applicant tells all.

Pope Benedict XVI's reign was no doubt built on enforcing traditionalist doctrine. He certainly did not enforce Bible doctrine because his church has very little of it anymore, and what is left is not worth enforcing. The church's leaders have long asserted that their unbiblical doctrine of celibacy of the priesthood is not a contributor to the immoral problems within the system. But the question arises, why is it then, that there have been hundreds of priest molesters in their churches, worldwide, while in stark contrast, few violations in other mainline religious groups? Most Protestant churches, in harmony with Biblical teaching, do not legislate against marriage but do allow marriage for their ministers. The Apostle, speaking under inspiration, is clear in declaring that to be or not to be married is the decision of the individual and does not come under the jurisdiction of any cleric or outside ruling body whether it be religious or the secular government (1 Cor. 7:3-9). Our Lord has also inferred that to be celibate is up to the individual for, as we know, everyone is not constituted alike as to their spiritual relationship to God or in their mental and physical makeup (Matt. 19:10-12; SITS Vol. 6, pp. 509-518).

Today it is Pope Francis that heads the Roman Catholic Church. Francis opposes same-sex marriage and opposed a bill to introduce it in Argentina in 2010. In his opposition to the same-sex legislation in Argentina he wrote "Let's not be naïve: This is not a simple political fight; it is a destructive proposal to God's plan. This is not a mere legislative proposal (that's just its form), but a move by the father of lies that seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God." As of this writing he has not made known publically his stand on homosexuality in the priesthood.

BRO. GOHLKE IN 1978

QUESTION MEETING IN ILLINOIS

How could a loving God condemn a homosexual person if they were born that way and had no control over their hormonal inclinations? A dysfunction such as this should require the mercy of all and perhaps more mercy should be extended to these unfortunate ones by Christians?

The question asks if more mercy should be given to

these inflicted ones. It is unfortunate for those who are homosexuals or gay people engaged in homosexuality. Mercy is compassion really. We should have a feeling of compassion for them not for the things they are doing (not for their sins), but we should have compassion for them. We should feel pity for them. It is true that some are born with this affliction and some acquire it and in these days are encouraged to acquire a love for the same sex rather than a love for the opposite sex; in other words to be homosexual instead of heterosexual. I think the example of Jesus in John 8:3-11, where He dealt with the woman that was taken in adultery. What did Jesus say? He

said to that woman; "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Jesus recognized that she was committing sin. But mercy rejoiced against judgement, He did not condemn her because He saw that she was evidently in a good condition of heart, a *repentant condition* of heart and she apparently wanted to change her course. We

too should not condemn or show judgement toward, homosexuals or lesbians, but have compassion for them as individuals. We would like to help them; not by going down into that pit of miry clay and corruption in which they are to try to drag them out, but reaching a helping hand to them if they have any indication and desire to come out of that condition.

I know that some homosexuals will say, well I was born this way. Actually there are a lot of things that we have more or less by nature and if we were to let all of our fallen tendencies rule us, we would get into all kinds of trouble. If for example, we have by nature a violent temper you could see what that would do if we left it unchecked, or if by nature we have a streak of cruelty and did not repress it, we can see where that would lead us. These tendencies, unchecked, are the reason why we have wife abusers, husband abusers and child abusers, because of a streak of cruelty. Or we might have a streak whereby we might go into stores and drop things into our pockets and walk out without paying for them; this might be just an obsession with us. It is similar with homosexual tendencies; it is something that can be fought against. It is something that can be repressed. What will repress it? The same thing that will repress any other bad quality and that is the teaching and spirit of Christ. We need to show these people, who

THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUALITY

MOST POWERFUL TEXTS THAT INSTRUCT US OF GODS VIEWPOINT ON SAME SEX ORIENTATION:

**GENESIS 19:1-29; LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13;
DEUTERONOMY 23:17-18; JUDGES 19-21;
ROMANS 1:18-32; 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 AND
1 TIMOTHY 1:10.**

(Some also use 2 PETER 2:4-10 and JUDE 6-7).

are homosexuals, as well as others, the better way, the way indicated in the Scriptures. Some will say homosexuals are not hurting anybody because they are both consenting in the matter; however, the man that has his cruelty streak is hurting other people. Not so, homosexuals are hurting themselves and more than that they are sinning against God!

Remember the case of Joseph, where Potiphar's wife came to him and she propositioned him and said, my husband is gone, you can come in and you can be like a husband to me. Joseph realized that this was wrong, but there is one thing he said that is very impressive and that is, that he could not do this thing and sin against God! Joseph realized that even if Potiphar never learned of this, he knew he would be sinning against God.

CHRISTIANITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY

The Christian church, however, has not stood idly by. When it has spoken out against this political immorality, the cry of "separation of church and state" is shouted at the so-called "religious bigots." But when the homosexual community attempts to use political power to try to control the church and get its agenda taught in schools, no such cry of bigotry is heard from the sacred halls of the media. Why? This answer comes very easily; it isn't politically correct to side with Christians.

With such clear statements against homosexuality, it is difficult to see how different groups can say the Bible supports homosexuality. But they try by redefining love, marriage, sex, homosexuality, etc., in order to accomplish their goal. But God created us in His image "male and female" (Gen. 1:21) and He created marriage, declaring that "a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

The Bible is a powerful book, and because of that the homosexuals often try to make the Bible agree with their agenda. But it doesn't work. The Bible does not support homosexuality, nor does it support same-sex marriage, as we have seen from the Scriptures above.

Unlike other sins, this sexual sin has a judgment administered by God Himself: He gives them over to their passions (Rom. 1:26-28). This means that their hearts are allowed to be hardened by their sins. As a result, they can no longer see the error of what they are doing. Without an awareness of their sinfulness, there will be no repentance. Without repentance, there will be no forgiveness. Without forgiveness, there is no salvation.

FORGIVENESS IS AVAILABLE

It is important for any who may have become ensnared by the evil conduct and immoral behavior of our day, to recognize that there is a way out of this situation, and this way out, comes to us, first, by a recognition, that we are sinners and second, that Jesus died on the cross at Calvary for all of the sinful human race, as the Apostle expresses it: "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; . . . for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:15, 16). Paul also explains that Jesus "is able to save to the uttermost (no matter to what extent we have sinned—all is not lost), for those who come to God through him" (Heb. 7:25). If we repent of our sin, change our lifestyle with Jesus' help and then, third, consecrate our all to God and seek to do His will from then on, we can have God's forgiveness and eventual salvation.

MEDICAL RESEARCH ON HOMOSEXUALITY

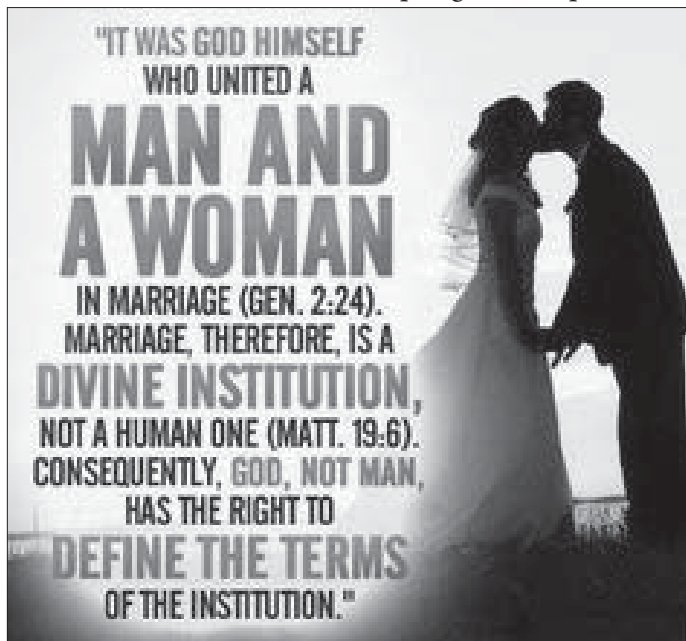
Many scientists today believe that homosexuality is from a combination of genetic, hormonal and environmental influences. They seem to favor biologically-based theories. Those attempting to justify homosexuality point to genetic and biological causes and claim that these causes are from (or created by) God and therefore acceptable. But this is not true. These genetic and biological defects are from the fall into sin. Please consider the following portion of an article published in the Bible Standard 2005, p. 28.

An example of this is homosexuality, condemned by God but seemingly justified by medical research in that persons are born with homosexual tendencies (Rom. 1:26, 27; Lev. 18:22, 23). Undoubtedly such research is genuine, in fact, research is shedding light on the myriad physical and mental problems due to mankind's fallen condition, and in many cases has been of help to man. All are born with varying degrees of physical and mental derangement through the operation of sin in the human family.

Another article that addresses this point was published in the Bible Standard 2006, pp. 72, 73. And 6000 years of degradation with sin has caused these defects not God.

Dr. Howard Dean when campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, was quoted in the Washington Post, January 8, 2004, as saying that "from a religious point of view, if God had thought homosexuality a sin, He would not have created gay people," and "the overwhelming evidence is that there is a very significant, substantial genetic component to homosexuality."

We take issue with the above statements of Dr. Dean; for God did not create the many imperfections that exist in the human race today. God created directly and initially two human beings perfect, and in His character image and likeness, but due to their fall into sin, they lost their perfection, and by human generation, this taint of sin has passed down to all subsequent generations even to the present time (Rom. 3:10, 23). Now, after over 6000 years of multiplied degradation with sin, the human race is afflicted with a multitude of mental and physical aberrations and debilities. Abnormal behaviors such as rape, murder, kleptomania and homosexuality, etc., along with all other sinful acts, when repeated over and over through generations, do increase the probability for such traits to be transferred to the offspring at conception.



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

media. In all this, our children are the recipients of the greatest harm, for it is set forth to them as acceptable and normal behavior.

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

THE CONTROL OF THOUGHT HELPS

Even those who are born with homosexual tendencies still have the ability to control their thoughts and curb their desires that are sinful. Consider the following reference from Bible Standard 1964, p. 82.

Some are inclined to believe that since each man's brain differs from every other man's brain to some extent, his thinking must necessarily be different; in a word, that a man can think only in harmony with his brain construction. But we reply, Not so; each may learn to weigh and balance his own thoughts, to curb some and to encourage others; but to do this each must have before him the ideal of character to be copied. Thoughts can be controlled just as words and actions can be controlled: the will is at the helm, and must decide which thoughts and sentiments it will entertain and encourage, and which it will repel. It is necessary, therefore, first of all, for the will to be rightly directed, and secondly, to be strong, and to use its power in the control of thought, in curbing those thoughts which it recognizes as evil, and in stimulating those which it recognizes as good, helpful, beneficial.

THOUGHTS FROM FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Marriage affirms our masculinity and femininity: Adam needed someone to help him reflect the uniqueness of God's nature. He could not do it alone. God gave Adam exactly what he needed: one woman. Eve in her female uniqueness completed Adam just as Adam completed Eve. Adam was a physical and emotional oddity without Eve. It was only when Eve came along that things made sense. Adam and Eve helped each other discover the depth of who they were as male and female.

Same sex unions deny the idea that any real, deep and necessary differences exist between the sexes. If real differences exist, which science proves, then men would need women and women would need men. Let us be clear in this understanding; Marriage has not been imposed

upon culture by some religious institution or government power! It was established by God and is enforced by nature. Genesis 1:27 “In the image of God, created he him; Male and female, created he, them.” v. 28 “And God blessed them, and God said to them be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” The family was instituted and divinely sanctioned in the beginning, when God created one man and one woman, brought them together and commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply.” This is where and how marriage began and where we Christians must stand. Let us resolve to be acceptable to God’s pattern for the family structure as contained in the scriptures.

Throughout history society has been established by males and females joining in permanent unions to establish a life together and bear and raise their children. It has only been in the last decade that some in all society have made the joining of two same sex individuals part of a family model. The true meaning of marriage is not something that each new generation is privileged to re-define! To us same sex marriage does great damage by denying the social role that God designed into marriage. We stand firm in the understanding of one man and one woman to express Jehovah’s design of marriage. This was and is Jehovah’s marvelous creation and He has not included all casual social relationships, even the most loving ones, in this (Jehovah’s) circle of kinship. Nor should we!

It has been said: “Homosexuality is a way of life which is accompanied by a variety of diminishing returns.” OH, if we maintain fellowship with someone who is living in compromise we may be misunderstood, even though we may not agree with the principle involved. An accommodation of the person often becomes silent approval of the principle.

CAN WE AS CHRISTIANS PRAY FOR THE NON-CHRISTIAN SINNER?

Just because someone is a homosexual does not mean that we cannot love him (or her) or pray for him (or her). Homosexuality is a sin, and like any other sin it needs to be dealt with in the only way possible. It needs to be laid at the cross and repented of. Christians should pray for the salvation of the homosexual the same way they would any other person in sin. However, this does not mean that Christians should approve of their sin. Not at all! Christians should not compromise their witness for a politically correct opinion that is shaped by guilt and fear Colossians 4:6 “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

1 Cor. 5:9-11; v. 11 “But now I write to you not to be associated with anyone, named a brother if he be a fornicator, or a covetous person or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a person not even to eat” (Diaglott).

NEW LEGISLATION WOULD AUTHORIZE PERSECUTION OF PEOPLE OF FAITH

Moving forward with a sweeping agenda they call “Beyond Marriage Equality” backers of redefining marriage have introduced new legislation, HR 3185, that would create special rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people and empower them to pursue legal action whenever they perceive an individual or business has “discriminated” based on “sexual orientation or gender identity.”

Under HR 3185, all that a gay, lesbian or transgendered person needs to do is allege that an individual or business has somehow discriminated based on sexual orientation or gender identity and the full force of the federal government can be brought down on the person accused. Many homosexuals are demanding their right to marry (one of same sex with another). Many countries have already approved of such rights. Sodom’s laws approved of homosexuality. That sin had to be punished. Now the same sin will lead to global tragedy.

THE QUESTION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS BE ALLOWED TO MARRY ONE ANOTHER?

No, however in this politically correct climate that relinquishes morality to the relativistic whims of society, stating that homosexuals should not marry is becoming unpopular. Should a woman be allowed to marry another woman? Should a man be allowed to marry another man? Should they be given legal protection and special rights to practice their homosexuality? No, they should not.

The Bible, of course, condemns homosexuality. It takes no leap of logic to discern that homosexual marriage is also condemned. But our society does not rely on the Bible for its moral truth. Instead, it relies on humanistic and relativistic morals upon which it builds its ethical structure.

Homosexuality is not natural. Just look at the male and female bodies. They are obviously designed to combine

in the sexual act. The natural design is apparent. It is not natural to couple male with male and female with female.

CIVIL LAWS ACCEPTING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

In this report from Germany published in the Present Truth 2001, p. 91 we learn of civil laws accepting the concept of homosexual couples bonding in matrimony.

As time goes by we are privileged to see how the conditions in the world are growing worse and the long expected Kingdom is coming near. Our country and so called Christian nations are running on the way to their own destruction, especially in the religious and moral matters of life. The worst of all was the new law which gives the possibility for homosexual couples to make a bond of matrimony similar to marriage (even the mayor of Berlin is a professed homosexual). We see that our Lord foretold these bad conditions, that in the day of His appearing (Second Advent), conditions would be similar to those in Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-30).

WHAT SHOULD A LOCAL ECCLESIA DO?

We recognize that we should hate the sin but not the sinner, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But we also recognize that the Christian walk is a “narrow way” (Matt. 7:14) and we are to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). In the Christian walk we must uncover our sins, confess them and cleanse ourselves from them. For anyone to engage in the Christian walk they must learn to identify their sins and begin the difficult work of purging them. This is also true for the homosexual; they must recognize their sin as God sees it, stop its practice and seek forgiveness.

If a homosexual, recognizing his sin and diligently working to cleanse himself of that sin and is truly repentant, it would be acceptable to have him participate in a local ecclesia. He should be given adequate opportunity to be reformed. Some will argue that they were born a homosexual and cannot reform. Just as a heterosexual can choose to be “celibate” so can a homosexual choose to be “celibate”. The Apostle would not have said “God gave them over to a debased mind” (See Rom. 1:22-28) if they were utterly helpless in the matter. It would seem wise however for the ecclesia not to consider this person as a candidate for any elected office (deacon, elder or musician) of the class. It would also seem necessary that much time pass (perhaps a year or more) to ensure that this person is truly on the road to recovery. After this

time, he might be considered for a committee member or a deacon but still not an elder. Not until much more time passes, serving faithfully in a lesser office, might he be considered as an elder if he has not in all that time acted on his immoral propensities and qualifies otherwise.

Why do we take such a harsh position with same-sex practices while other mainline churches are welcoming them and in some cases advancing them to the clergy and while various State agencies allow same-sex marriages?

All sin is of course sin, but not all sin is the same. God has identified homosexuality as an “abomination” to Him. He knew beforehand that there would be homosexuals and of course knew that through degradation they would be born with those tendencies and yet He identified it as an abomination and warned against it. He must have known that in spite of being born that way, the human endowed with a free will could still choose not to practice it.

And since the Bible has taught us that unlike other sins, this sexual sin (homosexuality) has a judgment administered by God Himself. If the practice is continued, knowing it is an abomination to God (a sin against God Himself), He will eventually let them be hardened by their sins and turn them over to their passions (Rom. 1:26-28). As a result, they can no longer see the error of what they are doing. Without an awareness of their sinfulness, there will be no repentance. Without repentance, there will be no forgiveness.

What then should be done if a same-sex couple is living together or marries lawfully? If living together, sexually active would disqualify them from becoming members of a class. This activity is forbidden by God and unacceptable behavior to be members of a class. It does however leave open the opportunity for them to reform by discontinuing living together and engaging in same-sex activities. By contrast, however, getting married is a lifelong commitment to a same-sex partner. There is no avoiding it; a homosexual must ultimately decide whether they want to be a Christian or continue in same-sex activities, it has to be one or the other as they are not compatible. One who chooses to marry someone of the same sex is deliberately making the decision to live the rest of his life sinning against God!

TRANSGENDER ISSUES

Transgender is an *umbrella term* for a person whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the *sex* assigned at birth. The *sex* of a person is classified male or female as assigned at birth, based upon the appearance of external anatomy and this is what is

written on the birth certificate! The poor confused world are living in the darkness expressed in Matthew 6:23 “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

The confused world of mankind now have gender expressions through one’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, body characteristics etc., which may or may not conform to socially-defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. This often leads to the process of altering one’s birth sex, which can include personal, medical and legal steps such as using a different name and new pronouns, dressing differently, changing one’s name and *sex* on legal documents, hormone therapy and one or

more types of surgery! Jehovah’s plan of salvation for all who will praise His name and consecrate their lives over to Him, calls for a time of trouble spoken by King David; Psalms 30:5 “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Yes, in Isaiah 60:2 the prophet says “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”

Let us rejoice in the righteousness of the LORD and in the justice of His promises “The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth” (Prov. 10:30). “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9).

ONLY GOD APPOINTS HIS PEOPLE’S LEADERS

Jehovah has arranged for the Movement of His choosing to continue to dispense the Truth as due and guide the general service under the arrangements He has set forth through His special servant Pastor C. T. Russell. As the Epiphany-enlightened brethren well know, it is most convenient and effective for the leader of the Lord’s people in directing the work of the Bible Standard Ministries (LHMM) [hereafter referred to as BSM] to serve also as its Executive Trustee, to look after its business affairs, etc. If the leader and the Executive Trustee were two different persons, it might work misunderstandings, lack of proper co-operation and possibly disruption.

This of course brings up the question as to who the succeeding leader of the Lord’s people might be and whom therefore to approve and accept as the succeeding Executive Trustee of the BSM. We believe the following considerations will help us to recognize God’s will in the matter. Only God has the right to appoint a leader for His people in general (see, e.g., Num. 27:18-20; 1 Sam. 2:35; Isa. 55:4; PT ‘48, p. 45). Being subject to His arrangements, and desiring only a leader of His appointment, we would not presume to look for a leader of our own choosing, or one chosen only by the brethren. We are glad to see that He has not left us to grope in darkness on this subject, for we believe He has clearly indicated Bro. Leon Snyder as His choice for the next general leader for His people.

In our writings it’s pointed out that the Epiphany Messenger referred to the BSM as a “movement, a voluntary activity,” as the “name of our public work,” as a “foundation or fund” with an individual as its Executive Trustee and that the Movement would no doubt continue on the same

basis in charge of the Youthful Worthies after the Great Company leader’s death. We believe that the same general arrangement will continue as the Consecrated Epiphany Campers are brought into the role of leadership.

By analogy, and in harmony with Scriptures, reason and facts (power of attorney), it seems evident that the Divinely chosen leader of the Lord’s people to succeed the Youthful Worthy leader in the event of his disability or demise, not as leader of the Youthful Worthies, but rather as leader of the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, would be the one who for a considerable time had been serving faithfully as the special helper of the Youthful Worthy leader and has continued faithful to the Truth as due.

The Movement has been held in this period of transition since July of 2012. The Lord seems to have indicated to us, that due to the length of Bro. Ralph Herzig’s disability, that it is His will for us to move forward with a special business meeting to be held at the Florida Convention, Friday, March 11, 2016 from 2:00-4:00 PM. In recognition of Bro. Leon Snyder as the Lord’s choice as leader of the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, the brethren will vote for him as Executive Trustee (Conducting the business) of our Movement. Bro. Leon was named by Bro. Ralph as his choice to succeed him. Accordingly, this vote is the affirmation of that choice and election of him as our Executive Trustee.

As a further confirmation of the Lord’s will regarding our Movement, this vote will be ratified at two additional business meetings to be held at the Muskegon Convention, May 20, 2016 and at the Chester Springs Convention, July 15, 2016.



HAVE YOU MOVED OR
ARE YOU GOING TO BE MOVING?
RENEW TODAY!

TO:

THE YEAR BEFORE US

Standing at the portal of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.
Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand."
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

For the years before us, oh, what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake;
His eternal covenant He will never break;
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

OBITUARIES

Sr. Teresa Ann Williams-Perry, loving called ("TT"), 59, died September 1, 2015 after a long illness. She was a child of God and loved His word. She was committed to the study of the Bible, meeting often with her Bible Standard Ministries brethren in small study groups and at general conventions. It was her quest to come to a better knowledge of her Creator and HIS only begotten son with the intent of some day meeting Their approval. She leaves her mother Sr. Gentry Williams; four brothers, Michael Alan (Linda), Donald, Lawrence (Deborah) and C.L. Tim (Renea) ; two sisters, Jennifer E. Williams-Scholer (Paul Scholer) and Alice Marie. Bro. Michael Williams officiated at the funeral service.

Sr. Esther Dora Lupus, of Sheffield Tasmania, Australia has entered into the sleep of death with the full hope and understanding of the promised restitution. God bless her memory!

Bro. Jack Summer Wilson, 72, died peacefully at his home in Manteo, NC, Sunday, August 9, 2015. He was surrounded by his family and friends. He is survived by his beloved wife of 45 years, Sr. Ruth Jolly Wilson (the granddaughter of our former pastor, Raymond G. Jolly) of Manteo, NC, his son Stephen Wilson, daughter Anna Wilson, two granddaughters, Josie Wilson and Lily Grace, and Lily's mother Jennifer. Bro. Daniel Herzig officiated at the memorial services in Manteo and Ocracoke, NC.

Bro. Willie L. Holland, Jr., 78, of Parksley, VA, died at his home on September 17, 2015. Bro. Bill was a pillar in his community; husband, father, grandfather and a friend to many. His smile was contagious and was complementary to his loving-kindness to all who were privileged to know him! He is survived by his wife Virginia, a son Kevin (Jeri), Daughter, Karen Strickland (Doug), daughter-in-law Becky, a brother, two sisters and five grandchildren. Let us keep his dear wife Sr. Virginia and his family in our prayers. Bro. Leon Snyder officiated at the funeral and memorial services.

Sr. Marcia Yakes, 63, died September 23, 2015. We thank the Lord that our dear sister is no longer suffering. She was introduced to the Truth and its understanding in 1990 by Sr. Carol Augustin. She was loved by her community, especially the children. A memorial service was held in October.

Sr. Annette Carter, 72, died September 28, 2015. She lived to serve her Lord and the brethren along with a deep need to serve her many friends. She was a genuine, kind, loving person with a love for the Lord that can only be described as admirable.

Stella Eleanor Johnson, 97, died Oct. 12, 2015. Sr. Stella embraced her Lord and studied His word with the hope of having a place in God's kingdom. She studied God's word all her life in fellowship with Bible Standard Ministries. She was preceded in death by her husband Nicholas in 1991. She is survived by a brother Richard Brezinski, Nieces and Nephews.

Faith in God includes
Faith in His timing



A NEW YEAR PRAYER

Thank You Lord for giving me a brand new year ahead. Help me to live the way I should as each new day I tread. Give me love and wisdom that I might help a friend in need. Give me strength and courage so a shoulder I might lend. The

year ahead is empty Lord, please help me fill it with good objectives according to Your will and Your word. AMEN