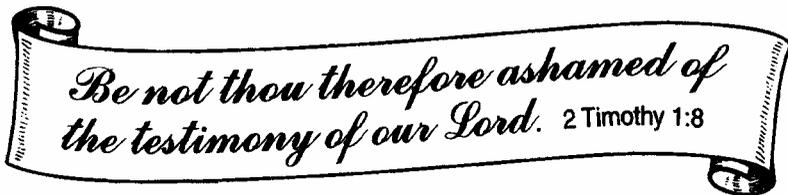


THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

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Editor: anabaptistmennonites.org.

Editorial.

"THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE OX"

"Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" 1 Corinthians 9:9-10.

The time of harvest is here. Those who worked hard to plow and plant are now privileged to reap the rewards of their labors. This is just and right. God revealed through Paul that this principle applies to spiritual workers as well. It is right that those who labor in kingdom work would be financially supported. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" 1 Corinthians 9:14.

Church leaders feel conspicuous in teaching this truth because they, like Paul, find fulfillment in spreading "the gospel of Christ without charge." "Neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me" 1 Corinthians 9:15. We enjoy a heritage of spiritual fathers who have kept the Gospel free by avoiding a salaried ministry. Ministry labor without a salary "lest [they] should hinder the gospel of Christ" and so that they "abuse not [their] power in the gospel." This Scriptural concept is also important so that leaders might "gain the more" and "have a reward."

However, those who benefit from the labors of God's faithful servants feel an obligation to share with them. Paul reminded the Corinthians that it was just and right for laborers in "spiritual things" to be reimbursed with "carnal things." Our Rules and Discipline states that "the brotherhood should consider it a responsibility and a privilege to share their material blessings with the faithful ministry." God has blessings in store for those who heed this Scriptural command.

Sharing provides a living for dedicated Christian workers. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple" 1 Corinthians 9:13. Full financial support is a Scriptural answer for missionaries and others who cannot provide for their own living.

Sharing lifts the burden of workers who carry a heavy load. Service in the church requires much time that some can hardly afford to give. The young minister, the school principal, or your busy bishop faces an extra challenge to make ends meet. We should be alert to support anyone who is carrying more than a normal share of kingdom work. If "you say unto them,

Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" James 2:16.

Sharing expresses thanks for the debt we owe to God's servants. Just as a child can never repay his parents for all that they have done, so we can never repay our spiritual fathers. Their prayers for our souls, their tears for our wanderings, and their pain in our discipline are all intangible values that we can never repay. We should say thank you! And we can lighten their care where we see that it is heavy.

Sharing cultivates a sense of brotherhood. The joy of giving and the gratitude of receiving knit believers together into a fabric of glory to God. Our native independence is curbed by a spirit of thankfulness for the contribution others make to our lives. On the other hand, it is a tonic to our humility to accept assistance with gratitude. Could it be that the favorable economic climate has lessened our dependence on one another? Leaders must cultivate a sense of dependence on the brotherhood in their calling to lead the flock.

Sharing challenges workers to be diligent in their calling. A gift is a reminder of the confidence others have in our sacrifice. Are we worthy? Are we as ministers sacrificing the time that we should to prepare inspiring messages, visit the sick and wayward, or comfort the widows? Is the work of the kingdom suffering because we, like the disciples, have gone fishing? The free meal that Christ prepared on the shore may have been a small rebuke for the disciples' detour from their calling. A "meal" provided by Christ through a brother may be Christ's call to "feed my lambs."

Sharing brings joy and reward to the givers. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17). By faith we understand that every sacrifice will be rewarded with multiplied blessings. We give according to the extent of our faith in the blessing. As we gather in the fruits of the earth, we should remember those who have spent time in kingdom work and share God's good gifts with them.

—BAS



Restitution.

Restitution is the restoration of something to its original state or rightful owner. The Fall of Man produced spiritual separation from God. Man tried to hide instead of enjoying fellowship with his rightful Master. God's provision of salvation makes it possible for man to be restored to his former

place of spiritual communion with the Lord. A commitment to make restitution to our fellow men is a necessary part of experiencing spiritual renewal with God.

The Holy Spirit's presence within the renewed heart continues to guide the Christian in the way of truth. Restitution is a part of "works meet for repentance." It is the outworking of repentance and regeneration in man's heart—the outward expression of an inward change. Salvation is wrought alone through faith in Christ. Good works are the resulting fruit of the life of faith, as it is written, "Faith without works is dead" James 2:20.

We cannot undo the far-reaching consequences of our sin, but genuine conversion produces in us a desire to correct past wrongs as far as possible. Reconciliation with God involves seeking to be reconciled to our fellow men. All sin must be confessed personally to God. However, where sin has affected our relationship with others, we need to make confession and restitution to them as well. James 5:15-16.

The Old Testament Law clearly outlined situations that called for offenders to make restitution to individuals they had wronged. If material goods were obtained from others through stealing or other deceitful means, they were to be returned to their rightful owners along with an added penalty (Exodus 22:1-4; Leviticus 6:1-5). If individuals damaged or lost another's property through carelessness or neglect, they also were required to make restitution (Exodus 22:6).

Today we live in the New Testament economy and are no longer subject to the Old Testament Law. However, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law.... but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). Many of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount reveal moral principles found in the Old Testament laws of restitution. "Be reconciled to thy brother." Matthew 5:24. 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him" Matthew 5:25. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" Matthew 5:40. These verses teach us not only to restore what belongs to others, but also to willingly give to others what is ours as needed to live in peace with our fellow men.

Zacchaeus is a New Testament example of one who recognized the importance of restitution in being reconciled to God. He sought Jesus, responded willingly to His commands, received Him joyfully, and confessed Him as Lord. Then he committed to restore fourfold to his fellow men anything that he had taken from them wrongfully. This testimony demonstrated Zacchaeus's penitence and expressed his desire that nothing from his sinful past would remain a stumbling block to his newfound peace with

God and men. Jesus verified the sincerity of Zacchaeus's commitment, saying, "This day is salvation come to this house" Luke 19:9.

Jesus still comes to abide at the house of sincere seekers today. He will dwell within the heart of all who confess His Name and receive Him joyfully. Like Zacchaeus, we who have received Christ will be careful to restore to our fellow men anything that we have taken from them wrongfully. The Holy Spirit is faithful to bring such instances to our remembrance. It may have been a business dealing where misrepresentation was used in order to gain an unfair advantage over another. It may have been an accident where we damaged what belonged to someone else. Whatever the situation may be, we will endeavor to make suitable restitution to others by restoring what was taken or damaged.

As long as we live in the flesh we face the possibility of failure, whether by accident or thoughtless actions that unfairly affect others. If such situations arise, we need to continue to exercise restitution so that our relationships between one another remain open, honest, and unhindered. As children of God, we desire His continual work of sanctification in our lives. We need to share the attitude the apostle Paul expressed when he said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after.... Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" Philippians 3:12, 15.

Overly sensitive persons may need to accept others' counsel as to whether or not an item is significant enough to require restitution. A more noble response the next time may be the best remedy. When we have cleared everything we know that stood between us and God or our fellow men, we need to claim assurance of salvation and rest in the peace which God alone can give. "Wherefore, beloved.... be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" 2 Peter 3:14.

Brother Timothy.



The Preeminence of Christ

Order and priority mark every God-designed work. Consider this sampling of Bible illustrations: On the first day, God created light, an impor-

tant resource for life on earth. On the sixth day, 'Adam was first formed, then Eve," consistent with God's headship pattern. Through Elijah, God commanded the widow of Zarephath to make the prophet "a little cake first" from her scant provision. And Christ has instructed us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Above and beyond every natural and spiritual priority is the preeminence of Christ. Whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, Christ is greater, higher, and more excellent than all. Regardless of the views and values of men, this fact stands eternally true, because "God ... hath highly exalted him" Philippians 2:9.

The principle that Christ is preeminent runs throughout Scripture, but the word preeminence appears only one time in the Bible. (See Colossians 1:18.) It is translated from a Greek word that means "to be first" (Strong's). Notice these areas, mentioned in Colossians 1:15-20, in which Christ is first or preeminent.

Christ is first in life—"the firstborn." Life never began in Christ, because He is eternal. But all natural and spiritual life begins in Christ, for He is the only source of life. The Creator imparts life to His creation. "In him was life" (John 1:4).

Christ is first in the Father's family—"the firstborn of every creature." As the eldest Son, Christ carries the birthright in the family of God. He is the family priest, intensely interested in the spiritual welfare of mankind. As the primary heir, He will receive and dispense the family inheritance.

Christ is first in deserving honor—All things were created. . .for him." Creation is designed to honor the Creator. The host of heaven worships Him (Nehemiah 9:6). "Every creature ... on the earth, and... in the sea... [gives] honour ... unto him that sitteth upon the throne" (Revelation 5:13). Man, "crowned with glory and honour," is especially equipped to glorify his Maker.

Because of sin, all men "come short of the glory of God" and fail the Creator's purpose. But at the Judgment, "every knee shall bow." Men that refused to honor Christ in time will then be cast out, like salt that has lost his savor, to be trodden underfoot by the Creator in the winepress of divine wrath. "Let all on earth their voices raise, / To sing the great [Creator's] praise."

Christ is first in the realm of His work—"He is before ["in front of "—Strong's / all things." The Creator stands greater than the creation. The grandeur and beauty of earth and universe pale beside the greatness and glory of Christ. To view the creation without seeing the Creator dishonors

Christ and is evidence of blindness to His preeminence. (See Romans 1:19-21.)

Christ is first in the church—"He is the head of ... the church." Christ holds the highest position and greatest authority in the church. Under His lordship the body functions and grows. In love and wisdom He moves members and gives gifts to bring fullness to His body and perfection to His bride.

Christ is first in resurrection—"the firstborn from the dead. "He was first to conquer death and break the power of sin. But Christ's victory over death was not a mere personal triumph. He became "the firstfruits of them that slept."

The resurrection confirmed Christ's plan to "enter into a strong man's house, . . . bind the strong man [,] and then ... spoil his house" (Mathew 12:29). Satan was the "strong man," and death was "his house"—a prison house where all men would be bound. At death, Christ entered Satan's "house," bound the prison keeper, and burst the prison bars for all His sin-cleansed followers.

This list only begins to name areas where Christ is preeminent. Time and eternity will unfold many more illustrations of His preeminence. How can we show that Christ is preeminent in our lives?

Keep self crucified. Serving self is diametrical to honoring Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." This message, observed on a church sign, says it succinctly: "When you are the zero, He is the one."

Cultivate love for Christ. This gives incentive for honoring Him. Worship Him daily. Live in obedience. Keep His day holy. Daily meditate on truth and sing His praise. Help others to love Him, especially the family. And cultivate love for His people, the church.

Admire the church. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, . . . city of the great King.. . . Walk about Zion, . . . tell the towers.. . . Mark ... her bulwarks, consider her palaces" (Psalm 48:2, 12-13). Think about the strength and beauty of the church. Marvel at her glory and rejoice in her victories. Notice her many faithful members; the solid, godly homes; her prospering youth; and the strong, stable elders.

The church is the crown jewel of Christ's possessions. These are the people purchased with His blood, kept by His power, and destined for eternal glory with Him. We cannot look down on the church and keep Christ preeminent in our lives.

Serve Christ joyfully. Every Christian is a servant in His kingdom. Service proves our honor for Christ, and opens channels for divine joy and

honor to flow in our lives. (See John 12:26.)

Sometimes our calling tests our commitment and seems beyond our ability. Our load may appear heavier, and our sacrifice greater, than others. But to groan or complain about our service greatly dishonors our Lord.

Keep Christ central at home. When Christ is preeminent in our lives, He has an honored place in our homes. Each person reflects His image and submits to His plan for headship in the home. A clean, quiet, orderly environment shows reverence for His presence. Mottoes hold reminders of His Word. Simple furnishings and toys show that we truly do keep Christ preeminent.

Discipline our business pursuits. An amazing array of business opportunities surround us today. But many are incompatible with keeping Christ preeminent.

When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, Pharaoh said, "Make them rulers over my cattle." But they refused, saying, "Thy servants are shepherds." As descendants of Jacob, "a plain man," they rejected opportunities for renown in business.

We cannot honor Christ by being "slothful in business." Nor will we honor Him if we aspire to become prominent men in the business world. Tell others about Christ. How genuine is our claim of honor for Christ? When have we last spoken of His preeminence to our family or to our brethren? We know that true honor is more than words, but when Christ is preeminent in our lives, "we cannot but speak" about Him. Telling others about Christ helps us to understand His greatness.

Watch for His return. When Christ is preeminent, we do more than look up to Him; we also look up for Him, anticipating the joyous moment of His appearing and the glorious reality of His eternal reign. To "see him as he is" will unveil a greater dimension of Christ's preeminence, and show us that He is not only the first but also the last, both the beginning and the end.

Jesus Christ is and ever will be "far above all ... not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21). *Brother Simeon.*

"Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.... Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old" (Lamentations 5:19, 21).



"Some Fell Among Thorns"

The crowd stood in rapt attention as the words of Jesus rolled in with the waves, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." It was a good story, alive with the details of the day and the life that surrounded them. But, to many in the crowd, the deeper meaning of this parable eluded them, and the more pressing "care of this world" beckoned them away from the Master and back to their homes. The Word in their lives "fell among thorns" (Matthew 13:7).

The sower is one who spreads the Word. Many means are used to sow the seed. It may be through script, through song, or through preaching, but it is outstanding that the seed is sown without partiality. There was seed for all, but only one parcel of ground yielded fruit as desired.

The seed represents God's Word. It is sown that men might believe, repent, and bear the fruit of an obedient life. The seed was good seed with 100 percent germination, but where there were thorns the new life ebbed and eventually died.

The soil illustrates men's hearts. The ground where the thorns grew was good ground. Indeed, the grain grew well in this ground, but so did the destructive thorns. Before long these thorny competitors hid the light and sapped the strength from the growing grain so that it yellowed, withered, and died.

The thorns are "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches." These were thorns in Jesus' day, and they are thorns to us.

What are some expressions of these thorns?

"Buy now, pay later" is splashed on many advertisements. This mentality prevails in our culture, but the "later" price is high and demanding. Managing high levels of debt often competes with spiritual activities. If we accept the cultural norms related to debt, we will find ourselves in a thorn patch.

"You owe it to yourself" is another expression that chokes spiritual growth and fruitfulness. Does life owe young men a late-model car on their eighteenth birthday? Does life owe young sisters six new dresses for Bible school every year? Is a second wedding trip on the six-month anniversary a newlywed right? Is a getaway to the cabin every year a necessity for the family? Does life owe the elderly a retirement with a sizable nest egg?

We must ask the searching question, "What motivates me in these decisions?" Is it a desire to walk more like the meek and lowly Savior, or is it a desire to please myself and be like everyone else?

"Times have changed" is true. But this expression is often used deceptively. Many Mennonite preachers stood tall and staunch in their early years in the doctrines of the Bible. They denounced vigorously the inroads of the radio, television, and worldliness in attire. But their lives ended, choked by the worldly influence of all of the above and more. It did not happen overnight, but it did happen because they allowed popular opinion and the maxim that "times have changed" to mold their response to these inroads.

There is a certain amount of change to which each generation needs to adapt. This change must always be accompanied by prayerful meditation and by applying the unchanging rule of Scripture. If we fail to heed the Word of God and the prompting of His Spirit and allow the voices of change and popular opinion to mold our attitudes, we too will find ourselves choking amidst the "care of this world."

How do we keep our hearts from being overcome by thorns?

We must begin each day with the Master. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). Schedules vary and some prefer to have their personal Bible meditation in the evening. However, to start a day without a thought of God will nurture the thorns and not the Seed. We need to shake off the caring embrace of those warm bed covers early enough to bask in "the closet" of warm fellowship with the Master.

We must choose to pursue "godliness with contentment." Our purchases, the books we read, the music to which we listen, and the friends with which we associate will either hinder us or help us to grow in contentment. By nature we are selfish and are bent toward discontentment. The devil uses discontent very effectively to sow thorns in the heart. The next time we find ourselves longing for something we do not have, we should start counting blessings.

Another death blow to the thorns is to appreciate constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is like a gardener's hoe or a farmer's plow that uproots the weeds and thorns in our lives. This often hurts, but the result is a heart that produces fruit for the Master. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Psalm 141:5).

No, we cannot eradicate the thorn thickets, but by God's grace we can be soft, dark, rich earth that produces godly fruit, "some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Brother Stephen



Church Committee Report – The Art Committee

God gave detailed directions for the artwork on the curtains of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:1). God directed that cherubim be woven into or embroidered onto the curtains. These cherubim added to the beauty of the tabernacle and reminded those who entered of God's presence and holiness. "Every wise hearted man ... made ten curtains ...: with cherubims of cunning work made he them" (Exodus 36:8). This implies that it was a work that required skill and was performed by individuals of special talent and ability.

The Eastern Mennonite Publications Art Committee is not collecting artwork to beautify a tabernacle. Rather, our artwork is to enhance, enrich, and add suitable appeal to various Christian books, pamphlets, and tracts. The special talents and skills of many artists are employed to accomplish this work. We certainly desire "that God in all things may be glorified."

The EMP Art Committee consists of six brethren who work under the direction of the Publication Board. We meet once a month to discuss art requests for various EMP publications and assign them to artists. Presently we are working on illustrating six books: The Little Lost Lamb, In a Strange Country, Aunt Joy's Visit, Maria's Refuge, Grade I Penmanship, and a Bible story book. We are also working on improving some artwork in Reading 2 Map Skills Workbook. Some of these books are illustrated with color pictures. The artwork is now complete for two new books, The Little Farmer and A Church for Charlotte. Look for these to be available in the future.

Some publications require new artwork regularly, such as Home Horizons and "Sendas Derechas" which is a bimonthly Spanish paper for the home, similar to Home Horizons. Recently we have also been working on cover artwork for new tracts.

We are grateful for the many artists who are giving their time and talents to this work. Most of the artists are sisters. This is an area of service in which our sisters excel, making an important contribution to our homes, schools, and churches. We are constantly in need of additional artists and encourage anyone who has interest to notify us.

Artwork should accurately portray the geographic and cultural setting of a story. We are also burdened that our artwork would portray the kind of homes, personal appearance, and conduct that characterize God's people. May the artwork in all our literature leave wholesome influences and impressions upon the readers.

Cheering the Sick and Lonely.

Sickness is often accompanied with a feeling of loneliness. As others hustle and bustle with the routine of life, time creeps by for the invalid. Just as "the LORD saw the affliction of Israel" (2 Kings 14:26), so we should have compassion on the afflicted. Following are some practical pointers on how you may profitably relieve the affliction of the sick.

Go visit them. Usually you should call first to learn if visiting is suitable. Your visit will be appreciated most if you do not share your opinion on their best cure. If they ask for your opinion, you may share, but not as one who claims to know everything. You may need to restrain what you are tempted to say (James 1:26, 27).

Communicate and reminisce. Share something of interest. Ask them to share a good memory. Be a good listener. Be careful not to interrupt when another is speaking. "Be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). Avoid telling the sick and lonely of your troubles or problems. They likely have enough of their own. Offer them a little sunshine. Seek to encourage them. Avoid pessimism, but do not give unrealistic hope. Quote some of God's promises to His people, such as Isaiah 41:10, 13.

Do not gossip or become the community newspaper. People naturally wonder what the gossip will say about them to the next person they meet. Rather, give encouragement and comfort. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds" (Proverbs 18:8).

Sing or read for those sick or confined because of their age. Empathize and pray with them and seek to encourage. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). Read something of real interest, especially if they cannot see well, and read slowly and clearly. It should not be hard to hear or understand. Watch the punctuation and use good expression.

If the sick or lonely person begins to blame or criticize others, remember (without saying so) that all reports have at least two sides. It may help to comment that often good relationships have at least some problems.

The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something every day they live
To pity and, perhaps, forgive.

William Cowper

Give a busy mother with a sick child or companion a helping hand, perhaps with canning, sewing, or babysitting. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). We all have personal duties, "for every man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:5). But if the love of Christ has filled our hearts, we surely will be compassionate and seek to be helpful.

Write letters and send get-well cards, or give a sick or discouraged person a phone call. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Hebrews 13:3).

Offer to take a lonely or an older person with you when you go away. This may help to distract them from their own problems. None of us can afford to be self-centered. We ought rather to be mindful of the blessings we enjoy. God has given us much for which we owe Him thanks. A little diversion and friendship may be the lift they need to be thankful.

Assist them in being occupied with something profitable if they are able. It should be something they can easily do and enjoy. They will find fulfillment if it has a benefit or good purpose. Keeping busy is one good antidote for loneliness. Troubles thrive in the soil of idleness.

Encourage the sick and lonely or discouraged to exercise faith in God. We all need to trust Him. He has wisely hid much of the future from us, but He safely cares for His own (1 Peter 5:7). This does not mean that our faith will never be tested. We cannot know what the future holds. But we can be sure that God is worthy of our trust. Life has uncertainties for everyone, but with faith we overcome our despondency. God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him (Romans 8:28).

Remind the sick and lonely to live daily in companionship with Christ. We all need to read His Word and pray. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). Christ gave us an example of cheering the sick and lonely that we would do well to follow. He never treated the sick with indifference or lack of compassion. Neither did He encourage self-pity. Our encouragement should not be like a sedative, but like a tonic that invigorates.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27).

—*the late Brother Amos.*



Ordering the Child (Part 3)

Spiritual Maturity

"Let's bow our heads for prayer," said Father as the Martin family sat down for supper. But little Duane's eyes did not close and his head remained erect. "Close your eyes," instructed Father as he helped Duane to bow his head.

Spiritual maturity, like many aspects of physical life, is a developing process. With proper nurture, an innocent child's spiritual perception and accountability will flourish as the years tick by.

Spiritual maturity develops when there is respect for sacred things. Respect for God begins in the high chair just as it did for little Duane. We must cultivate respect for God's house and His Word. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God" (Ecclesiastes 5: 1). Commanding respect for God-given authority figures such as parents, schoolteachers, and church leaders will translate into spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity is gained by answering the questions of innocent minds. Good answers will stimulate even deeper thought. "Are the neighbors Christians?" "Why doesn't Elwood's family come to our church anymore?" "Did Uncle Rufus (whom the child knew was divorced) go to heaven?" Such difficult questions deserve honest answers. Children do not need to know everything that parents know, and sometimes parents must simply tell them that God knows best.

Spiritual maturity grows by challenging children to think things through. Sometimes the best approach for our little "question box" is to say, "What do you think?" when you are suspicious he has the answer. Requiring our children to answer questions about what was read in family worship is another good way to stimulate spiritual thinking.

Spiritual maturity will bloom in a home where established guidelines and teaching are close companions. Knowing that mother will select only certain prints at the material store and that she will check with Father if there is a question will establish in the mind of Jane and Judith that Biblical modesty is important. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Timothy 2:9). Parental consistency in life and practice will greatly aid in cultivating spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity will not plateau at the age of accountability. Parents may feel a sense of relief when their child becomes a Christian. But remember, babes in Christ need nurture too. The Christian life has only begun! A good soldier must learn to endure hardness, danger, and disappointments "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Spiritual maturity will never reach its zenith in time. But may the testimony of our posterity be similar to that of Daniel and his three friends. 'As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:17).
Brother Philip.



PRAYER POINT

*"The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much"*

*Pray for the Publication Board and the writers
As the provide literature to strengthen our faith in God.*

*Pray that each of us as God's children
May have a greater burden for the lost and
May do what we can to bring them to the Lord.*

*Pray for those who are serving in other countries
As missionaries that the Gospel might be
Carried into all the world through these open doors.*

*Thank the Lord for His mercies which
"Are new every morning."
"His compassions fail not."
Lamentations 3:22-23.*

