



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" MARK 16:15

AUGUST 1995

FROM US TO YOU

At this writing we have just returned from a ten-day vacation in Vermont feeling refreshed and reflective about the trip. It was nice to stay in houses for a while, and enjoy the fresh air. Since we first got married 15 years ago, we have lived in the same Long Island apartment. Our building is old and has outdated heating, plumbing, and cooking facilities. There is no laundry and no elevator in the building. Most of the years we have lived in our rented home we dreaded the summers as our apartment would become hot, humid, and uncomfortable. We used to keep our windows open to let in some air, but it also allowed the street noise and pollution to come in as well, and we live on a very noisy main road. Over the years we have learned to contend with burglar alarms going off at odd hours, loud music blaring from car radios, drunks shouting profanities at each other, and gang fights outside our windows. So we really appreciated the beauty and serenity of the country inns and the bed and breakfasts we stayed at. Even the animals were friendly! Still it was nice to get back home and resume the work God has given us, filled with new enthusiasm for the task.

The longer you live for Jesus, the more He will teach you, as long as you are pliable in the Master's hands (Job 33:6, Isaiah 29:16, Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1-6, & Romans 9:17-26). Consequently, one of the lessons we have learned over the years is that when we are in God's will, we may not always get everything we think we want, because the Lord's plans may interfere with our desires. Nevertheless, God is so loving and kind that He will grant us any request that does not conflict with His purpose in our lives. For example, every time we have gotten to a place of total misery in a situation, God has interceded for us, often in unimaginable ways, and He has given us a solution. In the 1980's we used to have to drag heavy bottles of water home from the supermarket because the water from our taps tasted so bad. As the years went on, it became increasingly difficult for us to haul the bottles up the long, steep flight of steps to our apartment, but we didn't think there was an alternative. Then we discovered water filters, and **thank God**, we can get our water directly from the tap now, it just passes through a plastic filter first. The swelteringly hot summers were a misery for years, but **God solved that problem for us** as well, and we discovered that our building has more electric power than we thought. Plus that, we were able to purchase newly designed, energy efficient air conditioners that keep our apartment cool and comfortable, and now our windows can remain closed to street noise and pollution. Wrong numbers and crank calls used to be an annoyance for us, but **the Lord led us** to buy an answering machine and the situation is now solved.

Our most recent irritation was the lack of closet space in our cluttered, congested quarters. When you live somewhere for 15 years, you acquire a lot of things, but there was no place to put them. Every room in our home has shelves filled with objects, but that, plus three old closets, was not enough space, and we ended up having to leave

new purchases in bags on the floor. Then a difficulty arose with a new neighbor's loud music. It came through the wall into our home, but **the Lord showed us how to solve that problem** by muffling the noise. Eric built a new closet onto our wall unit, blocking off irritating sounds from the other apartment and giving us more space! Other couples far younger than us have married and moved into nice houses with gardens right after their marriage, but that was not God's plan for us. It also took many painful years to discover that it was not His will for us to have children right away either. For **His** children needed feeding and **His** will must come first (John 21:17, Hebrews 5:12-14, & 1 Peter 2:2). The second bedroom of our apartment was originally planned as a nursery for our offspring, but when we realized God's agenda was different from our own, we acquiesced to **His** will, and the nursery became an office that launched this ministry. Today we have a large office suite in town, and a small staff, but our home is the same, and we have realized that our would-be nursery became a nursery after all, not for our children, but for God's. For spiritual nourishment comes through God's Holy Word (John 1:1, Revelation 19:11-13, and see Matthew 26:26-29, John 15:5-8), and we live to serve Him, in the good times and the bad! It's like a marriage.



Today divorce rates are high because people enter into marriage with selfish expectations, and put themselves first. In the same way, Christians have problems in their relationship with God when Christ, our Bridegroom (see Matthew 9:15, 25:1, John 3:29, 2 Corinthians 11:2, & Isaiah 54:5-6), is forced to take a back seat to the personal wants and desires of the individual. Our marriage works because we are considerate of the needs and desires of each other, rather than taking a defensive approach in conflicts. We can do this

because God comes first in our lives, before anything else, even our spouses. When Christians put the Lord first in their lives, everything changes. We may not always get the things we want right away, but God often has a better plan for us in the long run, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28 KJV). People run into trouble because they don't trust God. His plans are bigger and grander than anything we could ever imagine for ourselves! But big plans take time, and we humans are often too impatient to wait on the Lord so that He will be able to manipulate circumstances and mold us into children He can be proud of. So, put your hand in the hand of the Man who stilled the water, put your hand in the hand of the Man who calmed the sea (see Mark 4:39), and remember, no matter how dark your situation may be, God's Light can shine through the darkness even in the gloomiest dungeon around, and bring the joy and peace that only comes from Him. So, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

In His love, we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

ROADMAP TO HEAVEN

By Anne Kaestner

How many of you have ever tried to lose weight? I've discovered over the years that dieting successfully is really all in the mind. It's just like being a successful runner, you have to make up your mind that you will live according to a specific code of discipline and abide by it no matter what. Your body may have other ideas, but you have to discipline your body. My husband, Eric, and I once saw the end of a marathon on television. The early arrivals had already reached the finish line, but there were a lot of runners who were still out there and had a long way to go. One of them was a pretty woman with short brown hair. The cameras fixed on her as she dragged herself laboriously along the track. She was stooped over toward one side, her head half downward, looking like a weeping willow tree moving along slowly. We ached for her, sensing her pain, cramping, and fatigue, but she would not give up. Everyone seemed transfixed on the woman because her determination was so great. She continued along the path even when it seemed as if she would pass out at any moment, but she kept on going despite her body's refusal to cooperate. Her sheer force of will determined that she was going to make it to the finish line no matter how great the pain or how long it took! When she finally arrived at the end, there was a thunderous applause due to her strength of character that, come what may, nothing would stop her from reaching her goal! That's how it is with dieting. In order to be successful at it, you have to make up your mind that you simply will not eat those fattening goodies no matter how great the temptation or how hungry you feel. You have to get to the point of actually resenting them. Instead of thinking how good they may taste, you consider how much weight they would put on your body. It's not how good the food may taste in your mouth that's important, it's the **final result** that counts. What will it do to your body and your health? That's the way it is with sin. That selfish desire to do what is evil may seem so appealing for a little while, but the price you pay for it in the long run just isn't worth anything you think you have to gain. Is it worth a few minutes of tantalizing taste buds, if you are ashamed of the way you look, and your arteries are so clogged with fat that it's an effort to get out of bed in the morning?

Too many people are willing to settle for a pittance now in place of an abundance later on. One Biblical example of this is Esau. Jacob and Esau were twins, but Esau was born first. In those days, the first born son was the one to receive the "birthright," the best portion of his father's wealth in inheritance, and the blessing that went along with it. But Esau was the type of man who liked to live for the moment and didn't think about the future. From Esau's perspective, the inheritance was way in the future, and it didn't concern him much. However, his brother, Jacob, knew how valuable the birthright was, and how stupid Esau could be. So, after Esau returned from a hunting trip one day, he was starving hungry, and Jacob was able to usurp the birthright away from Esau in exchange for a lunch of lentils (Genesis 25:30-34). Years later, when their father, Isaac, died, it was Jacob, not Esau, who got the inheritance! By then Esau had realized what he had given up, but it was too late to do anything about it (Hebrews 12:15-17). Esau was like a lot of people today. He wanted all the blessings, but he didn't want to live for God! He felt he could go through life doing as he pleased, and still get the inheritance. His grandfather was Abraham, a man who loved God! Abraham had built a firm foundation of faith for his family (Hebrews 11:8-10), and God blessed him for it, but Esau felt he could just tag along on the coattails of his family and get the blessings without accepting any of



the responsibility that went along with it. Unfortunately, that's what many Christians are doing today. Are you selling your soul for the crumbs that this world has to offer? Have you given up an eternal inheritance that will never perish for the trinkets of this world? When we are Born Again, we become heirs to the inheritance of God, just as Esau once had the inheritance. He was the firstborn. So are we (Hebrews 12:22-23), but you can lose that inheritance just as easily as Esau lost his birthright! And what would you get in exchange for it? All Esau got was a crummy bowl of beans!

Back in the 1970's I was working at a large brokerage firm near Wall Street when a conversation suddenly began at work one day about a former Governor of New York. He had been extremely rich, and had served briefly as Vice President of the United States. About the time of our conversation, the local papers had been filled with news about the circumstances surrounding his death. He had died in the middle of a very compromising situation! Although the man was married, he had been in bed with his mistress, at her apartment, when he was suddenly struck with a severe heart attack. The woman was in a panic! If she called for an ambulance everyone would find out about their affair, and his reputation would be jeopardized. Finally she called 911 for help, but to no avail. He died. Few men in this century have ever been as rich as he was. Few men have ever been as powerful. Despite this, God had determined that it was time for him to die, and there was nothing that he could do about it.

All his money and power were of no help to him. As we discussed his death at work, one of the male associates stated admiringly, "What a way to go!" But all I could think of were the words of Jesus, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37 KJV). Many Christians think that they will automatically get to Heaven because they once went through the sinner's prayer and they attend a church regularly. However, going to

church once a week and hearing "a nice salvation message" isn't enough. In fact, some Christians who claim that they have been Born Again for years, love this kind of a message. Why? It's because it makes them feel superior to that other guy who has never come to the Lord. That's why the writer of Hebrews was disappointed with the recipients of his letter (see Hebrews 5:11-14). Christians who don't want to hear anything preached but "a nice salvation message" will never grow in their walk with God. You can't stay in the kindergarten forever! If you're ever going to learn to become strong in your walk with God, you need to see yourself as God sees you and constantly strive to move closer to the light (John 8:12).

Why do you think that so many Christians promote human education and good works these days? Both of these become strong tools in the hands of a believer who truly loves Jesus with **all** his heart, but it's important to get your priorities straightened out first (Matt. 6:33). Righteousness is so understated in the church today, and education and good deeds are so emphasized because they don't require humility or repentance to God! Cain put all his faith in good works too. He wanted to do good deeds of **his** choosing that he expected the Lord to be pleased with (see Genesis 4:1-16). Like many people today, Cain wanted salvation on **his** terms, not God's! It's because people like Cain don't want to change their sinful ways. They don't want to give up their soap operas, or their professional football, or their rock 'n roll music, or their worldly lifestyle. They want to keep on doing all the things they did before they were Born

Again and still get to Heaven. Worse still, they want to slap a Christian label on it and kid themselves into believing that doing so makes it all right. It's not just "Rock 'n Roll," a filthy term originally used in reference to the act of coitus, it's now "Christian Rock." It's no longer psychology, a series of techniques originating through the writings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Freud, four men who sought to solve mankind's spiritual problems through human theories instead of through repentance to God and acceptance of His salvation. Psychology is one of Satan's cunning methods of perverting the human race, through deception, arrogance, and even the occult. It doesn't work because the problems humans face do not originate in the mind, they originate in the heart! (See Jeremiah 17:5-9.) When the heart is corrupted with sin, it destroys the mind and body. Nevertheless, this disingenuous form of humanism has made its way into the church. It's now "Christian Psychology." To put it bluntly, a pig by any other name is still going to smell and act like a pig! Dave Hunt's book, "The Seduction of Christianity" and several books by Martin & Deidre Bobgan go into this subject in greater depth and are well worth reading.

All of this is the reason why Paul wrote to Timothy, "*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths*" (2 Tim. 4:2-4 NIV). That's why there are so many false doctrines in the church today, and this nation is in such bad shape. There is no shortage of churches. However, that is not the problem. People, God doesn't haunt buildings (see Acts 17:24-25)! He lives in the **hearts** of those who love Him! **A church that is filled with the anointing of God is a church that has parishioners who take the Holy Spirit with them when they attend services!** If you think that you can live as the world (see John 17:14-16 and 1 John 2:15-17) six days a week and then go to church on Sunday looking to find God, you will never grow spiritually. Moreover, if a Christian doesn't grow closer to Jesus all the time, he will backslide and may lose his salvation.

When the Jews were en route to the promised land, they had to keep moving, following the Lord. They couldn't stagnate. Even so, except for Joshua and Caleb, the entire generation that started out from Egypt died before ever reaching their destination (Numbers 32:13, Deut. 1:32-39). Their children reached it, but they didn't, because they wouldn't trust God with their lives. They looked with their eyes and heard with their ears, and judged everything according to their natural inclinations. But that's not faith! (See Hebrews 11:1-6 & Proverbs 3:5-6.)

I've occasionally heard Christian ministers or singers say that they deserve to get large salaries for the work that they do because if they weren't living for God they could make much more money. Quite frankly, the arrogance in a statement like that staggers the mind! How any Christian could think that God should be grateful when they do the simple work that they are expected to do is beyond my comprehension! Is a bricklayer doing his employer a big favor when he does the work that he is paid to do? Should his boss feel grateful if the bricklayer uses the bricks he's given to work with? What if the bricklayer said to himself, "I could take these bricks that my boss has given to me and make a lot more money working for Mr. Worldly down the street, so my boss should give me a big raise." Should an employer feel grateful if his employee doesn't steal from him? No. The employer should be able to expect that his workers will be honest and hardworking. A person who steals from his boss so that he can reap

a big profit from it elsewhere should be prosecuted and go to prison, because he is doing evil! That's the way it is with God. We're not doing the Lord a big favor if we use the talents and abilities He gave us in the first place. He purchased us with the precious blood of His own Son! We already owe God far more than we could ever pay back in a million lifetimes! Everything we own we received from Him (Psalm 50:7-12). You cannot do a few good deeds now and then and think that you are pleasing God. He's not interested in what you can give Him. That was the mistake that Cain made! (See Gen. 4:3-16.) God wants **all** of your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)! Remember the words of David after he finally came to his senses following his terrible sin with Bathsheba. He didn't just pray, "God forgive me." He humbled himself before the Lord (see Psalm 51). David's heart broke within him because the Holy Light of God shone on him and illuminated how awful his sin was. Before that, David was too far away from the Light to see his sin. But God sent the prophet Nathan to King David in order to get his attention, and David finally began to see himself as he really was (2 Samuel 12:1-13). I can imagine David's cry of repentance to God, for he didn't take his sin lightly. The full weight and illumination of his wickedness was before him, and David's heart broke within him. My guess is that he sobbed before the Lord. He was like the tax collector in Luke 18:10-14. As David prayed, he summed up in two verses the expectations of God in us, "*For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise***" (Psalms 51:16-17 KJV).

I want you to compare the repentance of David with Saul. On the surface, King Saul also repented of his sin (1 Samuel 15:24-30 & 26:21). The difference was that David's repentance was genuine, whereas Saul's was phony. Saul wasn't really repentant in his heart. (See 1 Samuel 16:13-15, 18:28 thru 19:1, 1 Chronicles 10:13.) He just wanted forgiveness so that he could go back to living as he pleased (1 Sam. 28:6-7). He didn't want to lose the blessings of God, so he would occasionally make a superficial show of repentance, but that's all it was. There was no root of sincerity to it. Saul thought that he could sweep his sins "under



the rug." He didn't want to get rid of the filth in his life. He just wanted to cover it up so that he could stay in favor with God. But that didn't work! People, God cannot be fooled by insincere confessions. The Lord knows our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7). He sees right into our souls! Saul thought he could hide from God (1 Samuel 10:21-23) and commit his sin when God wasn't looking, a view held by many people today. Nevertheless, "***The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good***" (Proverbs 15:3 KJV). Despite false doctrine, you **can** lose your salvation if you fall away! "***But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved***" (Matthew 24:13 KJV. Also see Luke 9:62). "*Unto the end,*" means what Jesus said. If you enter a marathon, and half way through the race you decide to give up and drop out, believing, "The judges will understand my problems and have compassion on me," it won't work! You may delude yourself into thinking, "I'll tell them I've got cramps, and I'm too tired to go on," but it will be useless. They may feel sorry for you, but you won't get the prize!

Every marathon has its specified course! Therefore, no matter how terrific you may run at the beginning of the race, it won't mean a thing unless you make it to the finish line (1 Corinthians 9:24-25). As Paul stated at the end of his life, "***I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus***" (Philippians 3:14 KJV). The **narrow path that leads** (Continued On Page 4)

to Heaven is a race for the finish line. You have to stay on the **straight and narrow** (Matthew 7:13-14). Many people believe that they can sin a little now and then make up for it later by doing a few good deeds. People, it won't work! Jesus paid an incredible price for our sins 2000 years ago, but unless you love Him enough to live for Him on a **daily** basis, putting Him first in your life, you will not make it to Heaven! Jesus told the parable about the Sower who sowed seeds in Matthew 13:3-23. Jesus is the Sower, and all those seeds that were sowed reflect people who down through the centuries have become "Born Again" and accepted Him. However, most of them never made it to Heaven. (1) Some of them accepted Jesus in their heart but didn't really understand His ways in their heads. Therefore, the Devil, symbolized by the birds, removed the good seed that had been planted in them. This often happens through false prophets, teachers, or peers. (2) Other seeds were sowed in hard hearts (rocky ground). They accepted Jesus with great joy originally, but as soon as troubles and struggles came along they immediately blamed God for them, and turned away from Him. (3) The third type of "Born Again" person is symbolized by the seed that fell among thorns. Jesus stated, "*He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful*" (verse 22 KJV). Lastly, (4) is the individual who accepts Jesus with a heart symbolized by good soil. The seed Jesus plants in him or her can grow and blossom and bare good fruit, not for the person, but for Jesus! What do you think those 75% of the people who didn't finish the course will feel like when they meet Jesus face to face? (See Matthew 7:21-23.)

At the moment I'm on a diet that has worked for me well in the past. It works through the use of cards, each of which represents a certain type and quantity of food. As I eat each item, I move a card over to the other side of the wallet until all my cards are used up for the day and I'm finished eating. I remember hearing the designer of the diet talking about some women who had approached him. They had eaten a full day's worth of food and the morning wasn't even over. They were complaining that the diet didn't give them enough cards for all the food they wanted! This is the way many Christians are with God. Instead of being willing to humbly submit to **His** will and obey **His** laws, they expect God to change His standards in order to fit in with their worldly lifestyle! Anyone who takes this attitude isn't truly repentant. These days too many Christians refuse to walk the straight and narrow. They want God to widen the path for them! King Saul thought, like many Christians today, that he could simply sin a little now and then and afterward he'd just ask God's forgiveness. That's the way ancient Israel was, and God called her a harlot! The Lord illustrated this when He told the prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute (see Hosea 1:2) to demonstrate how His bride has treated Him. Christians, you simply cannot sin all you want and then return to God as if nothing ever happened! The Lord accepted David back into His fold because David's repentance was sincere, but even so, David didn't get away without punishment.

Today's young people very often don't even know the difference between right and wrong, and even Born Again (John 3:3) youth take their commitment to God lightly. Samson did the same thing. He was a strong young man who was blessed mightily by God from his birth (Judges 16:17). Samson appreciated all that God had done for him, but since His blessings had come to him so easily, Samson didn't value his relationship with God or remain faithful. Instead, he departed from his faith and slept with a prostitute named Delilah. Sure, he got to Heaven eventually, but what a horrible fall he had before God took

him back! Samson had left the ways of the Lord and had trusted in a beautiful enemy who beguiled him with her charms. People, Satan doesn't always come with horns and a tail. He comes as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)! His desire is to ensnare you into his trap. So he's going to tempt you in the most enticing of ways. He'll tailor make a temptation for you that is specifically designed to reach you at your most vulnerable weakness. In Samson's case it was women. So Satan and his demons planned a trap for Samson by using a gorgeous woman who knew all the ways of getting around a man like Samson. This once godly man had let his guard down and, knowing full well that he was sinning against God, he decided to trust a harlot instead of the Lord. She was a woman paid by Samson's enemies in order to weaken him! Samson had been so spiritually blind that the Philistines were able to burn his eyes out of his head (Judges 16:21). They made a mockery of him, and used him as cheap entertainment to laugh at (Judges 16:25-27). Did it matter to Delilah that Samson had suffered so much? Perhaps she had a twinge of guilt. She may have cried all the way to the bank (see Judges 16:18). The Philistines felt it was well worth the money they paid Delilah. What no man was able to do, this woman was able to accomplish! They were delirious with excitement. They had captured the man of God who had made their lives so miserable. In their minds, their god, Dagon, was stronger than the Lord (Judges 16:23-24). That's what happens when people fall for the devil's seduction. We make our Savior look weak while His enemies think they are strong. The Philistines were celebrating the fact that they had been able to capture Samson and turn him into a beast of burden. He was not only blinded, shackled, and imprisoned, but also forced to work in the most arduous and humiliating of ways, grinding wheat in the prison. That's what sin does. It enslaves us to the devil!

When you give your heart and life to Jesus, it is supposed to be forever! When Eric and I got married, we knelt down at the altar in a church, and pledged before God and the witnesses that we would remain faithful to each other "till death do us part." That's also what God expects from us! After all, what kind of marriage will a man have if six months after the wedding, his bride decides that she wants to go live with another man? Now what if she were to say to her husband, "I don't want a divorce. I want to continue

to use your name, your bank account, and to be free to come home and sleep with you once in awhile. If you really love me (Judges 16:15), you won't cast me out. We married 'till death do us part.'" That's the way some Christians are with God. They don't want to divorce Him. They want to remain married to Him, to continue to have His blessings, to have a home waiting for them in Heaven, but they also want to be unfaithful to Him whenever they please! How many of you men would put up with a wife who acted that way? You may say, "God took a pledge of betrothal when He accepted me, and it was supposed to be a lifetime commitment." Yes, He did. You also made the same pledge. Yet if you don't keep your end of the agreement, God is not obligated to keep His either. God doesn't believe in divorce, nevertheless, He has allowed it when a spouse has committed adultery (Matthew 19:8-9). Even Jesus, who married His people spiritually (Isaiah 54:5, Matthew 9:15, 25:1-13, John 3:29, & Ephesians 5:25-32), got a divorce from Israel (Jeremiah 3:8) when she began worshipping other gods, and acted like a spiritual prostitute! People, both in the New Testament as well as the Old, God will not tolerate persistent unfaithfulness in His Bride (2 Corinthians 11:2 & Hebrews 10:26-31). When you are Born Again, you are entering a race for Heaven. Will you make it all the way to the finish line (John 17:4 & 2 Timothy 4:6-8), or will you drop out and become disqualified? Remember the words of Jesus, "**To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**" (Revelation 3:21-22 NIV).

