

# From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

## THE GREAT COMPANION

Text: "I Will Not Leave You Comfortless; I Will Come to You." (John 14:18)

IS IT A FACT that we can KNOW Jesus of Nazareth just as we know our earthly friends? I do not mean following His example or benefiting from His ideas. Nor do I mean drawing a picture of Him. What I mean is--can we KNOW Jesus--talk with Him, feel His presence and friendship with us in our daily lives? If this is so, here is a tremendous fact which the average Christian has not grasped almost 2,000 years after it was established by Christ himself.

When Dr. Dale was working on his book, "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels," he suddenly leaped to his feet and started pacing the floor in excitement. "Jesus Christ is alive!" he cried, "Jesus Christ is alive!" A Christian, a theologian and a Bible student all his life, Dr. Dale still had not come to the Great Realization until that late date.

To the ancient Jews, God had always appeared as a Friend. "Enoch walked with God."--"God spoke to Moses."--Abraham was called "the friend of God." Jesus, the revelation of the Father, was the consummation of this concept.

Jesus was not unapproachable. He did not even wait for men to come to Him. He went to them. He was never too busy to listen to the problems of others. He was friendly and sympathetic to all--the rich and the poor, Gentile or Jew. And when He died on the Cross, was that the end? Of course not! He devoted a great deal of time and effort in those last days trying to get across to His disciples that he would be with them forever, literally and irrevocably. "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you."

ONE OF THE BIBLE'S most beautiful revelations is the way in which Jesus strove to demonstrate this fact after His resurrection. Jesus would not let Mary touch him. Why? Because He wanted her to accept His presence on faith alone. He wanted to emphasize that His presence is not dependent on sight or touch. The same thing was true of the other post-resurrection appearances.

In his "Transforming Friendship," Leslie Weatherhead writes, "Two men are on their way to Emmaus. Suddenly, without hearing anything, they find a Companion by their side. He walks with them, talks with them, sits with them at the table. They recognize Him by the way He breaks a loaf, and then He is gone. The Twelve are gathered in an upper room. Suddenly they are aware of a Presence. He is there. There is a word of peace. He is gone. Again on the seashore. Again on a mountain in Galilee. Again near Bethany."

"What do these strange appearances and disappearings mean? They are His perfect way of making them feel that He is never far away. He does not seem to be there. Then He breaks in upon them, always knows what has happened, always takes charge of the situation, until they never know when they may be aware of Him. They stopped midway in a sentence because they remembered that He could not be far away, and perhaps was an invisible auditor. The experience becomes richer. They feel that He is never absent. Communion will now mean as much as it did when they could hear His voice, see His face, and touch Him. They do not need the aid of eye and ear and hand. He has carried friendship beyond death. The Ascension does not mean that He passed to some distant heaven beyond those possibilities of friendship, but that He widened the possibilities so that for all men He is the ever-available. And Pentecost was not for them, I think, the coming of a third person, but Jesus, present in an overwhelming



REV. D. M. CLARK

# Pleasant Valley Baptists Convene Here

THIRD ANNUAL SESSION of the Pleasant Valley District Association is now being conducted at the Victory Baptist Church, 1305 N. 'E' St., with concluding programs scheduled for today and tomorrow, Aug. 12-13.

This morning's activities start with Devotion at 8 a.m. followed by the Mission Study Class

sense as their Friend, back in their midst in power indescribable."

LET US SEE how this conception of the Living Christ, our EVER-PRESENT Companion, may effect a radical change in our lives today:

Here is a young man who has been raised in a sheltered, Christian home. He is drafted into the service of his country and is immediately thrown into an environment entirely foreign to his experience. He is subjected to strange temptations. He sees things that disturb him. In the barracks he hears stories told in language that makes him feel unclean. He becomes discouraged and lonely. But all that changes when he realizes that right there in those same barracks, unseen but present, is a Friend who hears what he hears, sees what he sees and understands the situation he faces. This realization is like a breath of fresh, fragrant air relieving the nauseous odor of decaying garbage.

And here is a home torn by jealousy and suspicion and incompatibility. Parents exchange bitter recriminations. Children become accustomed to harsh words or worse and are soon wrangling among themselves. Love and understanding seem dead. But suppose a mutual friendship is somehow established between the husband and wife and the Great Companion. They suddenly are ashamed to realize that He hears and sees everything that has been going on. Now that they have One to whom they can take their problems, the entire family may soon find peace and harmony in the realization of a great Friendship.

Or here is a woman who has lived a selfish and self-centered existence. She measures everything that happens by one rule--"How does this affect ME?" Then comes the time when her aged father dies. She cries out in anguish, "Why had God done this to me?" If this woman knew Jesus as a Friend, she would be able to accept the inevitable with tranquility. She would realize that her father had gone on to closer friendship with Jesus and she herself could find consolation in that same friendship here on earth.

"The love of Jesus, what it is, None but His loved ones know." Yes, my friends, they KNOW! And if YOU truly love Jesus, there can be no doubt that you will find Him at your side--the Great Companion--ever ready to comfort and guide you.

at 8:30, Worship at 10:30 led by the local president, an address by Sis. E. Turner on "A Woman's Daring Leadership," at 10:45 and Memorial Services at 11, with the Rev. D. W. Smith delivering the sermon.

The Women's Auxiliary will conduct this afternoon's program starting at 2:30 with Vice President Mrs. E. Sullivan presiding and Mrs. Reather Hawkins speaking on "The Church and Race Relations." A discussion on "What Can Be Done to Improve Home and Family Life" will follow and the annual tea is scheduled for 6 p.m.

EVENING ACTIVITIES starting at 7:30 will be featured by Moderator Rev. I. W. Wilson's annual message and an address by Women's Auxiliary president Mrs. A. J. Thompson, wife of the host pastor.

A Bible Study period will be the first order of business Friday at 9 a.m., with an address by the Rev. Nelson on the topic, "Jesus Only Provides Atonement for Sinners" preceding a noon message from the Rev. Roy Wilson.

Youth will be in charge starting at 2:30 Friday afternoon, with Devotion conducted by Myles Thompson, Bernard Hawkins III, Ronnie Spencer and Cora Anderson. A Bible quiz will be supervised by Mrs. Lorraine Hall and Mrs. Loraine Tatum, with singing led by Mrs. Hall and Philip Collins. Friday evening Devotion will be directed by Curtis Hall, Estelle Moore and Bettie Buckles.


A PANEL DISCUSSION on "Should Parents or Their Child Have the Last Say on What College a Youth Should Attend?" will be conducted by Mrs. Mays, Mrs. Coney and Mrs. Hawkins (parents) and Pat Sullivan, Sylvia Channey, Yvonne Hall and Diana Glasco (youths), with Curtis Hall Sr. presenting a summation.

In addition to Moderator Wilson, convention officers include the Rev. F. N. Addison, the Rev. C. C. Smith, Sis. E. Nelson and Bro. David Harris. Auxiliary officers in addition to Mrs. Thompson are Mrs. E. Sullivan, Mrs. Rosie Brewer and David Brown. The Rev. N. W. Whitney heads the Ministerial Conference, assisted by the Rev. W. T. Nelson.

Participating in yesterday's opening programs were the aforementioned officers, H. Smith, Mrs. A. Diggs and the Rev. Jesse Wesley Sr. Alternate preachers for the three-day session were the Rev. Leon Davis, the Rev. Hendrix, the Rev. Spencer and the Rev. Addison.

## New Directory Soon

WE ARE REVISING our Church Directory in order to add churches not included previously and to up-date information on churches which have been regularly listed on this page. The new and more complete directory will be published in the near future.



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