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The Mark that I Leave



Will the world be better because I was here?
Will I leave some mark upon it?
When my lips are sealed and my hands lie still
Will the world in sorrow mourn it?

I've a day as long as the greatest man —
Why should I squander and waste it?
I've a work to do ere the day is through
And the vic'try is mine to taste it.

Perhaps my writing will be sublime:
A poem, a book, or a sonnet?
Or should I enhance a canvas with paints
And leave a great masterpiece on it?

I could be a builder with matchless design
Or musician who has no peer,
Or maybe a dreamer, a beautiful schemer,
The footsteps of masses to steer.

I can feel in my hands the chisel and stone
And a figure ethereal emerges;
Whatever my goal, I can reach it I know —
But the talent slowly submerges . . .

My spirit wings upward and soars to the heights,
But my hands cannot achieve it;
Not on canvas or stone or a book or a poem
Will you find the mark as I leave it.

Such "permanent" things tend to break and decay
And the artist is often unknown,
But the mark that I leave in the softest of clay
Will linger long after I'm gone.

For if I can better the ones that I meet
And give them a brighter day,
If I somehow can share their burden and care
And help them along the way,

They, too, will reach out to the grasping hand
And steady the weary feet,
And the kindness I gave will not go to the grave
But will spread like the waves of the sea.

And the mark that I leave when I say my farewell
Will beat in the hearts I adore;
No talent was needed and I have succeeded —
The greatest can do nothing more!

— Betty Burton Choate

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).



GRACE AND TRUTH

J. C. CHOATE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Grace simply defined is *unmerited favor, a gift not earned or even deserved.*

Christ explained grace in these well-known words, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"* (John 3:16,17). Paul explained it like this, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

The Apostle continued by saying, *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . ."* (Romans 3:23,24). *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound, But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 5:19-21). *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"* (Romans 6:14). Along with this, remember that John wrote, *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17). Reading on with the words of Paul, he said, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

In other words, all of these verses are saying that we were in sin, lost, without hope, unable to save ourselves or to do enough good works to earn our salvation. Furthermore, keeping the law (law of Moses) or living a good moral life, or even obeying the teachings of Christ — these things *alone* could not save us. Rather, it took the death of Christ, the shedding of His blood, and the grace and mercy extended through that gift to make it possible for us to be saved in this world and in the world to come.

Paul explained it like this: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).* Please note that he says we are saved by **grace (God’s part) through faith (man’s part).**

But someone might argue that while God’s part is grace, man doesn’t really have a part. Certainly, as Paul went on to state, we cannot save ourselves or be saved by doing the works of the law, *but still man has a part.* The Bible nowhere teaches that salvation is by *grace alone* or by *faith alone.* God’s grace is there in that He has provided the means of salvation by *giving His Son to die in our place in atonement for our sins.* Faith is also there in that *we must believe in God, and accept the sacrifice that Christ made for us, to the extent that we will obey the Lord’s will and remain faithful to Him.*

Even when we have obeyed His commands to be saved and to be added to His church, so that we can worship Him in Spirit and in truth and live the faithful Christian life, these things alone are not enough to save us. After we have done *all* that God requires, still, *if* we are saved, *it will be by the grace of God.*

But even *all the grace of God* cannot save us if we refuse to obey His will and walk in His ways all the days of our life. Paul not only says in Ephesians 2:8,9 that we are saved by grace through faith, but he goes on to say in Ephesians 2:10, *“For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

In Titus 3:3-7, Paul wrote, *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by*

works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The inspired writer is saying that man was lost, but because of the love, grace, and mercy of God, and because of man's obedience to God in being washed (baptized) and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), then he is saved by the grace of God and has the hope of eternal life. Paul also stresses that this is not accomplished by the works of our own righteousness but by the mercy and grace of God. Again, that *grace* covers us *only* as we *comply* with the Lord's will.

Some are prone to teach that we are saved by the grace of God *only*, separate and apart from anything that we might do. There are others who reason that the religious world is not perfect, and neither are we as the Lord's people, and therefore, God's grace will finally save everyone, regardless of their error. These are false views of the Lord's teaching. There is a great deal of difference between the way God deals with His imperfect children who have been scripturally born into His family, and with those who have not ever experienced that new birth.

Paul could have used the same reasoning in his time concerning false teachers, and all of those in error, but he did not. Rather, he said of the Galatians, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:7-9).

From these scriptures we must conclude that grace will not cover ignorance of the truth, our failure or refusal to obey it, religious error, or unfaithfulness.

God has therefore extended His grace to us and provided salvation for us, but we must believe in Him enough to accept the salvation He offers. Even after we do all that He requires of us, still it will take His grace to give us a home in heaven. *If we refuse to comply with His will, however, not even His grace can give us that eternal reward.* †



WHAT SHOULD WE PREACH?

Byron Nichols
Managing Editor

As people belonging to God, having been bought with the blood of His Son, we will undoubtedly want to please and honor Him with our preaching and teaching. But the question is — *just what does*

He want preached?

In trying to answer this question, I don't want to be guilty of being overly simplistic, but I do believe that there is a very simple answer to this vitally important question. The apostle Paul furnishes the answer:

*"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the word!** Be ready in season, out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:1-4).*

Here we have our answer — **"Preach the Word!"** But almost immediately another question arises — Why preach the Word? There are three good reasons which come to mind at once. (1) Because God said to. That ought to be sufficient by itself, but another very good reason is (2) because the Word is inspired by God, it reveals to some extent the mind of the Lord (2 Timothy 3:16). The other reason that we will mention here is (3) because the Word is for our benefit (2 Timothy 3:17). The inspired Scriptures have been given to us so that, as men of God, we can be complete, mature, fully developed, *"thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

People of God must be people of God's Word. Preachers who faithfully preach the Word help their hearers become able to rightly divide the Word, to handle it properly (2 Timothy 2:15). The Word has the power to mould and shape our lives in such a way that we can be an honor to Him.

The Word is able to save our souls (James 1:21). This happens when we become submissive and obedient to the Word as it instructs us.

The Word is what we need to hear, and once we learn to let it govern our lives, we will actually **desire** to hear the Word, rather than the flowery speeches of men who are willing to compromise themselves and the truth in order to attract and please people.

Why would one who loves God prefer to listen to messages that do not come from the Word, especially when Jesus makes the emphatic point that His words will be the basis for judgment in the last day (John 12:48)? Paul certainly understood the significance of what Jesus said. In Galatians, chapter one, he strongly warned against the preaching of any gospel which was different from what he had been preaching. It isn't hard at all to determine what he had been preaching. We can read it for ourselves in the book of Acts, and in the New Testament letters which he wrote. He faithfully and consistently preached the Word and *only* the Word! This made it possible for Paul to honestly say to the elders of the church in Ephesus, "*Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you **all the counsel of God***" (Acts 20:26,27).

Some object, saying that those who emphasize the Word tend to be hard, intolerant, inconsiderate, and unloving. There is absolutely no excuse for abusing the Word (or the hearers) by using it as a club or a weapon with which to hurt people. Nothing could be further from the purpose of God. But, friends, it is very possible to preach the Word in such a way as to be properly described as kind, compassionate, tender, and loving. I know that this is true. Go with me back to Acts 20 and notice verses 36-38. These men to whom Paul had declared "*all the counsel of God*" were now weeping greatly, falling on his neck and kissing him, and showing their great sorrow after learning that they would apparently never see him again in this life. Through his preaching and his life Paul had shown them that he cared very deeply for them, and that feeling was then returned to him. So it is very possible to boldly "*preach the Word*" and not be unloving, unkind, uncaring. Rather, I believe that truly preaching the Word is indeed being caring, kind, and loving.

Preachers, love the Lord and those to whom you preach enough to "*preach the Word*," doing so with courage, conviction, and boldness, but always with love (Ephesians 4:15). Elders, insist that nothing but the Word be preached, and see to it that your congregations once again periodically hear sermons on basic, fundamental Bible doctrines. Christians, study the Word, and commend those preachers and elders who are faithful in preaching and standing for the same.

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MORE EDITIONS OF THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

With Volume 12, it is our intention to increase the number of foreign editions to 12. These are listed on Page 1.

We strongly encourage congregations sponsoring foreign work to contact us about the possibility of printing 500 or 1000 copies of an issue, with local contacts and addresses, to be shipped directly from the printer to the chosen field. This is a very economical way of providing missionaries and local Christians with an excellent teaching tool, in bulk.

JCC

In the Circle of My Arms

You came into the circle
of my arms
Those many years ago
And I held you there,
Protecting you
And loving you,
Drying your tears
And brushing away the hurt.

Life decrees that children
must grow up
And leave a mother's care.
I cannot reach you now
So, instead,
I trust you to the circle of God's
greater arms . . .
But the ache is there for you,
The loneliness, the love,
And I feel an emptiness
without you near.

In my hurting heart
I think of God who also holds
His children
In His care.
No law demands that
Ever
Must His own outgrow His arms,
Yet, some, in blindness
Wander off into the world
And wrap themselves in sin
Beyond His reach.

I think of how I hurt
In longing
For those beyond my care:
And I think
How God must hurt
When those He loves
Walk on,
Beyond the circle of His arms,
Beyond His furthest reach
And die somewhere out there
Alone.

— Betty Burton Choate
A World Apart

God

God is not a cold, detached deity, devoid of feeling for His human creation. He has not isolated Himself in the heavens, having severed the emotional umbilical cord between Himself and His offspring. The depth of His feelings for man defy measurement.

Thus, *"Jesus wept"* (John 11:35). Disturbed over the unbelief of the Pharisees, Jesus was *"grieved for the hardness of their hearts"* (Mark 3:5). He is deeply *"touched with the feeling of our infirmities"* (Hebrews 4:15). Paul admonished Christians to *"grieve not the Holy Spirit of God"* (Ephesians 4:30). Humanly speaking, there are tears in the eyes of God.

By invitation, Hosea entered the heart of God. He was instructed to take a *"wife of whoredom"* (Hosea 1:2), a woman in whose bosom lay the latent seed of harlotry. In the process of time, it germinated and blossomed. Gomer left Hosea and her three children and embarked on a course of sin that robbed her of youth and beauty and

reduced her worth to the price of a slave (Hosea 3:1,2).

Hosea deeply loved Gomer. He was a forgiving husband and a devoted father. However, Gomer spurned his love and drove rivets of grief into his heart. Surely, the sobs of the prophet must have pierced the quietness of the midnight hour and bathed the night in tears.

God loved Israel. He found her lying in the blood of national birth. He washed her and robed her in blessings divine. When she reached maturity, he took her for his wife (Ezekiel 16:1-14). God was a perfect husband. His love for Israel was deep and unfathomable, as is His love for all men. Israel was the *"apple of his eye"* (Deuteronomy 32:10).

Israel repudiated the love of God. With arrogant disdain she declared, *"I will go after my lovers"* (Hosea 2:5). She bowed herself to the Baalim of the land and broke the heart of God. Her attitude was like Judah's, who responded to God's imploring cry to return to her first



Divine Grief

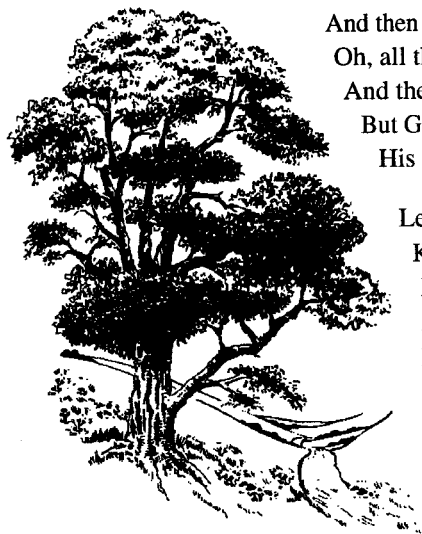
Frank Chesser

GOD

love with an adamant, *"No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go"* (Jeremiah 2:25).

All sin is ultimately against God. David recognized this when he said, *"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"* (Psalm 51:4). Joseph agreed, as he resisted Potiphar's wife with, *"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God"* (Genesis 39:9). Will you add another tear to the eye of God? †

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street congregation in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.



All the Grass Will Wither

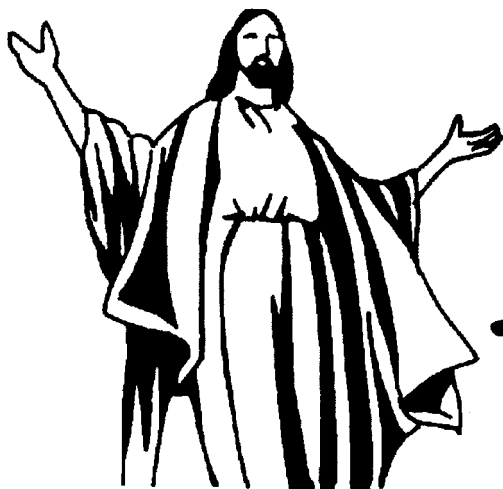
Who has measured all the waters
In the hollow of His hand?
And meted out the heavens
In one great and sweeping span?
Who can comprehend the measure
Of the dust upon the earth?
And then, just for His pleasure,
Weigh the mountains for their
girth?

To whom can we compare Him
Who the storms of life can tame?
Who counts the stars in heaven,
And then calls them all by name?
Oh, all the grass will wither,
And the flowers will all fade,
But God's word will live forever;
His foundations have been laid!

Let us be His fruitful servants,
Knowing He, the faithful prunes,
For He heals the broken hearted,
And He binds up all their wounds.
Let us praise His name forever,
Worship, glorify, adore;
There's no other who is worthy:
Let us praise our matchless Lord.

— James E. Tate

**Thou who hast given us so much, mercifully grant us one more thing —
a grateful heart. — Anonymous**



Only a Great Moral Teacher?

Tom Kelton

Jesus of Nazareth is the most important figure the world has ever known. This Galilean teacher has had more influence on mankind than any other person.

He was a great moral teacher — one in a class of His own. He spoke with great authority: “*You have heard it said . . . but I tell you . . .*” He spoke with great simplicity so that ordinary people could understand Him. He taught with remarkable depth: “*Love your enemies, do good to those who mistreat you*” (Luke 6:27). His wisdom silenced opponents time and again: “*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s*” (Matthew 22:21). His teaching was specific and highly relevant to daily life: “*Go and do*

likewise” (Luke 11:37), said Jesus at the conclusion of His parable of the Good Samaritan.

No wonder people marvelled at the teaching of Jesus. No wonder they followed Him everywhere, hanging on His words. “*No one ever taught like this*” (John 7:46), they said, and they were right.

But something else is remarkable about Jesus and His teaching. As well as teaching the highest standards known to mankind, He actually **kept** them. He not only taught people to love their enemies, but He also forgave those who crucified Him. He not only called people to lay down their life for their friends, but He actually did it. This makes Him the most remarkable of all teachers.

But Jesus identified Himself as *more* than a great moral teacher, so either He truly was something very much more, or He was very much less. He made the most astonishing claims, claims that have never been paralleled by any sane person. He claimed that He could forgive people's sins, that He had the right to people's worship, that He alone represented the way to God, the truth of God, and the life of God, that He had come to seek and save the lost, that He would give His life as a ransom for many, that He would rise from the dead, and that on the day of judgment humanity would be accountable to Him.

All four Gospel accounts bristle with supernatural claims on the part of Jesus. Were his claims true? If so, He was far more than simply a great teacher. He was the Son of God, the one who came in the flesh to make God real to us by sharing our human nature.

On the other hand, was Jesus lying about Himself, or was He insane? If so, in no way could He be called "a great moral teacher."

Which was He? Either we accept His claims *and* His teachings, or we reject *both*; but if we strip Him of *what He taught about Himself* we also strip Him of His *goodness* as a teacher. †

Tom Kelton is a writer and preacher living at Pharr, Texas, U.S.A.

Was the message spoken by God?

There are many books which claim to be messages from God. Among all of them, though, the Bible is unique.

Though 40 writers were inspired by God, spanning more than 1500 years of time, the message of the Bible is one unified story. Like a jig-saw puzzle, the pieces fit together. The Bible tells us of man's origin, of his perfect relationship with God, of his fall from righteousness, of God's outreach to him, and of how man can ultimately be restored to God.

Wherever the Bible alludes to history, science, archaeology, the nature of man, or to any other body of facts, it has proven itself to be true. Enemies of the Bible have never discredited it.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Those who are wise will look to the Book inspired by God for their direction in this life and for preparation for eternal life with Him.

Next: How can I be saved?

Going to God's Funeral

Ancil Jenkins

It is reported that Martin Luther was prone to depression. At one point his despair for the Reformation movement led him to deep gloom and pessimism. At the point of his deepest depression, his wife Catherine put on mourning clothes and began to act bereaved.

Surprised, Luther asked, "Why are you sorrowing?"

To which his wife replied, "Dear doctor, I have cause for the saddest weeping, for God in His heaven has died."

The message got home to Luther. As he thought to rebuke his wife, he realized he was acting just as she was. His doubt, depression, and gloom came from a lack of faith in God's existence, love, and power. He was acting as if God were dead.

Almost none who read this would say that God is dead. We, like many others, believe that He lives and reigns. During the 1960's, a theological movement proclaimed God's death. Many rose to oppose such blasphemous words. Most of us would have agreed with the late Marshall Keeble. Someone asked him if he had heard that God was dead. Keeble replied, "I didn't even know He was sick."

Yet, are we going to God's funeral today? Despite fine words to the contrary, do our actions, like Luther's, proclaim God's death? We claim He is alive, that He loves, cares, and guides us. Yet, if our actions say otherwise, there are only two alternatives — either He is dead, or we are hypocrites. It is bad enough if *the world* lives as if He were dead. How much more tragic it is, though, *for us who claim to love Him* to act like the world. If we believe He is alive but we live as if He is not — we are acting as if we are going to God's funeral.

How much do we honor and praise Him? If we hold back our songs of joy and our prayers of thanksgiving, are we not dishonoring Him? How often do we use His bounty every day of the week, and then also snatch from Him that time on Sunday which is set aside for His honor and glory?

Do we glorify Him by our every action? Do our words, deeds, and even our very bodies magnify His name? (Romans 12:1,2; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 10:31).

How easy to say, "All things work for good." In reality, this is not what the Bible says in Romans 8:28. Here is what it says — *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* The key phrase is, *"God works."* He is present and active in the lives of those who love Him and who have followed His call. He opens doors to those willing to follow. He supplies the needs and often the "wants" of His children. He is alive!

Just because He works differently today than in the past does not mean that He has changed. He who set the stars in place and called each one by name still rules and controls our universe. Who else could have maneuvered the changes in governments and ideology our world has seen in recent years?

It is time to quit preaching a living God but practicing a dead one. If He is alive, let Christians act, live, and preach like He is alive. To do otherwise is to act as if He is dead. †

Ancil Jenkins is a writer who also preaches for the Sunset congregation in Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

Happy Mourners

Were there no night
We could not read
the stars;
The heavens would turn
Into a blinding glare;
Freedom best seen is
Through the prison bars;
And rough seas make
The haven passing fair.

We cannot measure joys
But by their loss;
When blessings fade
away,
We see them then;
Our richest clusters
Grow around the cross
And in the high time
Angels sing to men.

—Author Unknown

Belief In God

One thing about the theory of evolution is that *it continues to change*. Not only does it continue to change, but there is by no means general acceptance of the same set of ideas by the evolutionists. Here are a few of the changes: Perhaps no evolutionist today accepts the theory of embryonic recapitulation as originally given. No one accepts the theory that microbes arise in stagnant water from non-living matter. So many of the so called "missing links" originally accepted have now been either shown to be a hoax or are doubted, and the ideas about the "missing link" have changed.

On the other hand, *God remains the same*. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the same one that created the earth and all things in it in six days and rested on the seventh. He is the same God who sent His Son Jesus into the world, that the world might

be saved.

The facts of nature and geology support, not the theory of evolution, but the Creation story. The lower four-fifths of the rock of the earth's crust is lifeless. Then life suddenly appears. It is at once general across the earth and demonstrates most of the types of life we now know. This is not the kind of evidence the evolutionists want, and, in

vs.

Theory Of Evolution

fact, is quite fatal to their claims. Exceptions may be explained by a break in the crust of the earth by either a flood or some other kind of upheaval, such as an earthquake.

In the so-called Cambrian period, where life suddenly comes into existence, there are generally the life forms we now know, even the classes, orders, and families. One criticism which I think is valid is that many evolutionists presuppose (as no scientist ever should) that data yet found will support what

Max Patterson

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they believe about evolution, but as yet cannot prove. So their convictions are based on “future” finds, which they *hope* will be made, not actual evidence in hand.

The real reason evolution is so popular is that there is an attempt to present an alternative to God. There are many who literally hate the idea of God, and so they will do anything to discredit the belief. However, to the thinking man, there is going to have to be more than the stating of a theory. There is going to have to be presented some evidence, evidence that has never been presented, and for good reason. There is none! Evolution is science fiction.

A man of God in the long ago prayed, “*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God*” (Psalm 90:1,2). †

Max Patterson is the preacher for the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Neosho, Missouri, U.S.A.

Questions

✿ If the “days” of creation were eons of time, how did the plants live through thousands of years of night before the dawning of “Day 4”?

✿ Since the sun and moon were created on Day 4, did the supposed eons suddenly become 24-hour days? and if not, when did the sun begin actually controlling day and night?

✿ The sun and moon divide our months and years; but why do we have a seven-day week, if not because of God’s own dictates in memorial of His week of creation?

✿ Evolutionists speak of “the” missing link, which is a gross misnomer. If all forms of life actually came from one cell, then there would be millions and millions of “missing links” between all the transitions from plant to insect to animal to human life!

✿ That a single human eye, with its 137 million specialized cells, could develop by an evolutionary process would be astounding; but that two such complicated organs would evolved at the same time in the same head is simply preposterous!

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God Is!

Flavil Nichols

It is self-evident that from nothing, nothing comes. This axiom needs no proof. If ever there had been a time when nothing existed, then nothing could ever exist. Something is! Therefore, something has existed always!

Atheism would have us believe that dead, lifeless, powerless, unintelligent “matter” is that “something” which has always been in existence.

In contrast with this, however, the Bible teaches that Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is that “eternal one” — that “something” which has always existed! *“He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible declares: *“From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God”* (Psalm 90:2). He is *“the eternal God”* (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Yes! The God of the Bible is as ETERNAL in the direction of the past as He is ETERNAL in the direction of the future! He declared of Himself: *“I am the Lord God, and beside me there is none other.”* For this reason He commanded: *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve”* (Matthew 4:10).

Whenever the beginning was, God was there! In contrast with atheism, it is logical to believe that *“In the beginning God . . .”* This self-existent Being, the all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good God *“created the heavens and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1).

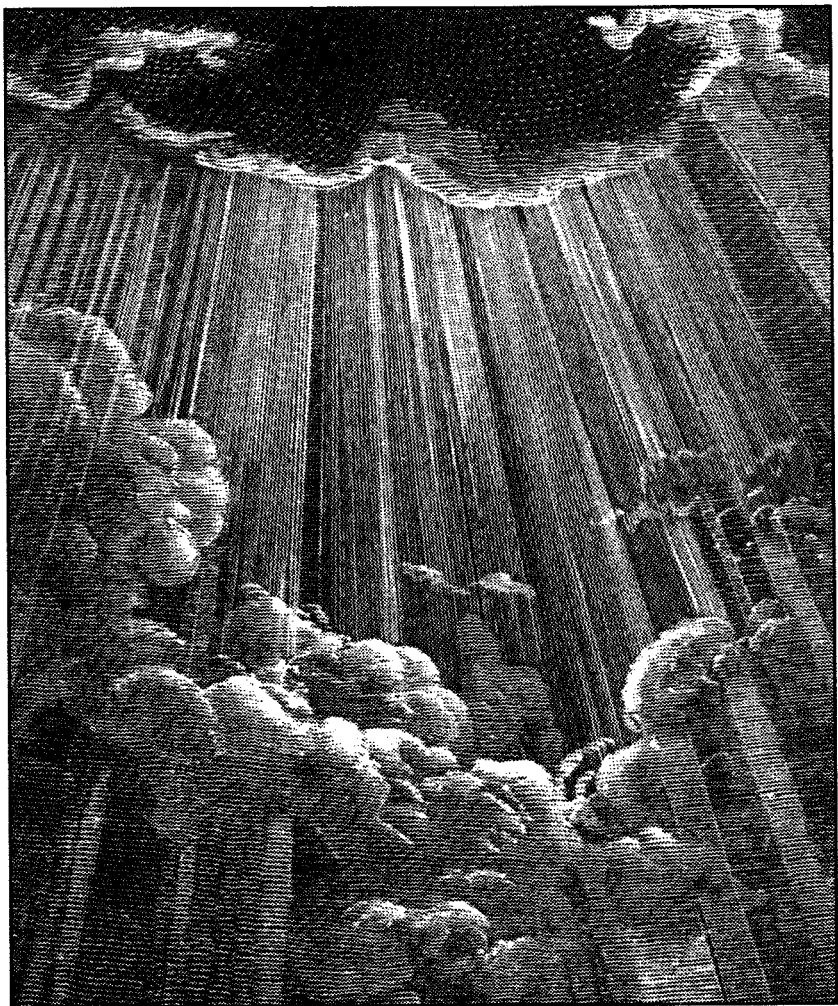
This is the God of the Bible. He revealed Himself through the Old Testament before Jesus Christ His Son came to earth to redeem sinners. This same God now speaks to man, to every creature in all the world, by His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1,2). †

Flavil Nichols is a long-time gospel preacher living in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.



He who influences the thought of his time influences the
thought of all the times that follow.

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God?

THE PERSISTENCE OF HIS PRESENCE

Betty Burton Choate

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I am a human being. How *important* I am! I am the center of my entire world. I see everyone and everything from the standpoint of its relationship to *me* and its importance to *me*. Reality is *me*; reality is *my own thoughts*; reality is *my own experiences*.

I am a human being. How *insignificant* I am! I look at the miles of the earth that stretch away before me in all directions. I look at the tremendous height of mountains. I look at the ocean that glistens on the distant horizon. I look out into the dark heavens, realizing the expanse of space far beyond anything my eyes can see. And like millions before me, overwhelmed with my infinitesimal smallness in comparison to all that exists, my soul is confronted with the awesome necessity of the existence of a Being who created and sustains this Universe. The involuntary cry rises within me, "*What is man, that You are mindful of him?*" (Psalm 8:4a).

There are humans who believe so deeply in God that they would die for Him, rather than deny His existence.

There are other humans who belligerently and vehemently declare that there is no God, cursing His very name.

But the striking fact is that, though not a single soul has ever *seen* God's face, He is the one subject that has permeated *every civilization, every age, and every major event in Earth's history!* And His existence is the one question that every soul who has ever lived has had to face and answer. That fact, in itself, is astounding!

Consider this: with all of the cultures, peoples, challenges, opportunities, interests, dangers, and fears among the billions who live in the world today – and among all who have ever lived – *the only question* (beyond the necessities for physical existence) *that has been common to all men is this: "Is there a God?"*

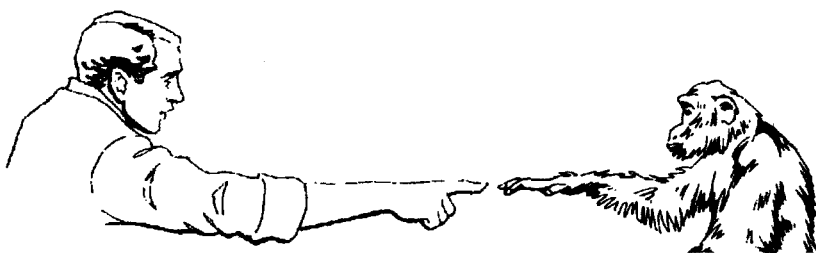
The persistence of His presence in the minds of men is lasting evidence that *He is real*. If He were only the figment of primitive superstition, humanity would have laughed or cursed the superstition out of existence long ago.

But He remains on the threshold of every heart, refusing to go away, requiring that each one of us deal with the question of His reality.

Do I believe in God?



Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, editor of *The Voice of Truth International*.



Origins Is the Main Issue

Basil Overton

The world abounds in living organisms. The science that deals with the functioning and the propagation of these forms is indeed a fascinating study. However, this science tells us nothing about the origin of any of these living organisms. The study of origins is not a discipline of the natural sciences, because the origin of life forms cannot be demonstrated by scientific means.

More than a hundred years ago, when Charles Darwin and others made the doctrine of evolution popular, religious leaders began to assume that, in view of what the evolutionists were calling "scientific facts," the account of origins in Genesis in the Bible would have to be viewed as being merely an allegory or myth. They also began to assume that the Genesis account was written so as to be adapted to the thinking that was then prevalent concerning origins. It was felt by these so-called religious leaders or theologians that the Genesis account of origins could be interpreted in a manner that would make it harmonize with the doctrines of the evolutionists.

Three Explanations Of Origins

Materialism is the doctrine that matter is everything; that nothing exists but matter; that there is no such thing as a spiritual existence; that mind is just an activity of matter. Materialists say that what man calls the soul is material and mortal.

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“Has Always Been Here”

We know there is a material world we call the earth, and that on it are thousands of things, both living and non-living. The question that concerns us is: From where did all these come? Some used to attempt to explain the existence of all these by saying that matter has always been here, even though much of it has changed its form.

This explanation is rejected because of the well-established principle of the increase of entropy, or the second law of thermodynamics, which says there is a constant tendency for everything to break down. This principle is a statement of how everything tends to become more and more at random. It means that energy is not being destroyed, but it is becoming more and more displaced or disorganized in all its forms. This scientific principle that says everything is running down is in direct conflict with the evolutionary hypothesis that says everything is increasing in order, organization, and complexity.

The second law of thermodynamics also contradicted the explanation for the existence of everything, because if matter has always been here, or is eternal, it would already be completely at random or disorganized. So, science refuted the idea that matter has always been here. Now scientists, including evolutionists, talk and write about the beginning! They say matter had to have a beginning!

“It Brought Itself Into Being”

Another explanation of the existence of matter is that it brought itself into being. However, just common sense rules this out as a valid or reasonable explanation.

Science says matter has not always been here, and that it had to have a beginning. Sense rules out the idea that matter brought itself into being. But it is here! From where did it come? How did it get here? Reason forces us to accept the only other conceivable explanation, which follows.

“Some Outside Force Brought It All Into Being”

Science, sense, and reason compel us to accept the conclusion that some outside force brought everything into being.

Evidence abounds inside the Bible and outside of the Bible that that book was written by people whom God directed by inspiration to write what they wrote. Therefore, what it says is true, and it says in its very first verse what is in perfect harmony with science, sense, and reason. That verse says,

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"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Later the same writer wrote, *"For in six days the Lord made heaven, and the earth, the sea and all that in them is"* (Exodus 20:11). So, that "outside force" is God!

It is easy to believe what the Bible says even about the origin of all things. To believe anything else is harder!

Rely On Faith

Some boast that they do not rely on faith. They say they cannot accept the Bible's account of creation because that would involve

leaning on faith. However, even though one refuses to believe the Bible's account of origins, he does believe something about origins. Biologists, whether they be evolutionists or creationists, generally agree on the facts of biology. They agree on the facts concerning biological processes and the functioning of living things. The disagreement concerns *origins*, not *processes*! Origins, not operations, is the main issue! †

Basil Overton is editor of *The World Evangelist* and lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A.

There Is Naught this Side of Heaven

Earthly life is like a vision,
Men its fantasies extol,
But the earth has no provision
That will satisfy the soul.

Here the house the soul is wearing
May be nourished well with deeds,
Be content with earthly caring,
But the soul has greater needs.

Flesh may joy in worldly pleasure,
Happy on the earth to trod,
Count its thrills and trifles treasure,
But the soul must be with God.

On the earth cannot be given
What eternal it requires,
There is naught this side of Heaven
To fulfill the soul's desires.

— Harry Presley



Our Future Body

John Thiesen

The great central hope upon which the Christian faith is founded is the resurrection of the dead. It is the gateway to all the future promises of God in eternity. Before reaching Heaven to inherit the mansions Jesus has prepared for us, we must first

pass through the resurrection.

What will our bodies be like when we emerge from our graves on resurrection day? This is a matter of deep interest and curiosity to all who possess this hope.

A Body Like Christ's

Our resurrected body shall be like the one Jesus presently wears in heaven. John said, *"But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"* (1 John 3:2). Paul said, *"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself"* (Philippians 3:20,21).

However, it shall not be of flesh and blood, for Paul explains, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption"* (1 Corinthians 15:50). Our cor-

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

ruptible body, the one laid in the grave, must undergo a change to fit it for a land not made up of things material, that is, of this earth, for Paul said, "*we shall all be changed*" (verse 51).

A Spiritual Body

Rather than being composed of flesh and blood as is true of the present body we wear, our future body shall be of spiritual composition, as it is "*sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body*" (1 Corinthians 15:44).

Paul further explains that this spiritual body is incorruptible, glorious, and powerful (verses 42,45,53).

Someone might ask, "How can we know that there will be a resurrection?" Jesus' own emergence from the grave to eternal life is our guarantee, for "*he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*" (Acts 17:31). There is no greater proof than Jesus' own successful victory over the grave. Because of His success, and His faithful promise to raise us also, we have great assurance and hope that the new body of the resurrection shall be ours also, when those who believe Him are called to meet Him in the air. †

John Thiesen is a former missionary to Malawi, and he now lives in Buffalo, Missouri, U.S.A.

"I Have Finished the Race"

All of those workouts before the race;
Just remember to keep your pace.
The starter shouts, "Runners, get ready!"
Your heart beats faster, your hands are unsteady.
The gun goes off, you start to run,
By the end of the first lap you feel you are done.
They're closing in, you keep ahead;
Just try to remember what the coach has said.
One more lap, it's the toughest one;
This is when you really must run.
As you finally finish the hardest mile,
On your worn-out face is a very tired smile.

— Author Unknown

What Does Sanctify Mean?

Glenn Colley

I want to suggest to our readers who are preachers or Bible class teachers that they do some teaching on the word “sanctification.” The Old and New Testaments have many verses containing the word, and the concept will enrich the Christian life of your listeners and students.

Thayer says the word means, (1) to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow; (2) to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate and so render safe from being corrupted; (3) to purify.

Here is a variety of observations about the concept:

1. Many Different Things Were “Sanctified” in the Old Testament.

The first use of the word in the Bible is Genesis 2:3, *“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.”* This means the day was set apart for service. The tabernacle was sanctified (consecrated for service), (Exodus 29:43); Aaron and his sons were sanctified for service (Leviticus 8:30); the priests had to sufficiently sanctify themselves (2 Chronicles 30:3); and Jeremiah was sanctified and ordained a prophet unto the nations before he was born (Jeremiah 1:5).

2. Jesus Prayed That Disciples Would Be Sanctified.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). This verse alone demonstrates the importance of the subject. Jesus intends His followers to be separate from the world! In John 17 the word “world” is used 18 times. Eleven of these times “world” refers to the masses of unbelievers who are without Christ. By being consecrated to Christ and part of His body, we are separate in lifestyle and in hope from the world.

3. We Are Sanctified Through The Truth.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19).

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4. We Are Sanctified By Faith.

" . . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts 26:18).

5. We Are Sanctified By Bible Baptism.

"That He might sanctify and cleanse it (the church, GC) with the washing of water by the word . . ." (Ephesians 5:26).

6. We Are Sanctified With The Blood Of Jesus.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

7. The Sanctified Ones Will Go To Heaven.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

8. Being Sanctified Demands Leaving Sin.

Sadly, many people seeking religion/God's approval today are in reality looking for the church which demands the **least** sanctification. When a man or woman is sanctified in Christ, they are "set apart" from worldliness. If they are worldly, they are not sanctified.

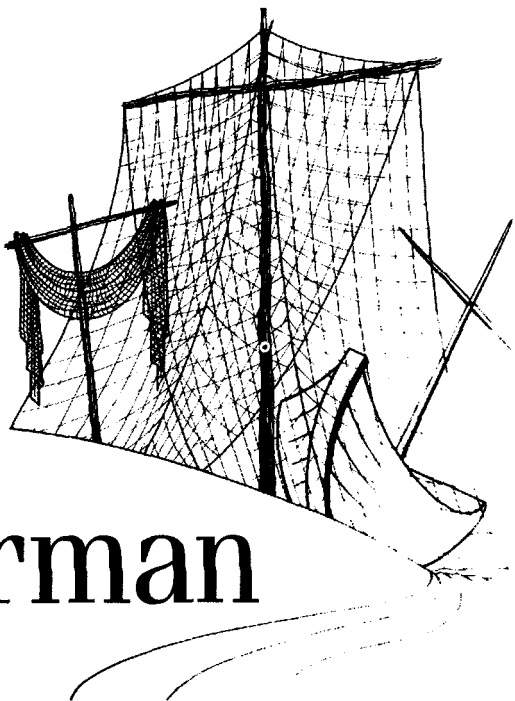
1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thessalonians 4:3).*

9. If I Am Wise, Live Right, Am Sanctified And Saved, It Will Be Because I Decided To Be In Christ.

Our lives are sustained in Christ. For us to live is Christ. As the children's song says, *"He is my everything, He is my all . . ."* *"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).* *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready also to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).* †

Glenn Colley is the editor of *The Words of Truth*, and he preaches for the church in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.

Peter, the Fisherman



O. P. Baird

Simon Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen. Their partners were James and John, the sons of Zebedee. One day, early in the ministry of Jesus, He sat in Peter's boat near the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret (also called the Sea of Galilee) and taught a large crowd of people on the shore (Luke 5).

"Now when He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.' But Simon answered and said to Him,

'Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.' And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink" (Luke 5:4-7).

How Faith Brings Blessing

What Jesus told Peter to do sounded unreasonable to human judgment. Night was the time for

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fishing. After fishing all night without any success a fisherman would not go back into the same water the next morning. Peter pointed out to Jesus that they had taken nothing all night. Then he added something that showed faith. He said, “. . . nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” Peter believed Jesus was the Son of God. Therefore, anything that He commanded was right and Peter would do it.

This is the true nature of faith. Faith in Christ causes one to obey anything He commands without question, just because He commands it. That kind of response is an act of faith, especially when the thing commanded is contrary to human logic. Just such a command is found in the first sermon Peter preached after the resurrection of Jesus. He told the people that God had raised Jesus from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ. *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”* (Acts 2:37,38). If a person is guided only by human wisdom, he will agree that he must repent, but he will not think it could be nec-

essary to be baptized for the remission, or forgiveness, of his sins. It takes faith to accept that requirement, but it is necessary simply because God commands it.

Peter's Fear

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ . . . And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid . . .” (Luke 5:8-10). Peter saw the power of God working in Jesus and he was afraid, because he was sinful. If a person is aware of his sinfulness and thinks of God only in terms of His power, he will be afraid. The devils know of God's power and they are terrified (James 2:19).

But if we know God's love and have received His forgiveness, the fear is taken away and is replaced by love and joy which Jesus gives.

After Jesus was raised He repeated this miracle with the fish. Some of His disciples were fishing, and Jesus called to them to cast the net on the other side of the boat. When they obeyed, the net was filled with fish. The apostle John said, *“It is the Lord!”* (John 21:7). Then Peter, instead of asking the Lord to depart from him on account of his sinfulness, plunged into the sea and swam to shore to be with Jesus as soon as possible. Let those who are aware of their sinfulness and who see the love of God reach-

ing out through the crucified Savior come to Him quickly in faith and obedience for His forgiveness.

Jesus' Promises to Peter

When Jesus told Peter not to be afraid He added, "*From now on you will catch men.*" So when they brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him" (Luke 5:10,11). Peter and his partners had been catching fish and, by following Jesus, they went out and caught men. The net they used to catch men was the Gospel of Christ.

After Jesus' resurrection He told His disciples, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:19,20). There are many people in the world who are lost in sin. Christ wants those who have faith in Him to go and teach them the Gospel and take them for Christ. †

O. P. Baird is a former missionary to Korea and now lives in Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.A.

You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.

Christ Is. . .

Christ is the Way — men without Him are like Cain, wanderers and vagabonds.

Christ is the Truth — men without Him are liars, like the devil.

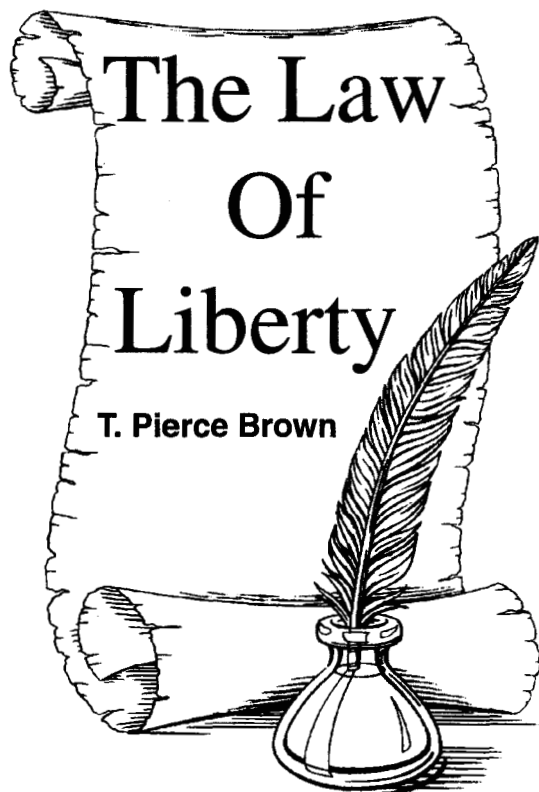
Christ is the Life — men without Him are dead in sin.

Christ is the Light — men without Him walk in darkness and know not whither they go.

Christ is the Vine — men who are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire.

Christ is the Rock — men not built on Him are carried away by the flood of judgment.

—Author Unknown



that we are under no law at all. Romans 5:13, "*Sin is not imputed where there is no law.*" If there were no law at all, there would be no sin, and no need for a Savior! Romans 8:2 says, "*The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*" 1 Corinthians 9:21 specifically says, "*Not being without law to God, but **under the law to Christ.***" If there is any clearer way of saying that we do have a law and are under obligation to obey it, I do not know what it would be. Galatians 6:2 speaks of fulfilling "*the law of Christ.*"

It is tragic, and almost incomprehensible, that so many are now teaching that we as Christians are under no law. Much has been written about that in recent months, but it is my hope that this article may cast some light on the subject from a different viewpoint and be worth your consideration.

The following scriptures are some that make it almost unbelievable that there are those who teach

Hebrews 8:10 says concerning the New Covenant, "*I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts.*" What sense would that make if we were not under law of some kind? James 1:25 says, "*He that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty*" and in 2:11, "*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*"

Even if one understood practi-

Are the Scriptures Inspired?

Jimmy Jividen

Some who claim to follow Christ are questioning that the Scriptures are an absolute, objective standard for faith and practice. They seek, under the guise of intellectual freedom, cultural conformity, and political expediency, to intimidate those who regard the Scriptures as a religious standard.

These questioners often use the correct religious terms, but they define the terms to fit what they want to believe. It is hypocritical to hide one's own doubts under the cover of language. Truth does not fear the light.

When these doubters say they believe the Scriptures are inspired, they may mean something different from what a Bible believer regards as inspiration.

They may believe the Bible is inspired in the sense a poet is inspired to write a poem. It is true, as they say, that the Scriptures contain great spiritual literary compositions; but, so also do the Gita and the Koran.

These doubters may believe that the Scriptures are inspired for

the time in which they were written, but are not relevant today. The Scriptures, they believe, are so shackled by cultural traditions that they are not applicable today.

These doubters may believe the Scriptures are inspired only if one perceives them to be so. They would suggest that a passage might be inspired to you, but not to another, and that inspiration is in the reader rather than in the text.

Unbelief comes in different forms. The above points are all popular forms of unbelief that can be found in most churches today. The fundamental religious issues confronting our times are not over doctrine, politics, and practice, but whether or not the Scriptures are the guide for faith and practice. We are in a battle for the Bible.

To call into question the inspiration of the Scriptures is to also call in question the Divinity of Christ, since only through Scripture can one know about Jesus Christ. †

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher in Abilene, Texas, U.S.A.

THE WORD OF GOD

Will you suppose for a moment that you have never heard of Jesus or the Christian faith? Were that the case, would you not be ignorant of even the most elementary teachings of the Bible?

One day someone presented a Bible to you and informed you that when you read it you will learn the greatest story ever told — the story of how the earth began, and the meaning and destiny of man. You were also told that you will read about a great flood that once covered the earth, about the birth of a nation called Israel, and about prophets who accurately foretold minute details about things yet future from their time period. “Your mind and heart,” said the giver of the Bible, “will be caused to wonder about such subjects as faith, repentance, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, giving, prayer, the Gospel, the resurrection, and a great host of other things to which you will be introduced.” How, you will undoubtedly wonder, could such a marvelous story be born of human imagination?

Now, let’s move from the hypothetical case we have just described to the real situation in which most readers of this article find themselves. The Bible is not a strange book to you, and you already understand much about the story it tells.

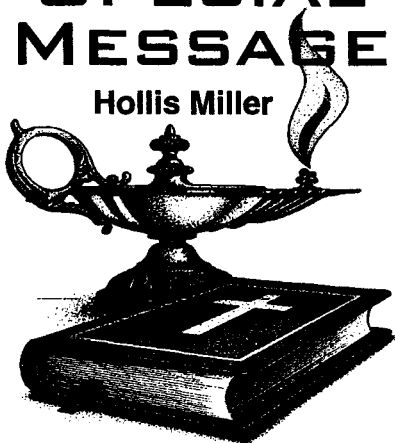
But a problem exists. Many who possess knowledge of the story the Bible tells believe only bits and pieces of it, or maybe not any of it. But why? WHY? Has anyone ever proved the story false? No, but theories and declarations of men who oppose it abound. Fact, however, has never disturbed its peace.

The next time you hold a Bible in your hands, remember that you are holding a book that is truly one of a kind. You are holding God’s special message to you. †

Hollis Miller preaches the Gospel in Elkton, Kentucky, U.S.A.

THE BIBLE, A SPECIAL MESSAGE

Hollis Miller



Preaching the Word

Hans J. Dederscheck

It is God's will that Christians dedicate their time to communicating the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). In the midst of daily activities all of us should have occasion to promote (proclaim!) the Good News (Romans 12:7,8; 13:11-14). Paul insists on "*making the most of the time*" (Colossians 4:5).

The Word of the Lord brings new life. The simple people of the early church brought the New Testament teaching into all regions of the Roman Empire, as they traveled and worked and lived. If Christians today would do the same, right where they are, the result would be overwhelming. Sin condemns; but Christ makes men free from sin and death (Romans 6). The very best service to God, besides living the Christian life, is teaching the Gospel. This is the only way to save human beings. Faith in Christ comes through hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:15,16).

The Gospel has to be proclaimed entirely (Acts 20:26,27), without adding or taking away (Revelation 22:18-19). There is only one Gospel, although many preach a false gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).

The Christian's preaching (proclaiming) must be a clear message which glorifies God. It is not "sharing" the Gospel in the sense of coming to a compromise, desiring "not to harm anyone." Christians preach in love and self-control, but also without respect of persons (Colossians 3:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11).

Church growth, however, shall not be artificially stimulated by manipulating the Word and the listeners. If our preaching is social entertainment, it is not proclaiming the Gospel. Psychological manipulation in religion may, perhaps, bring people into a church building but they will be emptied out of God's everlasting kingdom. Preach the Word in truth and love, but according to the Lord's instructions.

Christians must use all of the inspired Scripture in order to proclaim a complete Gospel. This whole message of God is able to make people "*complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Only the Gospel in its entirety gives man "*all things pertaining to life and*

THE WORD OF GOD

godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). A partial Gospel — which is what is preached by false teachers — is no Gospel at all because it ends in condemnation.

As Christians preach (proclaim) the Gospel, they must live a Christian life and teach the Good Tidings, motivated only by one reason: obeying God! Never preach to please members of the church, never preach because someone puts pressure of any kind upon you. Preach the truth in love, with all authority of the Scripture. Otherwise, your preaching and teaching will be void, man-pleasing, and corrupted. Christians must preach all of the truth. A partial truth is likewise an incomplete Gospel.

Worldliness and humanistic behavior will destroy the kind of spiritual life that comes only from the Gospel. Stay in all of Christ's Gospel message. *"For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables"* (2 Timothy 4:3,4).

We must preach all of the Gospel, or we labor *against Christ*.



Hans J. Dederscheck is an evangelist in Vienna, Austria.



Don't Quit Preaching

When things go wrong as they sometimes do
And you've preached your heart out the whole night through.
People falling out of windows and screeching their chairs,
And looking up at you with big blank stares.

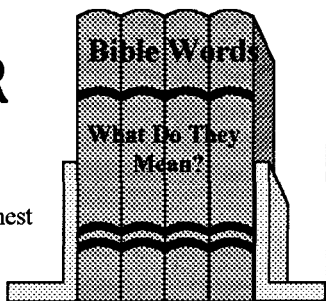
They shake your hand, saying, "Preacher, that's good."
You say, "Carry that message to your neighborhood."
And you see the shock in their bleary eyes.
If they remembered the topic, it would be a surprise.

But preach on, brother, 'cause you'll save a few,
And that's all the Good Lord expects of you.
You're in the company of some mighty men,
So take new courage, and preach again.

— Jessie Granville

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER

BY FENTER NORTHERN



Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in I Peter. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

- apostle** *n.*— A: to send B: disciple C: follower D: believer.
- elect** *adj.*— A: to vote B: a ballot C: mark an "X" D: picked; chosen.
- sojourners** *adj.*— A: travelers B: to walk alongside in a strange land C: visitors D: people with visas.
- dispersion** *n.*— A: cast reflection upon B: those persecuted C: to scatter as seed; remove D: not belonging to.
- foreknowledge** *n.*— A: to know beforehand B: to prophesy C: to receive prior information D: of genius ability.
- sanctification** *adj.*— A: separated for holiness B: worship with shouting C: a doctrine D: to accept a creed.
- sprinkling** *v.*— A: a light rain B: act of baptism C: scatter in small drops D: pour water.
- begat** *v.*— A: to receive ill will B: produced offspring C: be born D: conceive.
- inheritance** *n.*— A: will B: receive gifts C: donation D: received from one's ancestors.
- incorruptible** *adj.*— A: never withering B: immune to disease C: without blot D: clean.
- undefiled** *adj.*— A: all right B: never filed or honed C: unstained D: true
- reserved** *v.*— A: quiet B: timid C: guarded; kept D: under lock and key.
- salvation** *n.*— A: a church doctrine B: a happy feeling C: repentance D: deliverance; preservation from future wrath.
- proof** *v.*— A: a certificate of purchase B: a test made for certifying validity C: to pass a polygraph D: have an alibi.
- Revelation** *v.*— A: to have a great idea B: a book in the Bible C: to unveil D: to solve a mystery.
- end** *n.*— A: to call time out B: cease C: final result of a state or process D: an appendage.
- Sober** *adj.*— A: mentally alert B: free from intoxicants C: using wisdom D: A, B, and C.

Answers to

"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"

1. **apostle**—(Gk. apostolos) A: to send, as the twelve were sent by Jesus on a mission
2. **elect**—(Gk. eklektos) D: picked, or chosen. The elect are chosen of God on the basis of their faith in Christ (Eph. 1:4).
3. **sojourners**—(Gk. parepidemos) B: to walk beside in a strange land. Christians, whose citizenship is in heaven, are walking alongside of non-believers in their world.
4. **dispersion**—(Gk. diaspora) C: to scatter as seed. God's people, due to persecution or other circumstances, have been scattered to the four winds of the earth much as a sower scatters seed over his field.
5. **foreknowledge**—(Gk. prognosis) A: to know beforehand. The divine purpose of Jehovah.
6. **sanctification**—(Gk. hagioismos) A: separated for holiness. Christians, by the cleansing atonement of Christ's blood, have been "set aside" with a clean soul.
7. **sprinkling**—(Gk. rhintismos) C: scatter in small drops. As blood was sprinkled on the holy things in the Old Testament to sanctify them for divine use, so the Christian's conscience has been spiritually sprinkled by the blood of Christ. (See Heb. 10:22).
8. **begat**—(Gk. hanagennao) B: produced offspring. The idea is that God has produced his children of faith by having the gospel preached to them. One conceives in the heart when faith occurs, and is brought forth from the watery womb of baptism (Jno. 3:3ff).
9. **inheritance**—(Gk. kleronomia) D:

received from one's ancestors. The promise of a dwelling place with God made to the Christian's ancestors in the faith in the Old Testament is realized in

Christ
incorruptible—(Gk. sapros) A: never withering. The idea is that the promise of a future dwelling place with God for eternity is not seasonal. Nothing can prevent it from happening.

11. **undefiled**—(Gk. amiantos) C: unstained. Those who will live with God are the those unspotted by sin because they have been washed in the blood of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

12. **reserved**—(Gk. tereo) C: guarded. The power of God protects and keeps a Christian's home in heaven. No believer will be disappointed.

13. **salvation**—(Gk. soteria) D: deliverance; preservation from future wrath.

14. **proof**—(Gk. dokimion) B: a test made for certifying the validity of a thing.

15. **revelation**—(Gk. apokalupsis) C: to unveil, hence a divinely uncovered mystery.

16. **End**—(Gk. telos) C: a final result of a state or process. Therefore, when the process of redemption is final and salvation is fully realized in heaven.

17. **sober**—(Gk. nepho) D: A, B, and C. all refer to the Christian's actions in this world as he awaits the consummation of all things.

Vocabulary Scale

- 7–10 correct.....good
11–13 correct.....Bible Student
14–15 correct.....Bible Scholar

Undenominational Christianity

Bobby Dockery

Dr. Hans Kung, the well-known European theologian, published an epoch-making book some years ago which was entitled simply, *The Church*. In this book he lamented the fact that the established church has lost its way, has become bogged down in tradition, and has ceased to be what Christ intended it to be. The only remedy, according to Dr. Kung, is to go back to the Scriptures to see what the church was like in the beginning and then to recover in the 20th Century the essence of the original church! In other words, **we need to return to the practice of undenominational Christianity!**

I am personally convinced that undenominational Christianity is possible — that it is possible to be members of the church of our Lord without being a part of any denomination! To recapture undenominational Christianity in the 20th Century, the following things are necessary:

- 1. The unity of all believers on the basis of the Bible alone.**
- 2. The replacement of all human creeds and confessions of faith with the Bible as the only binding rule of faith and practice for the church.**
- 3. The recognition of Christ as the only Head of the church.**
- 4. The autonomy and independence of every local congregation.**
- 5. The use of only scriptural names to refer to God's people.**
- 6. The restoration of the government, worship, and terms of membership practiced by the New Testament church.**

Is Undenominational Christianity really possible in our faction-torn, sect-ridden religious world? Many would say, "No!" They would dismiss the very idea of "Undenominational Christianity" as an anachronistic, unrealistic dream. But the Bible teaches otherwise! Consider:

1. The Church established by Jesus in New Testament times was undenominational. He conceived of His church in terms of a unified, sin-

THE CHURCH

gle entity (Matthew 16:18). He prayed for the perpetual unity of His followers (John 17:20,21). Clearly, the division of His church into denominations was not something that He intended or approved.

2. We have the same seed today which produced undenominational Christianity in the First Century. The seed is the Word of God (Luke 18:11). We are born again by that seed (1 Peter 1:23). Seed — if it is viable — will always produce the same harvest, no matter where or when it is planted.

3. We can be undenominational today if we will turn FROM men and their doctrines, creeds, and opinions, and turn TO Christ and His Word. The *Bible only* will make *Christians only*! In the 20th century we can be what Christians were in the 1st century if we are willing to *believe* what they believed; *obey* what they obeyed, and *practice* what they practiced!

Why not be just a Christian?



Bobby Dockery is deeply involved in printing evangelism, and he preaches for the Baldwin Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Which?

There are two ways of beginning the day — with prayer, or without it. You began today in one of these two ways. **Which?**

There are two ways of spending the Lord's day — idly or devotionally. You spend the Lord's day in one of these two ways. **Which?**

There are two classes of people in the world — the saved and the unsaved. You belong to one of these two classes. **Which?**

There are two great masters of men in the universe — God and Satan. You are serving under one of these two masters. **Which?**

There are two roads which lead through time and eternity — the broad road and the narrow road. You are walking on one of these two roads. **Which?**

There are two deaths which people die — some "die in the Lord." others "die in their sins." You will die one of these two deaths. **Which?**

There are two places to which people go — heaven or hell. You will go to one of these two places. **Which?**

— Selected

THE CHURCH

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions

among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Commenting on this passage, one writer alleges that not only were those who were of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas divisive, but so were those who were *"of Christ."* But if even those identified as being *"of Christ"* were divisive, who would they need to be *"of"* in order to be correct? If they were divisive by being baptized *"in the name of"* Christ, in what name should they have been immersed?

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He said, *"Go ye there-*



Of Christ?

Ray Hawk

fore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). One is to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Those on Pentecost (Acts 2:38), the Samaritans (Acts 8:16), Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:48), and the Ephesians (Acts 19:5), obeyed that commission. By doing so, they were *"of Christ."* Since Paul informed the Corinthians that they had done the same (1 Corinthians 12:13), and Luke corroborates that evidence (Acts 18:8), we are forced to conclude that *"the church of God"* at Corinth was *"of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 1:2,13).

Paul further indicated that this baptism was a burial that was a form or type of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (Romans

THE CHURCH

6:3,4,17). When one is buried in and raised from water, he gets into the death of Christ and puts Him on (Romans 6:2-7; Galatians 3:27). This is exactly what the Corinthians had done. Therefore, they were "*of Christ*."

Jesus was crucified for us, not Paul, Apollos, Cephas or any other man. Since no one may be crucified for us but Jesus, how could the Corinthians be "*of*" anyone but Christ?

One must be immersed in the name of Jesus to get into Christ and become one with Him (Ephesians 5:25-32). We are not baptized to get into someone or something else. Since the Corinthians had been immersed in the name of Jesus, that baptism could not possibly have added them to the body of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (Acts 2:47). Since the baptism they had experienced could not put them into those bodies or churches, how could they be "*of*" them? The only possible one they could be "*of*" was Christ. That being the case, those who were said to be "*of Christ*" were exactly where they should have been.

By being "*of Christ*," one recognizes that Jesus was crucified for him, he accepts and obeys the baptism taught in the New Testament, and he is not guilty of dividing the body of Christ by trying to be a member "*of Paul*," "*of Apollos*," or

"*of Cephas*."

When members of the body of Christ at Corinth tried to segregate into the "Pauline church of Christ", the "Apollosian church of Christ", and the "Cephasite church of Christ", they created an unhealthy and disastrous condition. Jesus said, "*Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall*" (Luke 11:17). By dividing the body of Christ, they became carnal (1 Corinthians 3:3). They were guilty of creating something which the Lord did not construct, teach, or champion. Jesus said He was the vine and His disciples were the branches (John 15:1-7). He did not say divisive bodies were the branches.

It was a sin for the Corinthian church to divide itself into the body of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. Those bodies could not save the individuals who were claiming to be members of them. When Christians become "*of*" anything or anyone else other than Jesus Christ, they are guilty of trying to save themselves by following another. Biblically, this cannot and must not be done. Sadly, though, all over the world there are those who are trying to be a part of "Pauline churches" and "Cephasite churches". †

Ray Hawk preaches for the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

DESCRIBING GOD'S PEOPLE

R. H. Tex Williams

Names mean a great deal to most people, regardless of where they live. Our names are important to us because they identify us in a number of ways. In times past, and in many places still, names are important because they have meaning. For instance, the disciple of Jesus named Simon was called "Cephas" by Jesus. "Cephas," translated, means "Peter," which in turn means "stone." Later we see why the Lord called this man a stone, because he proved to be hard and unmovable in his faith and work for Jesus.

The inspired writers of the New Testament used names or descriptive designations to refer to followers of Christ. Those designations tell more about a person than do names alone. For instance, my name is Williams. To those who know me, that identifies me. However, there are several designations which can be used to refer to me that tell even strangers many things about me. I can be designated as "married," which indicates that I have a wife and that I have accepted

all the responsibilities of being married. I can be designated as being a "father," meaning that I have children and need to accept the responsibilities of providing for and rearing my children. Designations are much more descriptive of a person or a group of persons than simply a name.

One of the designations for followers of Jesus Christ in New Testament times had special meaning. In Acts 11:26, Luke wrote that *"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."* They were called Christians because they were avid followers of Jesus Christ and His teachings. It was not just a name given by those who were not Christians to those who were Christians, because later, Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, "... if you suffer as a **Christian**, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1 Peter 4:16).

God has given designations to His people to show many aspects concerning who they are and what they are supposed to be in the world in which they exist. For instance, God's people are biblically desig-

THE CHURCH

nated as "*churches of Christ.*" In Romans 16:16, Paul wrote, "*All churches of Christ send greetings.*" Paul had been with the churches in Macedonia, Achaia, Corinth, and other places. Undoubtedly, he told the Christians he was going to write to the brethren in Rome, and so all of them sent their greetings through Paul's letter.

The word "church" in the New Testament always referred to the body of Christians who belonged to Christ. Jesus said, "... *I will build my church* . . . " (Matthew 16:18). The church was made up of those who belonged to Christ, because they were "*bought with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28). The term "church of Christ," (meaning the "church belonging to Christ") is not a denominational *name*, but rather a Biblical, descriptive *designation* of God's people, showing that they are the *possession* of Christ because He paid for them with His blood.

There are many other Biblical, descriptive designations of Christians in the New Testament. For example, in 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul said he had written to Timothy who was working with Christians in the city of Ephesus, so that "*you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*" In this verse, there are

three descriptive designations of God's people. First is "*God's household,*" or "*God's family.*" This designation shows that all Christians are a part of a family, God's family. God is our father and we are brothers and sisters. God provided for His family, and we, through prayer, ask for His help and provision. Christians have a family relationship with one another, as do brothers and sisters in any family.

Also, in this verse God's people are called "*the church of the living God.*" To Christians God is "living," and we belong to Him because He planned our redemption and salvation.

Then Paul says that Christians are "*the pillar and foundation of the truth.*" Christians, the church, are to defend, preach, and sustain the truth about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, heaven, etc. It is given to the church to preach the Gospel "*to every creature.*"

There are approximately 25 more designations given by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures concerning the church. All of them are biblical and descriptive. It would be well if we would give up denominational names and begin using God's designations of His people. It might prompt us to serve better, and live purer lives. †

R. H. Tex Williams is the director of World Bible School in Austin, Texas, U.S.A.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

cally nothing about the meaning of those verses, he could not doubt that we are under **some kind of law** and will be judged by it.

This law is probably called the "*law of liberty*" for several reasons, but among them, no doubt, is that it is obedience to that law which gives us liberty — freedom from sin and its dominion.

The law of Moses was a "*ministration of death, written and engraven in stones*" (2 Corinthians 3:7), and the "*law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 8:2) is written on the heart (Hebrews 8:10), but it is still a law.

Possibly some of those who teach that we are not under law do so because they do not understand the difference in being justified on the basis or principle of law-keeping, and being amenable to or under law.

As the law of Moses was not merely a group of suggestions, so neither are the commandments of Christ. They are binding, with all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). But if we are to be justified on the principle of having kept the law, **we must never have broken it**. If you claim that you have never broken it, you just then did (Romans 3:23). But if you admit that you have broken it, you cannot consistently claim that you are justified on the basis of having

kept it.

But many would reply, "But I repented and was baptized for the remission of my sins, and that is a keeping of the law." That is a keeping of a part of the law. But James says, "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*" (James 2:10). We can all understand that if you robbed a bank and murdered the teller, when the authorities took you in, it would not be satisfactory to say, "I kept the law! I did not run a stop sign, nor break a speed limit!" The principle is: If you would be justified on the basis of law-keeping, you have to keep all of it.

So, we are under law — the law of liberty. But we are not thereby justified because we kept a part of it. We are justified freely by His grace, **if/as/when, by His grace we accept the salvation that is in Christ on His terms**. His terms are simple, His yoke is easy and His burden is light, but you must take His yoke on you (Matthew 11:29), and when you do you will confess freely that (1) you operate under His law, (2) you are saved by His grace, and (3) you are not justified or saved on the basis of having kept His law, but in spite of the fact that you broke it numerous times! †

T. Pierce Brown lives and preaches in Cookeville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

The Book of Colossians for adults

The following people are found in the book of Colossians. Find them in the puzzle below and circle them.

ARCHIPPUS
ARISTARCHUS
BARNABAS
BARBARIAN
CHILDREN
CHRIST JESUS
CIRCUMCISED
DEMAS
EPAPHRAS

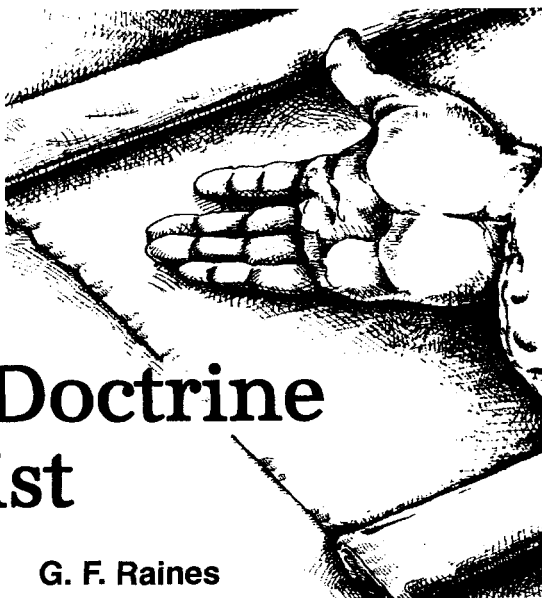
FREE MAN
GENTILES
GREEK
HUSBANDS
JEW
JUSTUS
LUKE
MARK
MINISTER

MASTERS
NYMPHA
ONESIMUS
PAUL
SAINTS
SLAVES
TIMOTHY
TYCHICUS
WIVES

I B D I J U S T U S U M I S E N O N
H L L A K B D A I L T Y C H I C U S
E K U L S A I N T S V A U D W E O A
P O A C I R C U M C I S E D V E Y R
A S P H V B E E A N B R M E A R J I
P B A R N A B A S A I N Y M P H A S
H E S I D R U Y N A Y T O A U I I T
R C E S V I E D S L A V E S E T T A
A K L T X A S E N O D H R Z U N T R
S O I J I N H T G R E E K D S A N C
U A T E X M I N I S T E R E Y M K H
W T N S O A O E O S U D V E O E M U
L O E U L R I T A C H I L D R E N S
Y M G S L K A M H U W Y E F F R A O
A R C H I P P U S Y G D D L Y F A S

My heart's desire
and my supplication to
God for the religious
world is that the time
will come when Christ

Let Us Abide in the Doctrine of Christ



G. F. Raines

and His church as described in the New Testament will be exalted above and completely supersede all sects and denominations, and that the Gospel of Christ will be exalted above and completely supersede all human creeds and opinions of men. As long as men exalt policy above principle, inclination above duty, and speculation above the truth of God's Holy Word, the religious world will continue to be tragically divided into factions and parties.

As C. C. Crawford well said, "The only message that will change the heart, heal the conscience and save the soul is the New Testament in its purity and simplicity.

Christians should speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent."

God said to Israel, "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it*" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Paul says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

If you want to know what to do to be saved, please read the following passages in your own Bible

THE WORD OF GOD

(they are so plain that they need no interpretation): Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 8:26-40; 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Jesus says, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent*

me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50). †

G. F. Raines writes and preaches in Newton, Mississippi, U.S.A.

The worst enemies of Christ are those "believers" who are actually unbelievers, those who spend their lives in a critical study of the Scriptures and invariably dismiss or rewrite or contradict everything in the holy book. Their perspective of the text is that it was written by people of the times or by disciples, *not that God Himself inspired the wording*. Seeing the Bible as a product merely of men who served as historians — and often "dating" the writings long after the occurrence of the events — these "scholars" slyly undermine belief in the authority and accuracy of the Scriptures by such presumptuous statements as, "the writers of the gospel accounts borrowed from each other, and they wrote what they remembered, as they remembered it," and "in this story, this is probably what actually happened."

These liberal "scholars" thus conclude that the Bible was simply a product of its time, not *God's message* for all men for all ages. They dissect Christ and His teachings, relegating their usefulness primarily to the people of that culture and the first century. They grant that we, in today's world, are free to analyze the writings and draw from them whatever we find useful, but they do not see the book as *a law* binding on all mankind.

These are the teachers in many seminaries. It is, therefore, not surprising that an increasing number of their students — priests, preachers, and leaders in the so-called believing world — also see the Bible as nothing more than an historical document. And it is not surprising, further, that faith grows weaker in the religious world in general.

The question is rightly asked, "When Christ returns, will He find faith on the earth?"

— **Betty Burton Choate**

God's Purposes for His People

Ron Bryant



Any observation as to God's purposes for His people rests upon certain convictions. These begin with the conviction that God is, that He has revealed Himself in His work of creation and in His work of redemption. It rests upon the conviction that He has manifested His love toward all mankind in all that He has done, and that He has made known His kind intention and His will for man in His revelation, the Bible. It rests upon the conviction that the church revealed in the New Testament as a reality, stands as a manifestation of the love, the wisdom, and the power of God, and that it was brought into existence

for a high and holy purpose — even the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:10,11). It rests upon the conviction that the church is God's people, by the terms of the New Covenant, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3-14,20,21; 5:23-31).

God's purpose for the redeemed body of believers is threefold. In the first place, God's purpose and plan for the church is revealed to include the creating of a family, spiritual in nature, that is recipient of and ruled by His love and acceptance. In the family of God, each child is blessed with forgiveness, love, and acceptance, and

THE CHURCH

these are shared with each member of the family. That family is His through the work of Christ. Only those that are in Christ are in that family (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19).

Secondly, God created the church to be a spiritual body which exists to function as a continuation of the Incarnate Lord, to function as the body of Christ, through which He reigns and provides identity. The believers are *one body* in Christ.

They are members not only of the body of Christ, but they are also members one of another. Individually they are able to serve, yet God's purpose involves them, not as individuals in isolation from one another, but as "*members one of another*" (Romans 12:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12). In God's purpose, the strength of the body includes that "*which each joint supplies*" (Ephesians 4:15,16). Only those that are in Christ are in that spiritual body.

Third, God's plan was to create, through the Holy Spirit, a spiritual temple of living stones into which He can invest His likeness and power, to the end that the temple can be able to serve and glorify Him and come to know its true worth. Believers are not only a family embracing the love of God, nor merely a body of believers realizing significance and fellowship; they are a living Temple, bearing the mark that they are competent in

doing those things which please God. Those who are in Christ are that temple (Ephesians 2:19-22).

God's purposes for the church are invested with plans which will provide: **[1] identity** (a spiritual family), **[2] function** (a united body of believers), and **[3] character** (a holy temple).

Also, God's purposes are an expression of His character. Out of His love He gives to the needs and longings of mankind the things which are of vital importance. The needs for security, significance, and competence are fulfilled in His provision in the church. God has chosen to demonstrate the truth about Himself through those He has called to be His people in the world. The purposes of God are therefore significant in the heart and mind, the understanding, and the endeavors of the redeemed. †

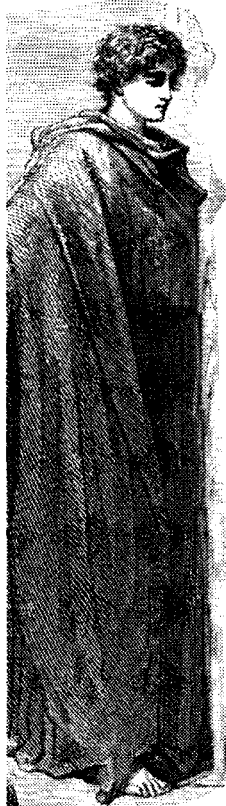
Ron Bryant preaches for the Camelback Church of Christ in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A.

Our Lord's purpose is not the development of a man; His purpose is to make a man exactly like Himself.

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am a good example of faithfulness through good times and bad.

1. **100** I was inspired by God to write five books in the Bible.
2. **90** I took care of a woman who was not really my mother (19:26).
3. **80** By Jesus I was called "son of Thunder" (Mark 3:17).
4. **70** I wrote about Nicodemus' visit to Jesus by night (3:1-21).
5. **60** A word that dominates in my vocabulary is *love* (1 _____ 4,5).
6. **50** I was often in the company of Peter and James, on special occasions with Jesus (Matthew 17:1).
7. **40** One of my books begins with the declaration, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (1:1).
8. **30** In one of my other books I wrote, "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard we declare to you . . .*" (1:1,3).
9. **20** I stayed with Jesus through the ordeal of His crucifixion (19:25).
10. **10** Secular history says that I was the last of the disciples to die, the only one to die a natural death. I was given special visions by God during a period of exile (Revelation 1:1,4).



My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.



Listen to Him

Leon Barnes

Imagine being Simon Peter for a moment. You have been chosen by Jesus to be one of the select twelve. You willingly left your business and family to follow Him and to learn to live for Him. On this day the Master takes you and James and John with Him as He climbs a mountain to pray. While you are

praying with Jesus, you fall asleep. After all, the walk up the mountain was tiring.

Suddenly, you are startled. You open your eyes to see the appearance of Jesus change completely! He is as white as snow! His whole appearance is shining! Besides that, you see Moses and Elijah talking with Him. They are discussing matters about His coming death.

What in the world should you do? Since you aren't sure how to react, you say to Jesus, *"It is good for us to be here. Let us build three tents. One for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."* Before you can get your whole thought out of your mouth, though, a bright cloud overshadows the mountain, and a voice comes out of the cloud saying, *"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:1-5).*

If you can still see yourself as Peter, don't you think this whole event would have been shocking?

But what was wrong with what you suggested, anyway? **First**, the idea of building three tents leaves the impression that this is a place to stay. It is the idea that the mountain top, with its lofty air of God's presence — perhaps even its isolation from people, in a monastery-type setting — is the place we want to

live. But it was never in the plan of God for Jesus or the apostles to remain on the mountain. The work to be done was in the valley, where a boy was hurting and the father had brought him to be healed. **Second**, the suggestion was wrong because it put Moses and Elijah on the same plane as Jesus. They were great men, but Jesus is God in the flesh (John 1:1,14).

But, probably the most important thing wrong with Peter's suggestion was that he was speaking when he should have been listening. God's answer was, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, LISTEN TO HIM.*" Isn't this the problem we all face, all too often? Like Peter, *we think that we should have something to say, some suggestion to make about everything which comes along.* But, when we don't know what to say, it is always wiser to not say anything. Someone has said that the fact that God has given each of us two ears and only one mouth should tell us something.

One of the major points made by Jesus and the Holy Spirit-led writers of the New Testament is that we need to "*Take heed how we hear.*" James wrote, "*Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath*" (James 1:19).

How many things have we missed which God wanted us to

hear, because we were so busy trying to decide what we would say next? Too many have ears but don't hear. We just aren't tuned into the things which really are important for us to learn.

As Jesus and the three walked down the mountain-side, they were listening to Him explain how John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come first. They received the charge to keep to themselves what they had seen and heard until after the resurrection. But before they could even reach the bottom of the mountain there was the clamor of trouble. The boy who was demon-possessed had been brought to the disciples, to whom Jesus had given power to cast out demons. But though they had tried, nothing had happened. The father, in frustration, brought his son to Jesus. "*Lord have mercy,*" was his cry. Jesus healed the boy and rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith.

Could it be that the reason Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to the mountain was so that their faith could grow? The work is in the valley, but the faith and strength to do the work are often on the mountain-top of prayer and listening to God's words. †

Leon Barnes is the preacher for the Barrow Road Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, U.S.A.

THE PRICE OF ARROGANCE

Godfried Kwao

"Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us" (Romans 15:4). Bible stories teach great lessons to all readers, but particularly to Christians. Arrogance has been one of man's greatest problems. God has condemned and punished arrogant people. Here are a few examples.

1. King Uzziah of Judah (2 Chronicles 26). At age 16 he became king. Under the able guidance of his religious adviser, Zechariah, he ruled wisely and was well-pleasing to God. He offered faithful service to his Creator, and in turn had plenty of blessings from Him. *"His fame spread everywhere, and he became very powerful because of the help he received from God"* (verse 15).

Then, presto! He fell. His fame and power were transformed into arrogance. He defied his Lord; he wanted to burn incense on the altar of incense (verse 16). He was resisted by 81 priests, Azariah and 80 others. Why? He wanted to usurp the function of the priests — an area exclusively the preserve of priests descended from Aaron.

Punishment:

- A. God's blessing withdrawn (verse 18).
- B. A dreaded skin disease broke out on his forehead, making him ritually unclean for life (verses 19,21).
- C. He was not buried in royal tombs (verse 23).

2. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4). In Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, recorded in Daniel 4, he was shown how he would temporarily fall from grace. The Eternal had given him glory, power, and prosperity. But he became proud and did not acknowledge the overwhelming power of the majestic Lord. For, he had said, *"Look how great Babylon is. I built it as my capital city to display my power and might, my glory and majesty"* (verse 30). Before he could finish his arrogant

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words, a heavenly voice had condemned him to live with wild beasts for seven years in the jungle (verses 31,32).

Punishment:

- A. Banishment from human society.
- B. Total disgrace — nothing is more humiliating than a king losing his senses and behaving like a wild beast.

3. Goliath (1 Samuel 17). Goliath boastfully challenged David, “*I will give your body to birds and animals to eat*” (verse 44). Goliath, the giant of a man, underrated David. In the fight he was no match for the boy. David took Goliath’s head home as a trophy. (Read also Luke 18:9-14.)

Conclusion: It is important to note that all physical blessings come from the Creator. He can withdraw any of them at will. The cost of arrogance is too high a price to pay. Avoid it! The arrogant Christian can regain his/her former station if he/she humbles himself/herself. †

Godfried Kwao is a gospel preacher in the country of Benin, West Africa.



The Christian As Overcomer

David Deffenbaugh

If asked to provide a list of the traits and qualities necessary for good Christian living, what words would your list contain? Certainly we would want to include things like faith, goodness, patience, kindness, compassion, and longsuffering. We wouldn't want to leave out anything from the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23), or the Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-7), or the unnamed list given by Paul in Colossians 3:12ff.

But how many of us would think to include "overcomer" in that list? That's right, overcomer. In each of the seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 2 and 3), Jesus holds out a promise. No matter how complimentary or critical He is to each church, He ends the letter with a promise, a promise to those who overcome.

Shall we be overcomers? We hesitate at overcoming as a response to the struggles and troubles of our lives. Overcoming is not the easy way out. It isn't the path of least resistance. Overcoming *demands* the most, but it also *blesses* the most. Too often we do want the easy way out of our problems and troubles (usually asking God to remove them from our lives, or oth-

erwise protecting us) and, therefore, we often miss out on God's greatest blessings.

Who could have blamed Jesus if He had slipped quietly into the night from the garden when He knew the mob approached? Who could have blamed Paul if he had simply retired to Tarsus after the turbulent first missionary journey? God provided the enabling strength for Jesus and Paul to be overcomers, and He'll provide the same for us; not only the strength to overcome, but the promised blessing, as well.

As those seven churches faced false teachers, false apostles, immorality, apathy, tribulations, persecution (even to the point of death), and more, their greatest need was to overcome. Compromise, turning a blind eye and a deaf ear, softening their stand — all of these responses would certainly have been easier, but the **promise** was to **the overcomer**. The **blessing** is to **the overcomer**.

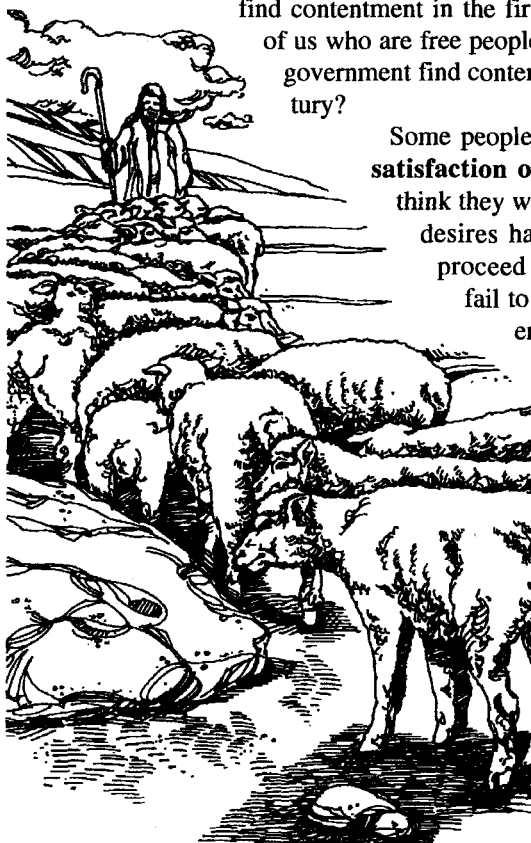
"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith" (1 John 5:4). †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the church in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

"I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:12,13).

The apostle Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he penned those words.

If a prisoner living under the Roman government could find contentment in the first century, why can't more of us who are free people living under a democratic government find contentment in the twentieth century?



Some people confuse contentment with **satisfaction of all their desires**. They think they will be content when all their desires have been fulfilled, so they proceed to chase the wind. They fail to notice a common phenomenon: instead of decreasing, our desires often increase as we desperately attempt to fulfill them. In the words of one landowner, "Actually, my desires are very simple. All I want is the land which borders mine." At best, the person who sets out to satisfy his desires will find only brief moments of satisfaction along the way. That is not the contentment of which Paul wrote.

Contentment

Royce Frederick

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Some people confuse contentment with **total indifference toward life's events**. The Stoics of ancient Greece believed that a truly mature person never allows himself to be affected by pleasures or sorrows. Paul could not have been referring to that kind of attitude, for he freely mentions his own tears and joys (2 Corinthians 2:3,4). It is not a sign of maturity to be stone-hearted. Sin and sorrows, righteousness, and joys touch the heart of a Christian. Contentment is not the same as indifference.

Biblical contentment is an **humble, undisturbed dependence upon Christ**, regardless of whatever life may bring our way. It is an attitude which cannot be swayed by fortune nor misfortune. It is a ready acceptance of whatever God may permit or cause in our life.

As one has put it: "A contented man is one who enjoys the scenery along the detour!" †

Royce Frederick is the editor of *International Gospel Teacher* and lives in Lufkin, Texas, U. S. A.

When you were small and just a touch away
I covered you with blankets against the cold night air;
but now that you are tall and out of reach
I fold my hands and cover you with prayers.



Lord, make my life a window for Your light to shine through,
and a mirror to reflect Your love to everyone I meet.



An elderly man astounded everyone by his cheerfulness in the face of physical ailments, family troubles and deferred pleasures. When asked the secret of his cheerful disposition, he replied, "Well, you see, it is like this. The Bible says often, 'And it shall come to pass,' never, 'It came to stay.'"



Hate is like an acid. It can damage the vessel in which it is stored as well as destroy the object on which it is poured.

— Selected

God's Special People

(1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:14)

Don L. Norwood

When a responsible person is spiritually re-born (John 3:3,5), he becomes a special person in relationship to God (1 Peter 2:9-11). He (or she) has, at that time, become a spiritual child of God, an heir of eternal life (Galatians 3:26-29).

Since all human beings have a natural tendency to sin because of the weaknesses of the flesh, God provided a means wherein His children can live out this life above the control of these sinful passions and lusts. Humanity's plight, even after the rebirth, is shown in these Scriptures: Romans 7:14-25; 8:1; Galatians 5:16-18,22-25; Romans 8:5,6,14). All people have this tendency to sin (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:23).

Our victory over sin is assured if we walk by faith, by the instruc-



tions of the Spirit — the New Testament Scriptures (1 John 5:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4).

A spiritual child of God stands under the mercy and grace of God at all times (1 Peter 2:9,10). The faith of such a person (his or her obedience of faith) has given him access into God's grace, and therefore there is peace between God and His obedient child (Romans 5:1-5).

God's grace has brought salvation to this penitent believer in Christ (Titus 2:11-14), and now he is being taught by the Word of the Spirit to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Such a person should always be zealous of good works, works that have been ordained by the Lord in His Word (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The spiritual child of God has access to God's throne of grace through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16). No one else has this great privilege. A man whom Jesus healed on one occasion said, *"Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a*

worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31). An example of this is Cornelius in Acts 10:1-4. Also read 1 John 5:14,15.

Where physical needs are concerned, the spiritual child of God does not have to be worried or overly concerned, because God has made this conditional promise (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 13:5,6).

When one of God's children does commit a sin he can repent of it, confess it, and pray for forgiveness, and God has promised to forgive (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16-20).

God has made a point of telling Christians to love the brotherhood (spiritual brethren) (1 Peter 2:17; 2 Peter 1:7,8). Christians are to do good to all people, but especially to their Christian brethren (Galatians 6:10).

Are you one of God's special people? God wants you to become one! (1 Timothy 2:1-6). †

Don L. Norwood is a gospel preacher who works with the Church of Christ in Mason, Texas, U.S.A.

There is no mugger as bad as the man who steals your hope.



If your actions and reactions are determined by how you are being treated at the moment, if the other person's moods control yours, you are in a most unstable environment. To live day by day being led here and there by the whims of the flesh is both demoralizing and degrading. To place your mind and spirit and will in the keeping of another is to be enslaved. And though none of us deliberately chooses this, each of us has experienced it.

For this reason God used a totally new word, AGAPAO, to describe His kind of love, a free-

The Freeing Power of Love

Jeril (Polly) Cline

ing love, independent of any outside influence, dependent upon His will, chosen as a deliberate expression of His nature and no one else's.

The object of His love does not have to be deserving (Romans 5:8). In fact, if such were a condition of His love, He could never love, for none of us is deserving. Instead, this love flows deep and constant, independent of the worthiness of its object, dependent upon the maturity of its Giver (John 3:16).

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God's love is not impulsive, prone to ups and downs. This love is stable, faithful, enduring, lasting, eternal (1 Corinthians 13:13). It is a reflection of the nature of the One Who gives it (1 John 4:8,16).

When we become His, we not only receive the forgiveness of sins, but the gift of His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39; 5:32). Now He makes His abode within us and helps to conform us to His nature, or personality, disposition, temperament (John 14:32; Romans 8:29). By His precious and magnificent promises we become partakers of His Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

No longer do we love according to the whims of our old, natural tendency. We are being trained and retrained to put off the old nature that enslaved us, and put on the nature of our Father (Luke 6:40; Colossians 3).

Now we are being empowered by the One who is able (Ephesians 3:14-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24; Jude 24,25; Hebrews 13:20,21). By His Spirit we are learning to love as He does (Galatians 4:6,7; 5:13-25).

We who have been set free by the love of God in Christ Jesus are free to love, unconditionally, independently of what others do or do not do to or for us (1 John 4:9-19). Truly, by this all men will know that we belong to the One who is love (John 13:34,35).

Apart from God we cannot love like this. That is why Jesus instructed His disciples to *abide* in Him (John 15:1-12).

For those who act and react according to the world's standard of love, it is impossible to comprehend this new life, this freeing way of loving (1 Corinthians 2:14). But for us who are in Christ Jesus, we not only comprehend it, we live it (1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:23; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:7,17,18; 5:7,9,10; 9:8).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7).

As you and I are tempted to respond out of our old nature, we must pray to Him who is love and draw from His maturity. Then and only then can we know the peace of God which surpasses this world's comprehension.

Paul was the author of the above verses. He was in prison when he wrote them. He experienced all kinds of abuse (2 Corinthians 11:23-31), yet he understood that real freedom transcends this world — it is God-

given. And real love, the freeing kind, flows out of God Himself.

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this most practical description of love:

"Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

This is a description of God. You can put His name in place of the word **love** and see how He loves you. Now substitute your name for the word **love**. Are you doing this for your spouse? Regardless of the way he/she responds, keep loving your mate and entrusting yourself to God, who is righteous and faithful, who will not fail you nor forsake you (1 Peter 2:18-24; 4:12-19).

Do not grow weary (Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13), for the kindness of God which led you to this new life of love can accomplish the same in your mate (Romans 2:4 and 1 Peter 3:1). †

Jeril (Polly) Cline is the wife of a gospel preacher and lives in Blue Ridge, Georgia, U.S.A.

And there is spiritual love.

I don't mean just a word . . . or pity for strangers . . . or shallow concern . . . or compassion. I mean a Love that reaches to the depth of the soul and demands that one be willing to give, whether or not anything is given in return, a Love that is a working motivating force in one's life, a Love fashioned of the very Love of God.

It is possible to feel in the human heart this spiritual Love, this Love that pulsates from the heart of God Himself. He Loves us when we have done nothing to warrant the Love, when we ignore Him, when we don't Love Him in return. And He goes on loving and longing for us because there is only Love in His heart.

How much we can grow in our understanding of the heart God by practicing His kind of Love for those around us!

— Betty Burton Choate
from *Windows of the Soul*

Not Growing Old

*"Though our outward man perish, yet
the inward man is renewed day by day."*

2 Corinthians 4:16

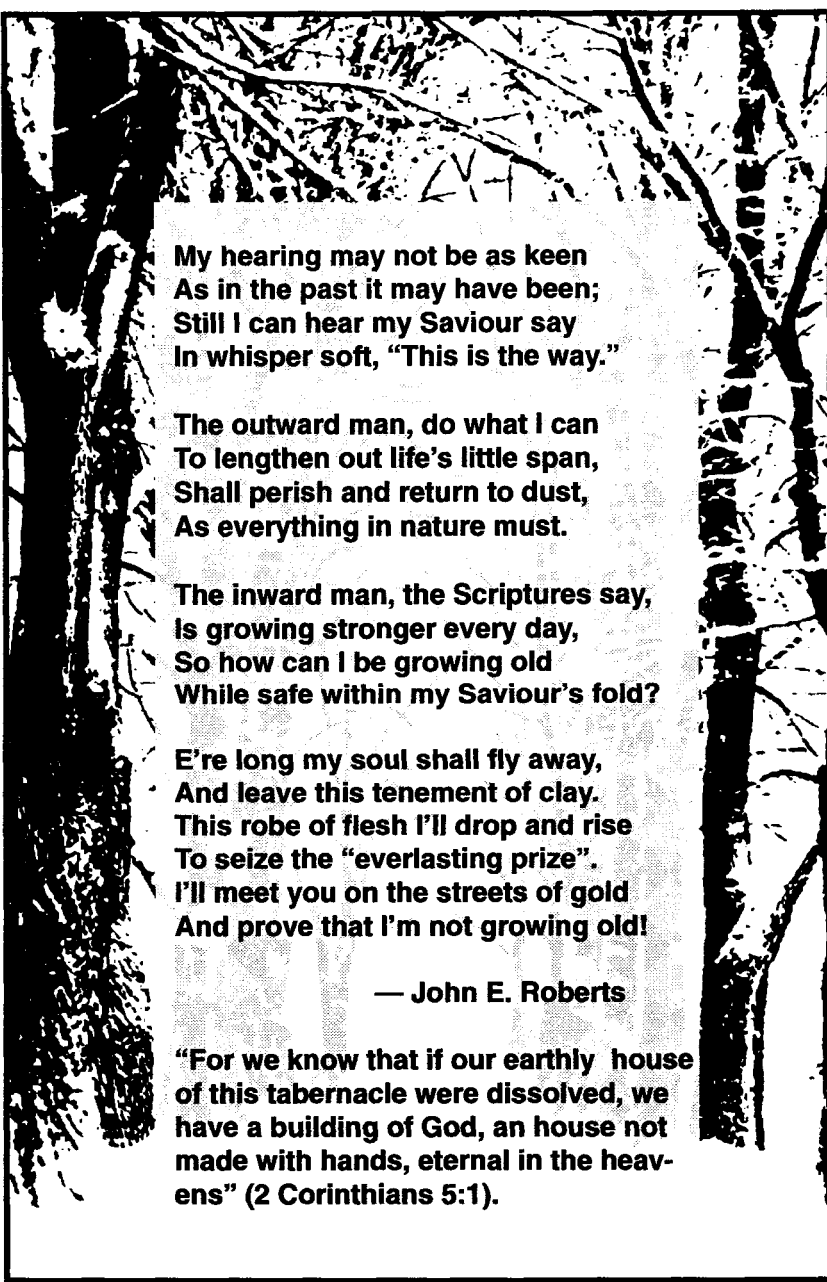
They say that I am growing old.
I've heard them tell it, times untold
In language plain and bold —
But I'm not growing old.

This frail old shell in which I dwell
Is growing old, I know full well —
But I am not the shell.

What if my hairs are turning gray?
Gray hairs are honorable, they say.
What if my eyesight's growing dim?
I still can see to follow Him
Who sacrificed His life for me
Upon the cross of Calvary.

What should I care if Time's old plow
Has left his furrows on my brow?
Another house, not made with hands,
Awaits me in the Glory Land.

What though I falter in my walk?
What though my tongue refuse
to talk?
I still can tread the Narrow Way,
I still can watch, and praise, and pray.



**My hearing may not be as keen
As in the past it may have been;
Still I can hear my Saviour say
In whisper soft, "This is the way."**

**The outward man, do what I can
To lengthen out life's little span,
Shall perish and return to dust,
As everything in nature must.**

**The inward man, the Scriptures say,
Is growing stronger every day,
So how can I be growing old
While safe within my Saviour's fold?**

**E're long my soul shall fly away,
And leave this tenement of clay.
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise
To seize the "everlasting prize".
I'll meet you on the streets of gold
And prove that I'm not growing old!**

— John E. Roberts

**"For we know that if our earthly house
of this tabernacle were dissolved, we
have a building of God, an house not
made with hands, eternal in the heav-
ens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).**



A Gift From God

Gary C. Hampton

Before anyone can do a truly effective job in rearing children, he must realize that they are a special gift from God. The Psalmist sang, *"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate"* (Psalm 127:3-5).

Since children are from God, we, as parents should not try to

mold our children in our own image or force them to yield to our plan for their lives. Instead, we need to remember what Moses wrote about man's creation. *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"* (Genesis 1:27).

Each child needs to be loved and to know that he is valuable to someone just the way he is. As long as he is living in accordance with the Lord's will, he should not be put down for choosing a particular life's

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work, or refusing to follow any man's plan for his life.

When Hezekiah was told by Isaiah that God said he was going to die, the king prayed God would remember the way he had lived and let him live longer. God spared his life and the king wrote a poem expressing his thanks. In part, he indicated he would use his life to praise God, and said, "*The father shall make known Your truth to the children*" (Isaiah 38:19).

If we would praise God, we must teach our children God's truth, realizing they came from Him in the first place. Our goal should be to "*bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). In our homes, God's Word should serve as the lamp to guide us down life's path (Psalm 119:105). †

Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Central congregation in Valdosta, Georgia, U.S.A.

True Lessons from a Peach Tree Limb

My father's words were very few;
He never raised his voice to chide
But told me why it was my due
Before he switched my youthful hide.

He taught respect and right from wrong
And if my lips bespoke a slur
It did not take him very long
To teach me how to say, "Yes, sir!"

He never heard of Dr. Spock,
Convinced a switch was Heaven's rule,
In these bold words he took great stock:
"Correction's rod will cure a fool."

My grandson, now, gets by with that
Which good ole Dad would not abide.
Perhaps he'd not be such a brat
If Dad were here to switch his hide.

— John H. Erwin

The rearing of children is probably the most difficult task on the face of this earth. All of us desperately want our children to turn out right. I certainly do not claim to have all the answers. As a matter of fact, the older I get, the less I know. However, I want to make some suggestions in this article that I hope will help all of us in bringing up our children.

tance of work.

4. Impress upon your children's minds the fact that making character is more important than making money. Paul said, "... *Provide things honest in the sight of all men*" (Romans 12:17). We must teach our children the importance of integrity.

5. Realize the importance of

How To Bring Up Children

Ken Tyler

1. Make home the brightest and most attractive place possible. When children grow up in a good, happy atmosphere, they have an excellent chance of becoming good, happy individuals.

2. Spend time with your children. Many children are being literally starved for affection because their mama and daddy do not take time for them. Too often children know their babysitters better than their own parents. Our children need us! They will soon be gone, and then we will have all the time we need for ourselves and other interests.

3. Make your children responsible for a limited number of duties at home. This will teach them responsibility and the impor-

example. The power of example is the greatest influence we have on our children. If you want your children to be like Christ, then live Christ before them.

As parents, our task is difficult but certainly it is not impossible. With God's help, we can properly rear our children. It takes a lot of prayer, wisdom, and effort. May we never forget, "*... children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them . . .*" Psalm 127:3-5). †

Ken Tyler preaches for the Lord's church in Arab, Alabama, U.S.A.

Wrongs Righted and Divorces Cancelled

Dayton Keesee

Hurting homes can be helped. Pains and pressures need not prevail. Agitations and aggravations can be conquered. **Divorces need not be declared!** After all, marriage came from the Master Planner (Genesis 2:18-24), and and it is a good thing which He designed to be enjoyed in human relationships. His plan and plea are *"enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given you under the sun, for this is your reward in life"* (Ecclesiastes 9:9). Only devilish deception would distort God's design.

All couples need to get His facts in focus so they can reap the rewards of His revelation about relationships. Perry Tanksley's poem helps us get that focus:



Kids Need Both Parents

In suit for their divorce,
They nor the judge could smile,
For both sought custody
Of their one cherished
child.

"You both deserve the
child,"
The kindly judge
replied,
"And since the lad is here
We'll let him decide."

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

He said, "Son, you must choose
The parent you prefer;"
The boy cried innocently,
"Oh, I'll take both, kind sir."

Through this they saw themselves
As vain and cruel, of course;
And they were so ashamed
They cancelled their divorce.

Is this another case, as the prophet pronounced it, where "*a little child shall lead them*" (Isaiah 11:6)? Carnal conduct can be corrected, and the child, the family, and the home are worth the necessary adjustments to achieve it! Any situation can be made immeasurably better if there is the desire and commitment to make it better.

Before you add sorrow to the scene, pain to the premises, hurt to the home, just remember — God designed marriage, the home, and the family for better purposes than that. Home is a caring and a sharing place, a happiness and a hope by heaven's design (Psalm 127:3-5). Let us be enriched by it, not rob ourselves and loved ones of its blessing!

If you will only "*walk in His ways*," the divine promise is, "*You will be happy and it will be well with you.*" (Read carefully Psalm 128:1-4). Help your home find its God-intended happiness! †

Dayton Keesee preaches for the Eastside congregation in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

When to Teach Your Child

Before your child
has come to seven,
Teach him well the
way to heaven!
Better still, the truth
will thrive
If he knows it when
he's five!

Better yet, if at your
knee
He learns when he
is only three!
Best of all if you've
begun
To teach of Jesus
ere he's one!

— Author unknown

**We increase our *ability,*
stability, responsibility
when we increase our
sense of *accountability*
to God.**

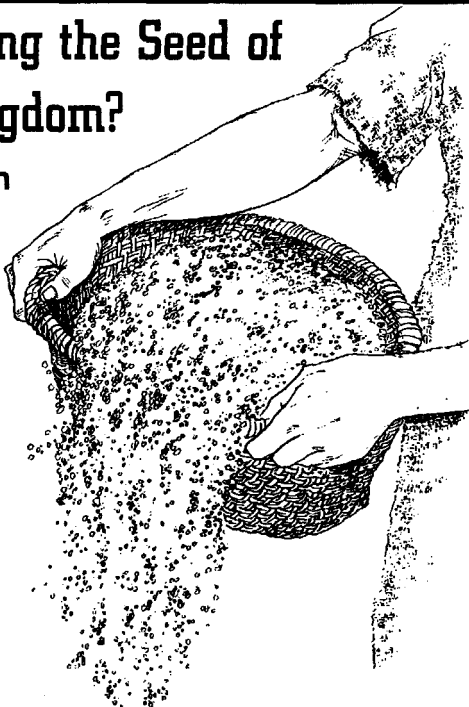
Are You Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom?

Maxie B. Boren

Jesus taught that the "seed" of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). When that "seed" is planted in good and honest human hearts, it will produce fruit to God's glory. God's Word will not return to Him void, but will accomplish that for which it was intended (Isaiah 55:11; consider also such scriptures as James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23).

The question that disturbs me is this — "Is the church today really busy sowing the seed?" Since the church is comprised of individuals, it must be asked of each one — "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom?" Countless numbers of professed Christians, answering truthfully, would be forced to admit, "No, I'm too busy with other things. I haven't found time, or taken the time, to be a sower."

I implore my brethren everywhere, let us seek **first** the kingdom of God and start planting the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of loved ones, friends, and acquaintances.



The matter is urgent, because where people will spend eternity is in the balance!

You can be assured the devil is busy sowing "tares"! And too many members of the church are "sleeping" while he does it (read Matthew 13:24-30,36-43)! What a tragedy! Woe, woe, woe at the judgment for the devil and his helpers, but what about those who "slept?" We need to read Ephesians 5:14! †

Maxie B. Boren preaches for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, U.S.A.



A Simple Method of Teaching the Lost

Jack Harriman

When I have opportunity to study with someone who believes the basics but has not understood and obeyed the Gospel, I follow this four step plan:

First, I establish the fact that we live under the New Testament and not the Old Testament, and I deal with the significance of that fact. The Old Testament was a covenant made exclusively between God and the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Psalm 147:19,20). The Gentile world was never under this covenant, and the Jewish world, since the death of Jesus, is no longer under it. So, we must get our instruction from the New Testament.

Second, I establish a common-sense approach to Bible study. This involves two things. (1) All the facts must be gathered. For example: When the guards came to arrest

Jesus, Mark says that one of those who stood by drew a sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Matthew informs us that it was a disciple of Jesus who used the sword. Luke says it was the right ear that was amputated. John identifies the swordsman as Peter and the victim as Malchus. (2) The student must reason accurately from all the facts. Any Bible subject must be approached in this way.

Third, by studying the Great Commission accounts, I apply all of this to the question of how and when one becomes a saved person. Matthew says one is to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (28:19). Mark says that one must believe and be baptized to be saved (16:16). Luke adds repentance and remission of sins (24:46). So, one becomes a saved person when he hears the Gospel and

believes it, repents of past sins, and is baptized for the remission of sins.

Fourth, I confirm this conclusion by a brief study of Acts 2. Those people heard the Gospel and believed it (verses 14-37). When they asked what else they should do, they were told to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins (verse 38).

I emphasize two things about believing, repenting, and being baptized. *First*, this stands together as a unit. Not one of these can be omitted and still result in the remission of sins. *Second*, there is a logical progression from faith to repentance to baptism to salvation — a progression that has been distorted by some of our religious neighbors.

Question? Where are you in your obedience? †

Jack Harriman works with the Center Street congregation in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U.S.A.

The Keys to Salvation

Hear the Gospel	Romans 10:17
Believe the Gospel	John 3:16
Repent of your sins	Luke 13:3
Confess Christ	Matthew 10:32
Be Baptized	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
Live faithfully	Revelation 2:10

What to Expect When You Visit a Worship Assembly of the Church of Christ

● When you visit us, you will be our respected guests. Even though we may differ in some things, we will always strive to be kind and courteous.

● All of our worship is simple, and may be entered into by any who are present. The music is composed of simple songs, and everyone is invited to sing. We partake of the Communion Supper each week. Our prayers are fervent appeals to God. The sermons are Christ-centered and Bible filled, designed to teach and uplift those who are present. Visitors are not expected to make a monetary contribution.

● The services are not intended to embarrass you, but rather to praise God and to teach the Bible to all who come. *Please visit with us.*



Send the Light

Jerry A. Jenkins

I cannot remember the first time I heard the song, "Send the Light." In all probability it was in the little white-framed church building on eighth avenue in West Huntsville. Through the centuries the song has been sung often. In recent years some have substituted the words, "bring the light," or "be the light."

The song, as you know, is based on a vision which Paul had, as recorded in Acts: *"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us"* (Acts 16:9). Paul had actually started on his second missionary journey, hoping to travel from Antioch into Bithynia, continuing his work in Asia Minor, but he was forbidden

by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was never disobedient to such instructions. After all, he was in the hands of God. When one door closed, Paul gladly turned and walked through whatever door was open. Following that example, when doors close in our lives, we should continue forward in faith, looking for others God has opened for us.

Responding to the vision, Paul moved into another continent, Europe. His first experiences in this new land might have appeared to have little potential. He met with a group of women at the riverside on a Saturday morning. Some might have felt that such a small group would not merit their time, but not so with Paul. These few women on a Saturday would change the course

of history. Learning from this event, we should never refuse to teach small groups. Attitudes of unwillingness or hesitancy show a need for us to study again the opportunity of little things.

Paul's second major experience in this new land resulted in being beaten and jailed. But Paul did not give up, and out of his efforts the church was begun and spread throughout Europe. We must remember that preaching the Gospel is essential, in spite of difficulties. Our first commitment is to teaching the lost. **Nothing** must interfere with this.

What was Paul's attitude toward this missionary journey? *"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 14:27). Note especially the phrase, *"all that God had done with them."*

Thinking of the work before us will keep us humble. Do not work to become the biggest or the most successful. As individuals and as congregations, we need to be motivated, not by how big or successful we are, but we need to live every day with a "lost world" disturbance. †

**Jerry Jenkins is the preacher for the
Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ in
Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A.**

Christianity: the Better Way

It means salvation.

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9).

It rids us of the old sinful life.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God can work through the life of a Christian.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Christians enjoy the peace of God.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. . ." (John 14:27).

—Charles Box

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Have you reflected on the fact that great leadership was a key part of every significant period in the Bible? The godly men who guided Israel and the early church determined the character of their age. God utilized their leadership as the primary means to achieve His spiritual objective.

If you think about it, each great generation of major spiritual progress is associated with an exceptional leader. That leader's name is still a familiar, often-used, "household word" among Christians.

Moses, the "*meekest man on earth*" (Numbers 12:3), was one of God's greatest leaders in perhaps the most difficult time in Bible history. Moses led the most unspiritual, ignorant, faithless, selfish group God probably has ever had.

Joshua, one of only three men who had total faith in God's power and ability to keep His promise (Numbers 14:1-10), provided leadership in one of Israel's few faith-filled, godly generations (Judges 2:7-10).

David, the man who revered God with life itself (1

*Be
Challenged!*

**Be
Excited!**

David Chadwell



CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Samuel 17:23-26), the man who twice refused to kill Saul because God made Saul king (1 Samuel 24:3-7; 26:5-12), led Israel to its summit of devotion to God.

Peter, whose enormous personal spiritual failure of denying Jesus taught him to place faith in Jesus instead of himself (Luke 22:55-62), provided powerful leadership for Jewish Christians as the church began.

Paul, the converted violent persecutor of Christians and denouncer of Jesus (Acts 26:8-11), provided the effective leadership that transformed the church from a Jewish movement to a world movement.

It is sobering to realize that Israel's periods of great spiritual decline coincided with dismal leadership. (Because the New

Testament records less than 70 years of the church's existence, there is too little time for the same problem to appear.) There were great spokesmen for God in Israel's periods of ungodliness (**Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah**), but no great leaders.

We face the greatest problems and challenges of this modern age right now. Great crises and great opportunity always walk hand in hand. Moses (the deliverance of slaves), Joshua (a war of conquest), David (a nation in decline), Peter (the powerful, organized Jewish resistance led by the influential Pharisees), and Paul (a hostile pagan world and government) prove that. †

David Chadwell is a gospel preacher in Oxford, Mississippi, U.S.A.

- ✓ "That's too hard. I can't do it."
- ✓ "No one would listen to me."
- ✓ "I am afraid."
- ✓ "I am not strong enough to withstand that kind of challenge."
- ✓ "God didn't give me the talent to do that."
- ✓ "Nobody is interested in spiritual things anymore."
- ✓ "We can't win. There are too many scum bags out there working day and night to take over."

A negative spirit is Satan's strongest weapon.

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter twelve.

1. Six days before the _____, Jesus came to _____ where _____ was. (V. 1)
2. Who served at the supper? (V. 2)
3. What did Mary do? (V. 3)
4. What objection was made by Judas Iscariot? (V. 5)
5. Jesus said, "_____"; _____
_____." (V. 7)
6. What did the chief priests plot to do? (V. 10)
Why? (V. 11)
7. As Jesus was entering Jerusalem, what did the people do? (V. 12, 13)
8. Jesus rode on a young donkey. This was the fulfillment of a prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 which said, "_____, _____
_____"; Behold, _____ is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt." (V. 15)
9. The Pharisees said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, _____!" (V. 19)
10. Jesus, knowing that He was soon to die, said, "Now My soul is _____, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But _____
_____. Father, _____ name." (V. 27)
11. What did the voice from heaven say? (V. 28)
12. Jesus said, "And I, _____,
_____." (V. 32)
13. Though many, even among the rulers, believed in Jesus, why did they not confess Him as the Messiah? (V. 42, 43)
14. "He who rejects _____, and does not receive _____,
_____.
_____." (V. 48)
15. Whose message did Jesus speak? (V. 50)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

A Good Christian?

Dalton Key

I have a good friend. She doesn't drink alcohol or abuse her body with tobacco. She doesn't destroy her mind and life through illicit drugs. I've never heard her gossip or tell a single lie. She doesn't waste her time in night clubs or dance halls. I can't recall ever hearing her speak with profanity or vulgarity. And she's never cheated a soul in a business deal. Many people would call my friend a "good Christian."

And yet you ought to know that I have been describing my dog, Paisley!

We must learn that being a Christian involves more than merely *not* doing evil. Being a Christian concerns submission to Christ, living by faith, and doing good, as well.

Christ taught, *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"* (Luke 9:23). Complete and total submission to Christ is essential if we would be called by His name.

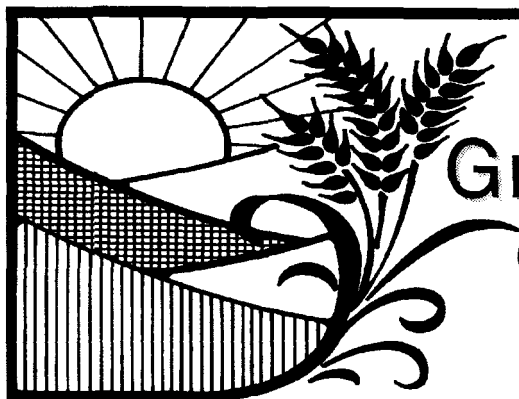
The world holds many good and honest souls who are not maliciously engaged in the blackest of evils. Many of these good, moral citizens are our neighbors, our friends, our relatives. They may, in some cases, be more moral than some nominal members of the church.

But they are not, by virtue of their upstanding life-styles, to be confused with "good Christians." Not until one comes to Christ and obeys the Gospel is he *a Christian*. No man can live a pure enough life to save himself, and there is still no other name to save us but the name of Christ (Acts 4:12).

Remember, there is a world of difference between my dog and a "good Christian." †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, U.S.A.

**Jesus Christ is the one way into the church
and the one way out of the sinful world.**



The Greatness of Life

Sunny David

The greatness of life does not lie in earthly possessions or in the wisdom of man or in the power of man. Whatsoever is on earth, even the existence of our physical life, is of a temporary nature, and is for a short time. Man, however mighty and powerful he might think himself to be, must acknowledge these facts about life written by the inspiration of the Spirit of God: *"Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue"* (Job 14:1,2). *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away"* (James 4:13,14). Christ taught, *"Take heed and beware of cov-*

etousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

From an earthly or physical standpoint, the above statements are most true about all humans. But from heaven's spiritual perspective, the greatness of man's life is seen in the fact that he was created by God in the beginning in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26,27). Thus, man is a spiritual being, a partaker of immortality, as a gift from God. His existence cannot be ended by any explosive force, or even by death. The greatness of man's life, therefore, lies in the very fact that, like his Creator, he too shall ever live, being the offspring of God (Acts 17:29).

But where does man exist? At the time of his creation, he was pure and holy, without sin, like God. He was in fellowship with God. But because of his disobedience, man, by his own choice and against the

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will of God, separated himself from his Creator. One of the saddest passages of the Bible is found in Romans 3:23, where we read, *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."* Man was created to glorify God, but because he sinned he made himself unworthy of God's glory. Now being separated from Him because of sin, humans live under spiritual sentence. Man will always exist, but *with his sin*. Even after he departs from this world, he will continue to live, but eternally separated from God. The Bible describes that state as "hell."

Since God knows the greatness of man's life and his eternal value, He did not spare even Himself in His efforts to restore lost humanity. In Christ Jesus He came down on earth, and look what God did to save man from sin, and consequently from hell:

"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would

even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Through partaking of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, man can again become worthy of God's glory and live with Him in heaven forever. As we follow His steps, becoming obedient children of God, we make Christ our example in daily life and carefully obey those things He has commanded us to do in His New Testament of the Bible. We surely know, then, that when our temporary existence on earth is over we will inherit that which is incorruptible and undefiled, which does not fade away: the eternal life of love, joy, and peace, in heaven with our Creator God (1 Peter 1:3,4).

Isn't life great, looking at it from heaven's standpoint? Heaven — not wealth or fame or earth's accumulations — should be life's greatest objective. We should do everything God requires of us so that we may inherit the eternal life of heaven, just as God has done everything for us to make us worthy of living in His presence eternally. †

Sunny David lives in New Delhi, and is a radio evangelist for much of India.

Your Sins Will Find You Out

Owen Cosgrove

Recently we saw the news story of a man who killed his wife over thirty years ago. He fled to a large distant city, changed his name, married another woman, and by her reared a family.

Some minor incident brought him in contact with the police, and he was fingerprinted. A few days later a computer matched his fingerprints with those found at the murder scene over thirty years before, and the man was arrested.

Mark Twain's story about Puddin' Head Wilson was a harbinger of the art of fingerprinting. In 1901, Sir Edward R. Henry of Scotland Yard devised a system of classifying and indexing fingerprints. Now the mathematical probability for positive identification where one fingerprint matches another in twelve comparative points is sixty-four billion to one. With ten fingers and thumbs to work with, the odds are astronomical.

But there is something even more certain than the science of fingerprinting in declaring and establishing guilt, and that is the all-seeing eye of God. *"We are naked and open before Him with Whom we have to do"* (Hebrews 4:13).

Hundreds of examples in the Old Testament prove abundantly that God knows the secrets of men (Romans 2:16). Moses warned the Israelites emphatically, *"... be sure, your sins will find you out"* (Numbers 32:23).

This is why man needs to have his sins remitted (Acts 2:38), blotted out (Acts 3:19), and washed away (Acts 22:16). No amount of fleeing, hiding, rationalizing, or lying will remove them. They must be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 1:7).

Modern religionists work hard to help people remove guilt feelings, but the Lord emphasizes first removing GUILT. To *remove guilt* feelings without removing *guilt* is to be like the man who fled to another state to avoid punishment. The guilt remained and the records finally caught up with him.

That is why the Gospel is the "good news." It removes not only the shame and the guilt, but the eternal punishment that sin brings. Thank God for His unspeakable gift in Christ and for the forgiveness of sins through Him! †

Owen Cosgrove is a writer and preacher living in Waxahachie, Texas, U.S.A.

"I Have Sinned"

Cecil May, Jr.

"I have sinned." Everyone can say that. *"If we say we have not sinned, we make him (God) a liar, and his truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:10). *"All have sinned"* (Romans 3:23). It is a worthy thing to say. *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy"* (Proverbs 28:13).

Not everyone who says, "I have sinned," however, says it from a penitent heart. King Saul said it more frequently than anyone else in the Bible, except David. But he was rejected. Pharaoh made a noble statement. *"I have sinned this time. The Lord is righteous, I and my people are wicked"* (Exodus 9:27). But Moses replied, *"I know that you will not yet fear the Lord God"* (Exodus 9:30). Sure enough, *"And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more and hardened his heart"* (Exodus 9:34).

It is still done. "Yeah, preacher, I know I ought to come to church more," but he doesn't, and doesn't

even intend to when he says it. "This habit's got the best of me. I know it's wrong and I really ought to quit it." But she doesn't. "The way the Lord has blessed me, I ought to be more generous and give more." But instead, he obligates himself for more monthly payments for more things. "I'm too easy to fly off the handle and hurt people's feelings," and so he or she continues on and on.

As the proverb shows, the godly alternative to covering sin is confessing and forsaking.

David said, *"I have sinned against the Lord,"* as he recognized his sin and himself in Nathan's parable (2 Samuel 12:13). In the Psalms he often confessed his sin, proclaimed his contriteness, and acknowledged his debt to God. *"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in thy sight"* (Psalm 51:3,4). *"When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin"* (Psalm 32:3,5). David felt true remorse, acknowledged his sin to God without excuse, and turned his heart to follow after righteousness. Therefore,

he is a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

Neither to boast of continuing in sin, nor to wallow in it as a pig enjoys the mud and muck, is to confess sin. Some declare what they do in order to glory in their shame. To confess sin is to acknowledge guilt, accept responsibility, and do the will of God.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and he will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). †

Cecil May, Jr. is president of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, U.S.A.

**If you don't want
the fruits of sin,
stay out of the
devil's orchard.
"Abstain from all
appearance of
evil"
(2 Thessalonians 5:22).**

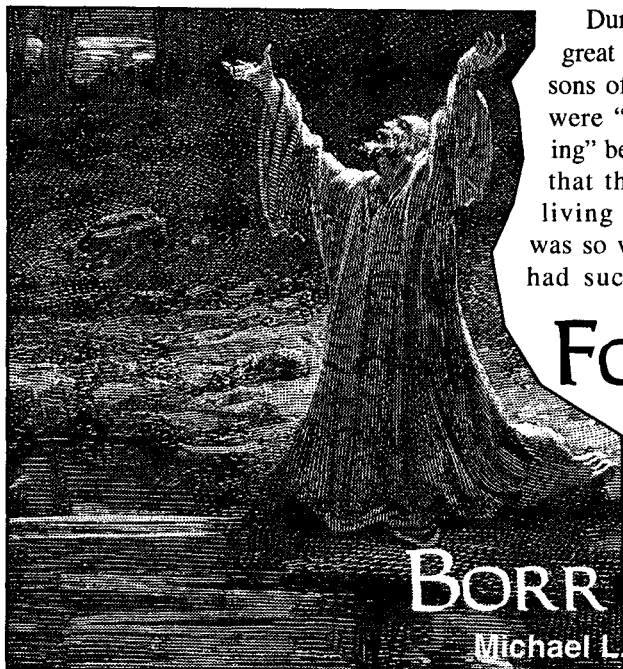
—from "God's Little Instruction Book"
by Honor Books Inc.

A Father's Prayer

Dear God, my little boy of three
Has said his nightly prayer to thee.
Before his eyes were closed
in sleep
He asked that Thou his soul
would keep.
And I, still kneeling at his bed,
My hand upon his tousled head,
Do ask with deep humility
That Thou, dear Lord,
remember me.
Make me, kind Lord,
a worthy dad,
That I may lead this little lad
In pathways ever fair and bright,
That I may keep his steps aright.
O God, his trust must never be
Destroyed or even marred by me.
So for the simple things he prayed
With childish voice so unafraid,
I, trembling, ask the same from
Thee
Dear Lord, kind Lord,
remember me.

—Author Unknown

ALAS, MASTER!



During the days of the great prophet Elisha, the sons of the prophets who were "prophets in training" became so numerous that they outgrew their living quarters. Elisha was so well respected and had such influence that

FOR IT
WAS
BORROWED

Michael L. King

young men were being drawn to the "ministry." He was their mentor in serving the Lord. They requested that they be permitted to move closer to the Jordan, which would allow them easier access to water and to enlarge their dwelling place. Each man cut a beam with his own hands to build a log house of sorts. One worker, while "felling a beam," had his axe head to fall into the water. He was greatly perplexed and cried to Elisha, "*Alas, master! for it was borrowed*" (2 Kings 6:1-7).

He evidently sought the axe head in vain. The writer, Jarchi, gave stress to the significance of it being borrowed, with the thought that the son of the prophets may have had nothing with which to repay it. Elisha was summoned, and upon his arrival he inquired as to the place where the item had been lost. The laborer had confidence in his "master" for he had, on a previous occasion, thrown salt into a poisonous spring, making it "healed"

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(2 Kings 2:19-22). In this new emergency Elisha cut a stick and cast it into the water, causing the iron to "swim". The laborer was instructed to put forth his hand and take hold of the axe, which he did.

There is a striking similarity between this Old Testament happening and the care and custody of one's soul today. *"Know yet not . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price"* (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). We have been assigned the awesome task of being the caretaker and curator of our soul, a borrowed commodity, and it must be returned to God (1 Corinthians 15:35-55). When man fully realizes that that which is within his earthly control is of God and has eternal value, he will be cautious and protective of it. He could never repay, should it be lost (Matthew 16:26)! Only the "Master" has the wherewithal to *"seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

Similar to the seeking of the lost axe head, God, our Master, cast not a stick, but His Son, into a world of darkness and turbulence to "find a wretch like me." The miracle performed by the prophet was not the casting of the stick, for that could have been done by most any man. The wonder of it all rests in the rising of the iron, which is an overriding of nature's dictates. It was not so startling for Jesus to be

thrown into a world of sin and to die outstretched on a Roman cross, for this was a common occurrence. The amazement came when He, like the iron, rose to provide usefulness and continuance for mankind.

When we were helpless and hopeless, Christ was introduced to our frustrating dilemma of alienation, separation, and simply being lost (Isaiah 59:2). When the "Master" raised Him from the darkness of death, after having *"become sin for us"* (2 Corinthians 5:21), allowance was then made for us to also be raised to usefulness, in spite of our having fallen into sin.

Jesus was plunged beneath the earth in burial, but was victoriously raised to serve in continuum as Redeemer, Advocate, Mediator, and Savior (Hebrews 9:12; 1 John 2:1; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 4:14). There is a similitude between Christ being the *"Branch of David"* (Jeremiah 33:15) who was cast into the world, and the stick which was cast into the stream. We were lost due to our own carelessness and estranged from God with all of our potential apparently wasted (Isaiah 59:2; James 1:12-15), *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"* (Romans 5:8,9). The Master

stepped in to salvage a lost valuable.

The Romans were promised that if they would allow themselves to be plunged (baptized) into a grave of water as Christ was buried, that they could also be raised in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:4-11). Just as the non-miraculous casting of the stick into the water, baptism performs no miracle, the raising of *"that which was borrowed,"* being our souls, is indeed a phenomenon of the ages!

The laborer was instructed to *"Take it up. And he put forth his hand and took it"* (2 Kings 6:7). Salvation is available to *"whosoever will come and take of the water of life freely"* (Revelation 22:17). We are saved by grace, which is obtained by our reaching out and accepting it through faith (Ephesians 2:8), thus *"laying hold on eternal life"* (1 Timothy 6:12). That which we have lost, spiritually speaking, can be retrieved only by the Master (John 14:6). The Master has availed Himself, the branch has been cast, and the lost empowered to be raised. Salvation of souls *"hath appeared unto all men"* (Titus 2:11). *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"* (Hebrews 2:3). †

Michael L. King preaches for the Grant Street Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama, U.S.A.

God Taking Care

Because I know that I want to be God's child and I want to please Him, I trust my life and my soul into His hands. He has promised that He will take care, that all things will work together for my good because I love Him and want to obey Him.

With that trust, when the way is easy I know that God overrules and that all is well. When the way is not easy and the chapter has so many dark pages, I can know one of two things: either I have been disobedient to God and I have brought about my own troubles from which He will rescue me if I turn to Him; or the seemingly dark days are necessary to teach a lesson or to bring about some good thing that could be accomplished in no other way.

So if I try to walk close to Him I can know that I live under His care and protection, through the easy days and the difficult days. And, understanding that there is purpose in *all* the days and that my life is under His control, I can live each day in faith.

— Betty Burton Choate
Windows of the Soul

The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Tim Nichols

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

We see in the first two verses of Hebrews chapter 12 a clear admonition to remove from our lives those things that would keep us from being faithful servants of God. The inspired writer of Hebrews uses the figure of preparing for a race and running that race. He has just shown us that many have run this race before us and finished the course. They were all people of faith who obeyed God in the face of terrible consequences. Abel, by faith, offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (11:4). Enoch was translated not to see death (11:5). Noah prepared an ark (11:7). Abraham and Sarah went where God said to go and did what God said to do. Abraham obeyed the voice of God in offering his only son as an offering to God because he believed that God could raise him up again (11:8-12,17-19). Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David, Samuel, and the prophets of God acted in faith. They believed God and were willing to act upon their belief by obeying Him.

What did they have to endure? At what cost did they obey God? Moses faced the wrath of the king of Egypt and his mighty army (11:27). Some were tortured. Some were cruelly mocked and scourged. Some were imprisoned. Some were stoned. Some were sawn asunder. Some were slain with the sword. Some were destitute, afflicted, and tormented. They wandered in deserts, mountains, dens, and caves (11:36-38).

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What did they accomplish for God's cause? Noah saved his house and, in effect, the human race. Abraham became the ancestor of the Christ. Joseph was used to save God's people from death by famine. Moses was the instrument God used to rescue His people from destruction in Egypt. Rahab saved the spies who had entered Jericho. Among the faithful of God some had subdued kingdoms, done righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and escaped the edge of the sword (11:33,34). Otherwise weak men were strengthened by God to wax valiant in fight and to turn to flight the armies of the aliens (11:34). Women received their dead raised to life again (11:35).

How did they accomplish these things? **By Faith.** Why did they endure these things, to be used by God to accomplish these things? **Because they were looking beyond their short lives to the promises of God.** Abraham *"looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (11:10). Moses saw the invisible God and considered the reproach of Christ to be worth far more than the treasures of Egypt (11:24-27). They all *"died in faith,"* having seen the promises *"afar off"* (11:13-16). Some, in the face of torture, would not renounce the cause of God to save their own physical lives *"that they might obtain a better resurrection"* (11:35).

The record of their lives, their faith, their sacrifices, and their accomplishments is given to provide us with examples to follow in our own lives as we run the race. Their true stories are for our benefit (Romans 15:4). The lives of these great people bear witness to the fact that the race **can** be run. Their examples shout to us that it **can** be done and that **we** can do it — in spite of our weaknesses. Trust God as they trusted. Obey God no matter what the consequences. The reward that awaits us in heaven is a hope worthy of dying to obtain. Like those who cheer us on in an earthly race multiplied a thousand times, their examples shout to us that **we can do it!**

Even with the encouragement that comes from the lives of these great people, and even with the God of heaven offering to guide our every step, we must run willingly. We must prepare ourselves and keep ourselves in proper condition. Let's hear and heed God's instruction concerning what we are to carry with us and what we are to discard as we run. Let's keep our eyes upon the One who has laid out the course for us, who has run before us, and who is waiting to receive us at the finish line — Jesus Christ. †

Tim Nichols is a preacher/author working with the church of Christ in Keyser, West Virginia, U.S.A.

Why Be Baptized for the Dead?

Mack Lyon

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" (1 Corinthians 15:29).

The doctrine of baptizing for the dead (proxy baptism) comes from a misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 15:29, which says, *"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"* Taken apart from the remainder of the chapter, it seems to have some merit, doesn't it? But let us consider it in context and see what it is saying.

The subject of 1 Corinthians 15 is the resurrection of the dead. While the Jews were familiar with the idea of a resurrection, to the Greeks the thought was not only new, but it was repulsive and repugnant. Since many in the Corinthian church were from the Greek culture, they had a problem accepting the doctrine of the resurrection.

So, in the first section (verses 1-11), Paul offers an abundance of proof of the Lord's resurrection.

First, it is *"according to the Scriptures."* Secondly, there are more than 500 witnesses who saw Him after He rose, some of whom were still living, and some whom Paul called by name, and last of all, He was seen of Paul himself.

The second division (verses 12-19) is proof that dead bodies are resurrected. If not, how could they account for the resurrection of Christ's body? Paul's argument is irrefutable. Christ's body was raised; he had proven that beyond doubt. Therefore, it must follow that the dead are raised.

The third division (verses 20-28) is a discussion of the time and circumstances surrounding the general resurrection. But notice in verse 20 the absolute certainty with which Paul speaks of Christ's resurrection and ours: *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."*

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In the fourth division (verses 29-34) Paul speaks of some practical advantages of such faith. (1) It gives meaning to our baptism (Romans 6:3,4). If dead bodies are not raised, why are we then baptized for them or with this hope for them (verse 29)? Peter also makes it clear that in baptism we are saved *"by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:21). (2) The resurrection gives purpose to sacrificial service in living for Christ. (3) It shows the folly of materialism. In view of such hope, they are foolish who say, *"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"* (4) It gives reason for avoiding bad company, because *"Evil communications corrupt good manners."*

In the fifth division (verses 35-49) he answers the question all of us must have asked at some time, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" You see, dear reader, it is the resurrection of bodies that is under discussion. Just like the grain we sow is given a new and glorious body when it is raised, the natural body we bury in the grave is also changed and given a more glorious spiritual body, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the spiritual kingdom. Why marvel? There are different kinds of bodies even in this life.

And, last of all (verses 50-58), he speaks of the final victory

Christians have over death and the grave through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we ought always to be steadfast, unmovable in our faith, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. See how he says, *"Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*

In its context, verse 29 says nothing about being baptized in behalf of people who died without baptism, does it? It is a perversion of God's Word to take a statement of His out of context to force it to mean something He never said or intended to say. †

Mack Lyon lives in Edmond, Oklahoma, U.S.A. and is the speaker for the television program *In SEARCH of the Lord's Way*.



The "RE's"

In faith

*renew,
reaffirm,
rejoice.*

Repeat,

Amen, Amen.

— Brunice C.
Cole, Jr.



Defining Spirituality

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

"Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

What ideas come into your mind when "spirituality" is mentioned? Saying "Amen"? Loud singing? Long prayers? A good feeling?

The fact is: minds are confused about spirituality. Most define it in terms of subjectivity.

Paul described three categories of people:

1. The **natural** man (1 Corinthians 2:14), who is one of natural understanding.
2. The **carnal** man (1 Corinthians 3:1,2), who is the Christian who behaves like the natural man.
3. The **spiritual** man (Romans 8:2), who walks after and minds the things of the Spirit.

To the Galatians Paul defines the spiritual in terms of attitudes and actions. The attitudes are called "fruits of the spirit" and nine are listed (Galatians 5:22,23). The Spirit in one's life will be manifest by joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. In the same context, the writer defines nine actions of "one who is spiritual" (Galatians 6:1).

1. **He will seek to restore the brother or sister who has been overtaken.** He does it meekly, not with arrogance. **Have you tried to restore a wayward brother?**

2. **He will bear another's burden** (verse 2). There are so many burdens of all kinds. We need to listen, comfort, and encourage. **Have you helped a brother bear his burden?**

3. **He will not think of himself too highly** (verse 3). He or she is not deceived about one's own strength. False pride is inconsistent with spirituality. **Are you humble?**

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4. **He is open and honest about his contribution to God** (verse 4). He examines his life and is too busy correcting his own imperfections to criticize others. **Have you taken personal inventory today?**

5. **He accepts responsibility for his own actions** (verse 5). He does not blame others. He does not expect others to do his visiting, soul-winning, and evangelism. **Do you sense a personal responsibility?**

6. **He gladly supports those who bring him the truth** (verse 6). The elder-shepherds are esteemed. Those who teach and preach are morally and spiritually supported. He never resents being challenged to support the Gospel around the world. **Have you expressed appreciation to those who teach you in the Lord?**

7. **He understands the principle of sowing and reaping** (verse 7). God rewards service in kind. Sowing to the Spirit brings life. **Are you sowing to the spirit?**

8. **He never gives up** (verse 9). He is not on and off, hot and cold — but perseveres! He does not change with the wind. **Are you steadfast?**

9. **He seizes opportunity to do good** (verse 10). He does good toward all — just and unjust; saved and unsaved. His kindness toward others opens the way for truth to enter hearts. **Are you doing good toward others?**

Attitudes of the Spirit in the heart will manifest actions of the Spirit in life. Now, do you better understand spirituality? †

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. preaches for the Walnut Street Church of Christ in Dickson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

It is told that one snowy day, a General was out walking with his son. Soon the General noticed that his son was doing his best to walk in his tracks in the snow.

Said the General to some friends later: "When I saw this I said to myself that it behooves me to walk very straight when this fellow is already following in my tracks!"



Two lawyers were best friends. Much to the amazement of one, the other became a Sunday School teacher. His friend fumed, "I bet you don't even know the Lord's Prayer." The other replied, "Everybody knows that. It's 'Now I lay me down to sleep . . .'"

"Alright, alright, you win," said the other, admiringly. "I had no idea you knew so much about the Bible."

They say that it is better to be poor and happy than rich and miserable. But couldn't something be worked out, such as being moderately rich and slightly moody?

Probably the man who said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous

thing" was right. That could be true in a special way concerning the Bible. A man was asked his favorite part of the Bible, and he replied that he guessed it was the parable about the one who loafs and fishes.

Little five year old Jimmy was very proud of the fact that he could say his prayers by himself without any coaching. This didn't stop his parents from checking up on him, however, to see that he didn't forget anything.

One night, while listening at the bedroom door, they heard him add one or two thoughts of his own. He had just finished his "God bless Mom . . . God bless Dad . . . God bless Grandma," and normally would have hopped right into bed.

This particular night, however, he stayed on his knees a moment longer. Finally, he looked up and said earnestly, "And please take care of yourself, God, 'cause if anything happens to You, we're all sunk."

BULLETIN BLOOPER:

"Our church will have a seminar titled, **WINNING OVER WORRY**. Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help."

PROVERBS 17:22

Reportedly one member of Weightwatchers dropped out after admitting that she hadn't been to a meeting in a month of sundaes.

On the religion page of a local newspaper, there appeared a preacher's announcement of a special church service the following Wednesday. When Wednesday came, the only person to appear for the service was the church janitor, a huge man weighing over three hundred pounds. The following week, the janitor was astonished to see an article on the religion page of the same newspaper saying that "a large and enthusiastic crowd had attended the special Wednesday service." When he protested to the preacher that the report was an out and out lie, the preacher replied, "It was not a lie. You are large, and I am enthusiastic!"

Judge: "Your wife charges that you have not spoken to her in five years. Why is this?"

Defendant: "I didn't want to interrupt."

Proud Father: "My baby looks just like me."

Neighbor: "What do you care, as long as it is healthy?"

SPELL-BOUND

I have a spelling checker.
It came with my PC.
It plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I cannot sea.
I've run this poem threw it,
I'm sure your please too no;
Its letter perfect in it's weighh.
My checker tolled me sew.

WANTED: Good woman to clean, cook fish, dig worms, and owns boat, motor, and trailer. Send photo of boat, motor, and trailer.

A certain preacher is convinced that his preaching is better than heaven. He offers this as his proof: (1) His preaching is better than nothing. (2) Nothing is better than heaven. (3) So, his preaching is better than heaven.

Question to a little boy: "What is a lie?"

His answer: "It is an abomination unto the Lord and a very present help in the time of need."

Wear a smile and have friends,
Wear a frown and have wrinkles.

The man who says he's too old to learn new things probably always was!

Wanted, More Calebs

Bill Dillon

Read Numbers 13:17; 14:10; Joshua 14:6-15. Caleb's finest hour in earlier life was his appointment as one of the group sent to spy out the land of promise. Among the twelve spies sent, ten returned with a message, summarized by someone, as "The Four G's." They spoke of Grapes, Great cities, and Giants in the land, but pictured themselves as Grasshoppers. Caleb's ringing speech to the panic-stricken Is-raelites was ill-received as he opted for immediate possession of the land by the help of God (the "Fifth G," excluded by the faithless ten).

With the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, steadfast heroism has never seen a finer exemplification than when Caleb and Joshua stood before the face of cowards and rebels, who made ready with stones to brutally batter the men of God into silence.

Such a thorough-going servant of the Most High was Caleb, that in later days at the age of eighty-five, he requested Hebron and the hill country as the land was propor-

tioned and distributed. Caleb, after forty years of waiting, had a score to settle with the fierce Anakim, the giants who had terrorized the ten spies. At an age when some men and women are known to shirk their share of responsibility and sacrifice, you would never hear Caleb say, "I pray thee, have me excused," or "let the young people do it—I'm too old."

Brethren, where are the Calebs today when the call goes out for teachers, workers, fighters, toilers, and helpers? In times of tempest blast, the chaff always follows the gale; but where are the Calebs who "wholly follow the Lord" with resolute commitment to the Lord, first, last, and always? Where are the Calebs who need no external excitement, no parade, nor puffery to propel them to greater service? Where are those whose power is of the heart, not of the purse? "One hundred half-hearted Christians aren't worth a single whole-hearted one."

God, send us Calebs! †

Bill Dillon is editor of *Gospel Gleaner* and preaches for the Lord's church in Mountain Home, Arkansas, U.S.A.



A Panoramic View of the Life of Moses

Jane McWhorter



It had been a long and difficult journey over the deserts of the wilderness for approximately forty years as Moses led the Hebrews from the wrath of Pharaoh in Egypt to the borders of the land which God had promised them. Disobedience to a divine command (Numbers 20:8-12) penalized this

leader from actually entering Palestine, but he could view its length and breadth from the lofty position of Mount Nebo. Looking to the southwest, he undoubtedly saw the general area of Egypt. As his eyes moved eastward from the land of his birth, he could not help but see the general vicinity of

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Midian, where he had cared for sheep for forty years as an exile. Northwest of Midian lay the expanse of the Sinai Peninsula, where he had shown courageous leadership and had also felt the frustrations and disappointments of leading a group of people who must have been very discouraging and even disgusting at times.

Many unfortunate circumstances had happened to Moses during his lifetime. As he viewed the panoramic sight, perhaps he was better able to fit the puzzle-parts together and could truly understand how things had eventually worked for good.

It was a tragic environment into which Moses was born. Because the Hebrew slaves had incurred the wrath of the Egyptian rulers, all male babies were ordered to be killed. The edict was cruel. However, if Moses' mother had not been trying to save her baby's life in the little ark, he would never have been noticed by Pharaoh's daughter nor exposed to life at the royal court. Those years spent at the center of the palace undoubtedly left their mark on Moses' leadership qualities and position of influence. His slaying of the Egyptian was a sin, but it precipitated his flight into the desert region, where he was molded in the crucible of Midian. A Hebrew fresh from the ease of Pharaoh's palace

would have been a poor leader during the strenuous physical ordeal of wilderness wanderings. Midian was an excellent training ground for the years which lay ahead. Here Moses grew accustomed to living outside and working with his hands. The days and years of solitude must have given him time to grow closer to God. Perhaps they even gave him an opportunity to remember his mother's early teaching.

Each unfortunate circumstance was a rung in the ladder of Moses' growth, which, in turn, benefited God's people and the history of the Jewish nation. We are not told the thoughts which went through Moses' mind as he looked toward the promised land and contemplated his life, but he was in an excellent position to gain a panorama of understanding.

A number of difficult events have or will come to each of us, but we have the promise that they will all eventually work together for good for the child of God (Romans 8:28). They worked together for the good of Moses and his people. Perhaps he could understand when he reached Mount Nebo. May we all open our eyes and hearts to the overall view and try to understand the same principle. †

Jane McWhorter is a Christian writer and a preacher's wife living in Fayette, Alabama, U.S.A.

Jonah

Frances Parr



"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amitai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me'" (Jonah 1:1,2).

Jonah was a man of God; he feared the one true God of Heaven, the One who had created the sea and the dry land. But Jonah made an unwise decision when he was asked to do something he didn't want to do: he tried to run away.

According to Nahum chapter 3, Nineveh was a large, wicked, and bloody city. Populated with 120,000 souls, it was full of lies, robberies, harlotry, injustice, brutality, murder, and idolatry.

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Instead of going toward Nineveh, as the Lord commanded, Jonah took a ship bound for Tarshish. He paid his fare, boarded, went down to the lowest parts of the ship, and went to sleep. A good place to hide from the Lord? No, indeed!

A terrible storm arose and the ship was in great danger. The sailors had prayed to their various gods, but got no relief from the storm. The captain found Jonah and asked him to pray to his God. Even though the sailors were reluctant, at Jonah's request they threw him overboard. The storm stopped instantly. Jonah put the safety of the ship and crew above his own life, and because of that action, all on board the ship believed, worshipped, and sacrificed to the real God.

Jonah sank. Down and down he went, until his head was wrapped in seaweed and he felt he had departed from life on earth. But God wasn't finished with Jonah; He had prepared a fish to rescue the man. From the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed a beautiful prayer of praise and repentance. From the depths of despair, he knew who would help. Even though Jonah had sinned, God was still there, willing to forgive and provide a way out of Jonah's crisis.

God didn't, however, relieve

Jonah of his task. When the fish vomited Jonah safely onto the shore, God repeated the same words He had said in the beginning. "*Arise, go to Nineveh . . .*"

Nineveh was so large that it took three days to walk across it. When Jonah began his first day's walk, he preached the shortest sermon recorded in the Bible. "*Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown*" (Jonah 3:4). Not many words, but what an effect they had! The people, from the king down to the lowest servant, believed in God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth. They turned from their evil ways. God saw and relented. He did not destroy Nineveh.

Jonah's mission was successful; he should have been pleased. Instead, he was angry. Perhaps he feared that the people of Nineveh would think he was a liar. Jonah wanted to die! He went out of the city, built a shelter, and sat under it. The Lord grew a plant to shade and protect Jonah. The man rejoiced greatly over the plant. However, the next morning God sent a worm to damage the plant so that it withered. The east wind blew and the sun beat down on Jonah's head. He grew faint and said, "*It is better for me to die than to live*" (Jonah 4:8).

God spoke to Jonah as a parent would talk to a child having a tem-

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per tantrum. *"Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"* (Jonah 4:9).

"It is right for me to be angry," said Jonah, *"even to death!"* (Jonah 4:9).

The story of Jonah ends suddenly, leaving many unanswered questions. What happened to him? Did he come to his senses and continue serving the Lord? Were the people of Nineveh truly repentant, and did they continue to worship the true God?

The last verse in Jonah helps the reader to see the people of Nineveh through the eyes of a loving God — as lost, pitiable souls who cannot discern between their right and their left. God's love shows plainly in the story of Jonah.

He loves us even when we disobey and displease Him by our actions. He is ever present, ever caring and available for help if we allow Him to have first place in our hearts and lives.

All people encounter Ninevehs in their lives, and there will be times when we are tempted to act as Jonah did. Remember the words of David in Psalm 139:7-10, *"Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me."* †

Frances Parr is a Christian writer living in Eldon, Missouri, U.S.A.



- ◆ It is impossible for you to influence others to live on a higher level than that on which you live yourself.
- ◆ If you will live right each day, you will be neither afraid of tomorrow nor ashamed of yesterday.
- ◆ It isn't what you have in your pocket that makes you thankful, but what you have in your heart.
- ◆ A man with the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue; he is devoted to God Himself.
- ◆ God's love is *what* we have to tell the world, and God's love is *why* we have to tell the world!

— Selected

Cornelius:

"Now Here We Are"

Jack W. Carter

The story of Cornelius impresses me. It helps me to realize that there are some very outstanding people in this world who are just waiting to truly know the God they have already come to love and desire to serve.

Actually, it's more than a story about Cornelius. Evidently some other people must have been living their religion in such a way as to catch the attention and respect of Cornelius. Through the influence, and perhaps the teaching, of Jews who knew how to love and reach out to others, he somehow came to learn that giving alms to the people was pleasing to the God he desired to serve. And, his resultant faith was strong enough to motivate him to pray "continually."

The most impressive part of the story of Cornelius to me, however, is the way he was able to influence his entire household. This doesn't mean only his wife and children — it means his servants and their fami-

lies, as well. We read that he was *"a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household . . ."* (Acts 10:2). Not just some of his household, not just most of his household — **all** of his household feared God.

When Peter, who had received divine instruction to go to Cornelius, arrived on the scene, Cornelius had already *"called together his relatives and close friends"* (verse 24). Then the statement that I love most is spoken by this devout man, a statement that I wish every family leader of every generation would emulate every time there is an opportunity to learn more about God. *" . . . Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord"* (verse 33).

I love it.



Jack W. Carter preaches for the Lord's church in Castle Rock, Colorado, U.S.A.

Confessing Sins

David Pharr

What about confessing sins? You may have known of some Christian who went forward during an invitation song to confess sins. When is this necessary?

Because of ignorance or weakness you will commit sins. You can grow in strength to resist temptation, but you will never get to the place where you can think there will never be any more sin in your life. But as a Christian, walking in the light, you have assurance of forgiveness (1 John 1:7).

In 1 John 1:9 we read that sins are to be confessed. This verse refers to confessing sins to God. Every time we realize we have done wrong we must confess it to God in genuine repentance. The wonderful promise is made that as soon as we do so, God forgives us. (Keep in mind that this is the way *one who is already a Christian* gets forgiveness. An *alien sinner*, one who has never become a Christian, must be baptized into Christ before he has this privilege.)

But when should sins be confessed to another human being? James 5:16 teaches that we are to confess to one another. When and to what extent is this necessary?

First, recognize that the word confess does not require **revealing** sins to others, but only **acknowledging** them. Some have thought this means to reveal even the intimate thoughts of one's heart, but this is not the meaning.

We ought to confess to others those things which pertain to them and those things in which we need their help. If, for example, you do something that hurts another, you should confess it to him.

Some sins are so generally known as to require a confession to the whole church. This is necessary because when it is generally known that you have sinned, it needs to be generally known that you have repented.

The invitation song is an appropriate time for someone to come before the church to confess sins which are generally known by the church. Of course there are other ways that such a confession might be made known (letter, announcement, etc.) and walking to the front

BIBLE QUESTIONS

during the invitation song is not the only way to confess public sin. Still, coming forward is usually a practical and satisfactory way to do it.

There are two extremes in regard to public confession of sins that ought to be avoided. One extreme is the unwillingness of some to publicly confess their sins when it is obvious to many or all in the church that they have been unfaithful. It is probably pride which holds them back. The other extreme is the notion that one needs to go forward frequently to confess even private, personal things, or problems which could best be resolved between individuals.

A simple rule to follow is that we should make our confession of sin as public as the sin. If it is private, confess it only to God. If it is known to a few, confess it to God and those few. If it is generally known, confess it to the whole congregation.

In Acts 8:13-24 we read the story of Simon in Samaria. Notice in verse 13 that he was baptized and became a Christian. But in verses 18-21 we learn of his grievous sin and Peter's rebuke. Then Peter tells him to "*repent . . . and pray*" (verse 22). In verse 24 Simon also asks Peter to pray for him. This example shows that a baptized believer who openly sins should: repent, pray for

forgiveness (confession to God), and ask for the prayers of others.

When confession of sin to other people or to the whole church is necessary we should not fail to do it. It is more likely, however, that it will be privately to God that most confessions must be made. Such confessions ought to be thoughtful, specific, and with sincere contrition. †

David Pharr is the preacher for the Lord's church in Clinton, Tennessee, U.S.A.

**"If we say that we
have no sin, we
deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not
in us.**

**If we confess our
sins, He is faithful
and just to forgive us
our sins and to
cleanse us from all
unrighteousness"
(1 John 1:8,9).**



CHRIST'S WORDS

Jno. 6:63	Jno. 12:48-49
Jno. 5:46-47	Jno. 14:23-24
Jno. 15:7	Mark 13:31
Heb. 1:1-3	Matt. 17:5

PROMISED APOSTLES

Mark 9:1	Acts 1:8
Jno. 14:16-18	Jno. 14:25-26
Jno. 15:26-27	Jno. 16:7-14

Law Nailed to Cross

Col. 2:14 Heb. 7:18-19



Dillard Thurman

APOSTLES' DOCTRINE

Jno. 17:8 →
 2 Cor. 5:18 →
 1 Jno. 4:6 →
 2 Cor. 3:5-6 →
 2 Cor. 4:5-7 →
 Jno. 13:20 →
 Luke 10:16 →

WORD GIVEN APOSTLES

Mark 16:15-16 →
 Acts 16:17 →
 2 Tim. 2:15 →
 2 Thes. 1:7-9 →
 1 Thes. 2:13 →
 Eph. 1:12-13 →
 1 Pet. 1:12 →

SINNERS HEAR GOSPEL



Charity and Giving

E. Claude Gardner

I. Introduction:

- A. Text - Matthew 6:1-4
- B. From the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught benevolence and giving and the connection between the two duties.

II. Discussion:

- A. Jesus taught His disciples to “do alms.”
 - 1. The marginal reading is “righteousness” — hence, giving is a “righteous act.” Later in the sermon, Jesus admonished His disciples to “*exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*” (Matthew 5:20).
 - 2. Almsgiving is liberality or charity to the poor and needy. The Greek suggests “mercy” and “pity,” whereas the Hebrew indicates “justice.”
 - 3. The poor will be here always (Mark 14:7).
 - 4. Jesus indicated that almsgiving is an act we do without being commanded to do it. He assumed that men will give, and he emphasized the proper motive for it.
 - a. We should have the spirit of Paul (Galatians 2:10;

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 24:7). Paul, the great evangelist and missionary, had a tender heart for the poor.
- b. Other examples are Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8) and Cornelius (Acts 10:2).
 5. Benevolence is also a work of the church (Acts 6; 11:27-30).
- B. Jesus gave the guidelines for giving.
1. The act is important, but the motive is also imperative. Gifts are not *“to be seen”* of men.
 2. Jesus taught *“let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,”* which is another way of declaring that our gifts must not be for “pompous self-laudation.”
 3. This does not forbid making public one’s gifts if the motive is proper. Jesus publicized the gift of the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44). Luke publishes the generosity of Barnabas.
 4. Jesus connected giving and benevolence. He showed that the giving has a purpose — a reason to give.
 5. Other guidelines for giving are significant. Giving should be out of love, without any expectation of benefit (Luke 6:35; 14:12-14). Also, giving is to be done with cheerfulness and purpose (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- C. Jesus taught that giving brings blessings.
1. The Father *“shall reward thee openly,”* provided the heart is right in making the gift. See Acts 20:35.
 2. When one gives to the poor it is a gift to God (Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 25:40,45).
 3. The liberal giver has learned that God blesses materially (Luke 6:38; Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:10-14).
- III. Conclusion:
- A. Let us teach more on the opportunity and obligation to the poor.
 1. Congregations should review the percentage of the budget given to the needy.
 2. We should be reminded of the connection between helping the poor and opportunities for evangelism.
 - B. Numerous ways can be found to fulfill our longings for the poverty-stricken, homeless, medical missions, Christian hospitals, etc.

E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

2 Timothy 1:12

Paul said Christ had appointed him to three offices in vs. 11 that brought his suffering: (1) A preacher, (2) an apostle (3) a teacher. Can we say the same about our calling?

Paul had been arrested, imprisoned and awaited his execution at Rome for the three offices he mentioned in vs. 11.

Although now awaiting his death, he had not changed his feelings about his calling (Rom. 1:16)

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed:

for I know whom I have believed, and am

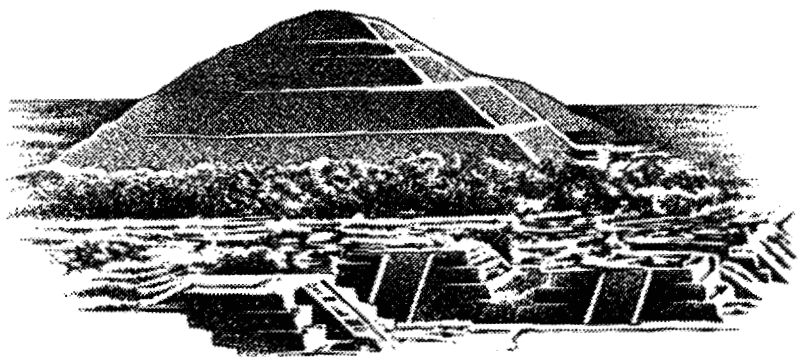
persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Paul not only knew what he believed, but whom he believed (Phil. 1:21; 3:8-14; Gal. 2:20; Jno. 15:1ff.)

God does all these things for only those who believe, are persuaded and are committed unto death (Rev. 2:10) and toward the day we shall all appear before him (Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10)

Note these verses on what God is said to be able to do: (1) save (Heb. 7:25) (2) succor (Heb. 2:18) (3) subdue (Phil. 3:21) (4) make all grace abound (2 Cor. 9:8) (5) Make a weak brother stand (Rom. 14:4)

—Foster Northern



Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacan, Mexico

Mexico

Joe Cross Romero

Just a few years ago Mexico was moving toward true democracy, free enterprise, and partnerships with world powers. But those hopes have been tarnished, at least for the moment, by political corruption, civil unrest, environmental pollution, and the Mexican government's devaluation of the peso. The resulting economic woes have increased tensions along the United States-Mexico border where drug trafficking and illegal immigration rise each time the peso falls.

Such ripples touch neighbors in all directions, for our lives are even

more closely linked by the North American Free Trade Agreement, by the recent guarantee of 20 billion dollars in U.S. loans to Mexico, by the growing influence of Hispanic culture spreading north of the border, by the hefty U.S. investment in new businesses south of the border, and by modern communications that continue to shrink the world.

Across Mexico, people are waiting. Driven by the decay of the old political order, by the pressure of financial disaster, by modern links to the outside world, and by gradual building of agitation at all

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

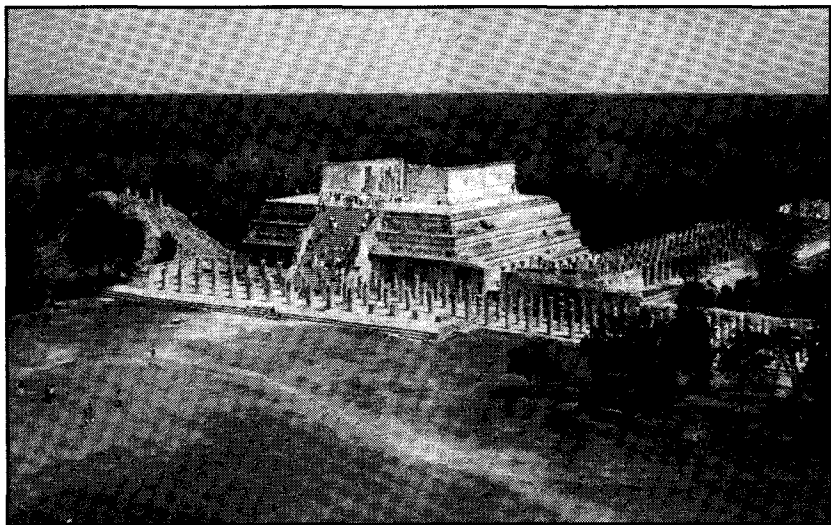
levels, drastic change seems inevitable. But its direction is, as yet, unknown.

Mexico's people are poor. They have a per capita income of \$4,000, compared with \$25,000 in the United States. Yet the cost of living in Mexico is about 28% higher. The poor are growing restless. Even the relatively small middle class has conducted protests and work disruptions. Everyone, it seems, wants a better life.

When the Spanish landed in 1519 and conquered the people with speed and ruthlessness like the gods they were first thought to be, they found huge veins of silver and other minerals. Within a few years 5,000

mines were producing the silver that would build Spain's Armada and finance its wars. The oppressive rule of the Spanish stamped Mexico with an imprint of European religion, agriculture, and industry, but — unlike the colonists to the north — the Spanish did not obliterate earlier races. Instead, the mixing of Spanish and Indian has created a people like no other on earth — the Mexican. Within the blood of these Mexicans run the civilizations of Olmec, Maya, and Aztec, as well as the driving hungers of the Spanish.

The Roman Catholic Church dominates spiritual life, but pagan and animistic Indian beliefs and rituals also permeate the culture and



The Temple of the warriors, built by the Mayas during the 6th century AD, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico.



A village scene among the Indian population.

the religion. One can almost hear the wail of an Aztec war song in the smoky shadows of the village churches.

Mexico — a neighbor of almost 100 million people. She is real and she is in need of the saving power of Jesus Christ. Of her, too, Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel . . ." (Mark 16:15).

As Christians, we must answer this question:

What can I do to help?

Twelve years ago we, personally, began preaching and teaching God's word to the Mayan people in Southeastern Mexico. We found

them extremely receptive. Hundreds have been baptized and new congregations have been planted. There is a joy, a spirit of growth and sacrifice among the Christians of the Yucatan Peninsula.

But the part that I like the most is that they have a gift — to be able to receive the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The time is surely right to send His message to this part of the world. We have more opportunities, more requests from the church and from people who are not yet members of the church of Christ, than we are able to fill. We need your prayers and your assistance in every way. †

Spanish World Bible School

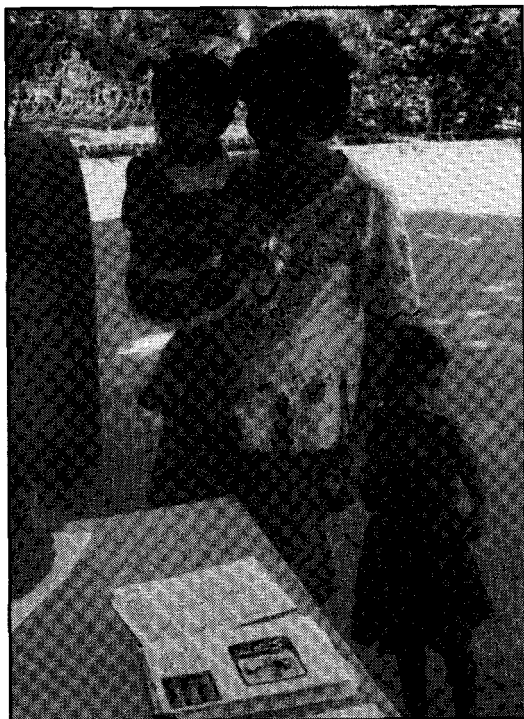
Jimmy Stegall

Spanish World Bible School was founded by the 7th and Beech Church of Christ in Durant, OK, with the vision of carrying the gospel to Spanish-speaking people

throughout the world. In this effort, emphasis is placed on supplying the needs of the local church and equipping local Christians with the necessary skills and resources to teach

prospects in their own language and community.

At the request of local Christians in various nations among Spanish-speaking people, Spanish World Bible School helps conduct gospel campaigns to evangelize the local community and to obtain a supply of willing prospects for the local church to work with in follow-up. Large quantities of printed materials are supplied for the campaigns and for the subsequent follow-up. This work also includes establishing new congregations and providing leadership training, all done through the local church and its leaders in the various cities and villages.



A display of Spanish World Bible School materials at a sign-up table.

Is the Program Effective?

In a word, YES. There are many ways to measure effectiveness, but the bottom line is, are souls being led to Christ and are they remaining faithful? Last year alone there were nearly 2,200 conversions directly attributable to campaigns and their subsequent follow-up. Eight new congregations were established. Of these conversions, records over the past several years indicate that over 80% remain faithful to the Lord after five years! These converted are part of the local church in their own community



A Christian woman and her son.

because it is from these very congregations that the Christian comes who studies with them. Through this local interaction we are helping to equip the individual congregations to accomplish God's will.

We encourage Christians to take part in the efforts to evangelize Mexico. There are programs of medical missions, orphanages, preacher training schools, campaigns, leadership training and personal evangelism. Especially are we concerned that the local Christians be equipped, in training and knowledge, to do their own work and to reach out to new areas.

Please pray for the Lord's church throughout Mexico.



FROM THE HEART OF ...



Many have been won to Christ since the gospel in its purity began to be preached in Mexico early in the 1930's.

Mexico is a land of contrasts —

- of the ancient cities and temples of the past contrasted with the heavily populated and sprawling cities of today.
- of Mexico City — one of the largest cities in the world — contrasted with the many small villages, little changed from ages past.
- of poverty and severe economic crisis contrasted with the fact that she is the leading producer of the world's silver, and fourth largest producer of oil.
- of the apparent promise of democracy in government contrasted with actual authoritarian practice, coupled with much corruption at all levels, bringing the country to the brink of bankruptcy.
- of much religion — a blending of the superstitions and rituals of the ancient Indian religions and Roman Catholicism introduced by the Spaniards — contrasted with a dearth of knowledge of true Christianity.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 12 (from page 76)

1. Passover, Bethany, Lazarus.
2. Martha.
3. She anointed Jesus' feet with spikenard and wiped them with her hair.
4. That the oil should have been sold and the money given to the poor.
5. "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial."
6. To put Lazarus to death, because many believed on Jesus because of him.
7. They covered the street with palm branches and cried out praises to Jesus.
8. "Fear not, daughter of Zion; your King.
9. "...the whole world has gone after Him!"
10. "...troubled. ... for this purpose I came to this hour. ... glorify Your..."
11. "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."
12. "...if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."
13. They did not want to be banned from worshipping in the synagogue.
14. "...Me, ...My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."
15. The Father's.



Who
Am
I?

(from
page
49)

John

The Book of Colossians

I	B	D	I	J	U	S	T	U	S	U	M	I	S	E	N	O	N
H	L	L	A	K	B	D	A	I	L	T	Y	C	H	I	C	U	S
E	K	U	L	S	A	I	N	T	S	V	A	U	D	W	E	O	A
P	O	A	C	I	R	C	U	M	C	I	S	E	D	V	E	Y	R
A	S	P	H	V	B	E	E	A	N	B	R	M	E	A	R	J	I
P	B	A	R	N	A	B	A	S	A	I	N	Y	M	P	H	A	S
H	E	S	I	D	R	U	Y	N	A	Y	T	O	A	U	I	T	
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A	K	L	T	X	A	S	E	N	O	D	H	R	Z	U	N	T	R
S	O	I	J	I	N	H	T	G	R	E	E	K	D	S	A	N	C
U	A	T	E	X	M	I	N	I	S	T	E	R	E	Y	M	K	H
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Y	M	G	S	L	K	A	M	H	U	W	Y	E	F	F	R	A	O
A	R	C	H	I	P	P	U	S	Y	G	D	D	L	Y	F	A	S

(page 32)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



United Mexican States



Government: Federal Republic
President: ERNESTO ZEDILLO
PONCE de LEON

Secular Facts:

Location: South of the United States.

Land Mass: 761,600 Sq. Mi.

Population: 91,800,000.

Major Cities: Mexico City,
Guadalajara, Monterey, Puebla, Tijuana.

Weather: Primarily hot and dry, cooler
in the mountainous areas.

Language: Spanish; also, more than 50
Indian languages.

Literacy: 88%.

Religion: 97% nominal Roman Catho-
lic, 3% Protestant; much influence of
ancient Indian religions.

Economy: Mexico is in its worst reces-
sion in more than 50 years, following
the devaluation of the peso. Unemploy-
ment is 15-18 percent, per capita income is
\$4,000. Because of inflation, the cost of
living is 28% higher than in the U.S.

Petroleum products, motor vehicles,
consumer electronics, steel, textiles, cof-
fee, cotton, processed foods, silver, cop-
per, gold, wheat, rice, and beans are
some of Mexico's products.

Monetary Unit: Peso.

The Church:

Congregations: There are about 450
congregations, with approximately
18,000 membership. Most congregations
are small, averaging 40 members. The
largest is in Merida, Yucatan, numbering
about 250 members.

History: Pedro Rivas, a Mexican nation-
al, was baptized in Harlingen, Texas, attend-
ed Freed-Hardeman College in 1929, and
later returned to Mexico to preach, under
the oversight of the Central church in
Houston, Texas.

J.W. Treat of Abilene, TX was a pioneer
American evangelist who served in Mexico.
Harris Goodwin, Haven Miller and the James
Brandons also worked in Mexico for many
years. Numerous American churches from
across the border have sent individuals and
campaign groups into the country.

Modern History: There are 5 schools of
preaching in Mexico. "AIM" students from
the Sunset International Bible Institute par-
ticipate in organized evangelistic programs in
the country. Spanish World Bible School is a
mission program sponsored by the 7th and
Beech Church of Christ in Durant, OK,
involving local Christians in evangelism.

Front Cover: Temple of Kukulkan, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico, built by the Mayans in 500 AD.