

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A WORD . . .

What is *law*, and in particular, what is *God's law*? Law is the body of rules or principles established by recognized authority.

God's law for this age is His New Testament, the word of His covenant, sealed with the blood of His Son (Hebrews 9:15-17). We are to study His word so that it will be imbedded in our hearts. Through the guidance of that inspired record we learn to become partakers of divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), holy and approved of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

What are traditions? Traditions are customs and practices which are handed from generation to generation. Traditions are not inspired; they are not law.

But the carrying out of the law *requires a procedure, a method*; and procedures and practice become traditions — and traditions can become as "sacred" in the heart as the law itself, if followers don't make careful distinction.

The other danger is even greater: *to throw away the law in loosing oneself from the tradition. Let us beware!*



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STAFF:

Editor-in-Chief: J.C. Choate

Managing Editor: Byron Nichols

Layout Editors: Betty Burton Choate
Barbara A. Oliver

Art Consultant: Steven B. Choate

Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate

WRITERS:

George Akpabli

W.T. Allison

O.P. Baird

Leon Barnes

Wayne Barrier

Roy Beasley

V.P. Black

Maxie B. Boren

T. Pierce Brown

Ron Bryant

Jack W. Carter

David Chadwell

Frank Chesser

Betty Burton Choate

Jeril Cline

Glenn Colley

Willard Collins

Owen Cosgrove

Sunny David

Hans Dederscheck

David Deffenbaugh

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

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Earl Edwards

Demar Elam

Reuben Emperado

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E. Claude Gardner

R. Gnanasundaram

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Gordon Hogan

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A BALANCED DIET

J. C. CHOATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Man must have bread and water, physically and spiritually, to survive. Spiritually, of course, this nourishment is not earthly or carnal. *Jesus* is identified as the bread of life and the water of life (John 6:35; John 4:14). The sustenance we have through Him saves us and nourishes us, giving us hope in this life and the promise of a home in heaven in the world to come.

It is spiritually expedient that we feed upon the word of God. Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). In the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

In our study of God's word, and even in the sermons we hear, we need a balanced diet. To dwell upon any one part of the truth over a period of time, to the exclusion of other truths during that time, will warp our thinking, will stunt us and dwarf us, causing us to be one-sided in our view of God's will. Imbalance in our diet will result in fanaticism, error, apathy, and many other spiritual ills.

We know that in our daily lives, physically, we need a well-balanced diet to be strong and healthy. It is not good to eat only those foods which may be our favorites. Milk products are a must for infants and the young, and to a certain extent throughout life; but there comes a time when, for proper physical growth, a person must move on to stronger foods and even to meat itself. The same principle is true spiritually. Peter said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"

(1 Peter 2:2). The Hebrew writer tells us that to be strong we must go on to partake of the meat of the word. He speaks of some who had not continued in their growth process and had consequently died. He explains, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

We are living in a time that is generally called "the junk food age". Junk food is sweeping the world. Even such countries as Russia and India have been invaded by it. This food is synonymous with high-fat content, low food-value, and fast service.

There is a lot of spiritual junk food being offered today with fast service too. You are told you can "be saved" on the spot, any time, wherever you are, by faith alone or just a prayer. Most people are enthused by a good show and thrills and excitement, so there is an abundance of religious leaders and preachers out there who offer people what they want — for a price of course.

When we eat only light foods, along with a lot of sweets, we are heading for health problems. But what we all need most of the time is some properly home-cooked food which includes an assortment of vegetables along with a reasonable amount of good meats to provide our regular allotment of daily vitamins.

Spiritually, we may hear the gospel enough to understand it, believe it, and obey it to be saved, but if we never mature beyond that point, we are in trouble. What we need is a good strong base on which to build a solid Christian life. This involves not only a knowledge of the gospel, the church and worship, but also the understanding of Christian evidences, what faith is all about, how prayer works, and the application of all of the other aspects of the Christian life.

On the other hand, it is just as easy for us to think we have arrived, that we know it all, and to assume that since we understand the basic teachings of God's word, everyone else knows them, too, and therefore, there is no need ever to bring up such basic subjects again.

Peter said, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12). He went on to say, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up

your pure minds by way of remembrance.” (2 Peter 3:1)

How many times in the scripture do you read references to Noah and the flood, the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the land of bondage, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and other Old Testament stories? The Lord chose to have four writers tell of His life and of His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul, Peter, and John, in particular, wrote and emphasized many great truths again and again. These re-tellings serve as our reminders and reinforcements of God’s truths.

In our personal studies and in our pulpits we need to hear lessons on the sovereignty of God, on the beauties of heaven, the torments of hell, and numerous other themes which will encourage us to obey God and to go on to attain greater heights in our Christian lives. But we also need to study and hear lessons from time to time on the gospel, scriptural baptism, the oneness of the church, the kind of music God wants in worship, and other basic principles.

We must never forget that we are not the only ones who are to be taught God’s word, and that others may be at different spiritual levels with a variety of spiritual needs. In our meetings there are children, young people, and hopefully some new converts, visitors, and even older members who need to hear a

wide range of subjects taught from God’s word. These teachings must be given again and again over a period of time because it is so easy for man to forget what God wants him to do or not to do. If the proper job is done then those who attend will be taught the truth, growth will follow, members will be prepared to teach God’s word to others, and the church will be strong.

If this is not done, the non-members who attend will leave untaught, the children will grow up ignorant of God’s word, the new members will forget the truths they once knew. By pretty words and fair speeches they will become weak and indifferent, and the church itself will not be strong.

But the damage is even greater: the younger members will grow up not knowing the basic truths that save us and sustain us, and they will turn more and more to the religious world around them. This has already happened too many times in formerly strong congregations.

My brethren, we must return to the kind of biblical study and gospel preaching that will restore us — and the church universal — to a knowledge of God’s word. That knowledge will nourish our souls and will enable us to do the work God has given us to do. Only a balanced diet of God’s word will do this. As Paul exhorted, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). †



GOD AND HIS WORD

BYRON NICHOLS
MANAGING EDITOR

The Bible tells us about a man named Jeroboam. Please notice this description of him in 1 Kings 11:28 — *“And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor; and Solomon saw the young man that he was industrious”*

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have been mentioned in the Bible in such an honorable way? Jeroboam was an outstanding young man. He was one who got people's attention because of his excellent qualities. He was so admired by the people that they even made him their king!

However, it is quite noteworthy that Jeroboam came to be known as *“Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.”* This statement is made about Jeroboam some 14 times in the Old Testament!

What happened? What changes occurred in his life to cause Jeroboam to become known for leading his own people, his nation, into sin? Here is the answer: *Jeroboam took it upon himself to change God's instructions, God's laws.* (Read 1 Kings 12:25-33.) Not even a king had the right to do such a thing.

Now let's turn our attention away from Jeroboam and his terrible sin for a moment. What a great blessing we have in being able to read the Bible for ourselves and learn what God wants from us and for us. There is a problem that comes with this wonderful blessing, though. The problem is that there is responsibility involved. Because God has made it possible for us to know His Word and His will, He expects us to take advantage of that opportunity. He has given us intellect, making us able to read and to understand what we read; He has given us the Bible, making it possible for us to know all that is necessary for us to please and honor Him.

We must be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11, who were not even

Christians yet, but they understood the wisdom and necessity of verifying what they were being taught. Sure, it takes some time and effort to search the Scriptures. However, if our goal is to be pleasing to God, we will be more than willing to make the necessary investment of time and effort. We will do it because of our respect and love for Him, and we will also do it because of our determination to be correct in our understanding of Him and His Word. This is vitally important. Our eternity depends upon it!

It doesn't matter who it is that is doing the preaching or teaching. We still must search the Scriptures to see if what is being taught is so. If the **Bible** does not support it, surely we must not support it. If the Bible **does** support it, surely **we must** also.

The great apostle Paul knew that the **message**, not the **messenger**, is what is important. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 he said,

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

God said, "*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*" (Exodus 23:2). What the majority think or do may very well influence **us**, but the **truth** is not influenced — it remains stable and immovable. It is so important that we allow ourselves to be led only by the truth, and not by either the persuasive words of men or what the majority believes or desires.

Please do not misunderstand — not all who have the ability to speak with great persuasiveness are doing so in an effort to lead anyone into error or away from God. Not at all. However, we need to realize that we are most vulnerable to being misled when listening to one who is a very gifted, powerful, and persuasive speaker. It is appropriate to admire and respect his ability. But we must be careful that we not allow ourselves to assume that just because he says a thing, and says it very persuasively, his message does not need to be measured against the standard of truth, the Bible.

Jeroboam defied God by making the changes that he did in the worship of God. How shocking that the **created** would dare to disregard the will of the **Creator**! Certainly no one since the time of Jeroboam has qualified himself/herself to change God's laws. Surely we do not want to be in the position of defying God because of our ignoring or changing what He has said in His word.

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THANKS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL. IT IS OUR GOAL TO REACH INTO MANY NATIONS WITH THIS TOOL, WITH YOUR HELP.

IN THE U.S. CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS ARE URGED TO PLACE THE MAGAZINE IN PUBLIC READING RACKS AND LIBRARIES, AND TO GIVE IT TO FRIENDS.

JCC

Not By Sight

I do not know the path, dear Lord,
That You would have me take;
No lamp is shining in the night,
No finger points the way.

The fleshly man cries out for
words

To guide the stumbling feet;
He fears the dangers in the depths,
The sorrow, tears, defeat.

The inner man with timorous
voice

Keeps pleading to be heard;
He knows the pledge You've
made to man,

The promise of Your word.

He tries - Oh, Lord, he tries -
To help me walk by faith,
To tell me I must learn to step
Although I see no way.

And, Lord, I ask Your added
strength

To gird the inner man,
To help me learn to trust Your
eyes,

To wait Your guiding hand.

I'll see the light, I'll know the
path

As every step unfolds;
Please help me learn
submission, Lord,
Please guide my trembling soul.

- Betty Burton Choate
from Still Moments

GOD

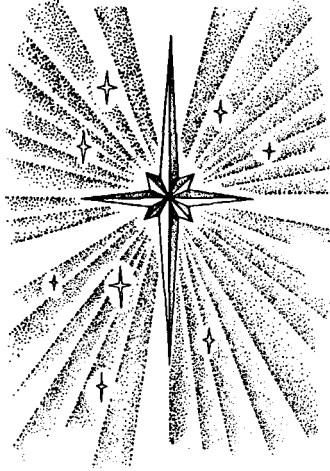
The good news for you is that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, has brought you hope. "... *Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col. 1:27).

Christ came from heaven and He promised, "*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). He wants you to be happy and joyful by following His teachings and example.

Christ wants to be your Savior. "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21). You have sins and imperfections, and the only Savior to deliver you from them is Jesus.

Christ wants you to have spiritual life. "*In him was life: and the life was the light of men*" (John 1:4). You are "*dead in trespasses and sin*" (Ephesians 2:1) until you are made alive in Christ. "*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*" (1 John 5:11).

Jesus Christ



Is Your Hope

E. Claude Gardner

Christ sacrificed Himself voluntarily, and, with the shedding of His blood on the cross, He purchased the church. When 3,000 obeyed the commands of Jesus and

came to Him, they were saved, and all of the saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). For you to be cleansed by Christ and His blood, you must believe fully in Christ, turn from a life of sin, and be immersed "*for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38).

Christ will bring you victory. "*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

The Lord Jesus Christ is your hope and the hope of the world. Become a friend of Jesus and live for

Him. "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*" (Gal. 2:20). †

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

“Where Is The Wise?”

Bob Plunket

Paul raised this question almost 2,000 years ago at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:20). It is a rhetorical question that he answers. Paul is really saying, “What has human wisdom without God really accomplished? Where are all the great philosophers, and what have their lives accounted for?” Many would answer the question — “Where is the wise?” — by saying that they are in our universities. Others would say they are in politics, or perhaps in the great scientific programs. Few would say that they are in our pulpits, they are in church pews, they are men and women of faith. Paul was not asking about who the wise are, but where they are.

Paul met some of these wise men in his own day at Athens, and what did he tell them? He told them that God made the world. He is Lord. He is a spirit. He is independent. He is the giver of life, and made all nations from one man. He determined their bounds, gave seasons to the earth in the hope that man would seek Him and find Him, because He is not far from us. We have our being in God. Since we

are the offspring of God, we must not think that God is like a stone covered with silver or gold, crafted by man. This now is inexcusable, he says. God demands repentance, because there is a day of judgment by the man He hath ordained. The assurance of this was His resurrection from the dead (Acts 17:16ff.).

Yes, where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world” (1 Cor. 1:20)?

Who was the wisest: Plato, Aristotle, or the Apostle Paul? Time, history, and experience answer that Paul was. Paul said of the godless wise in Romans 1:22, “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.” †

Bob Plunket preaches for the Lord's church in Tuscumbia, Alabama, U. S. A.

*Where were you when I laid the
foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have under-
standing.
Who set its measurements, since
you know?
Or who stretched the line on it?
On what were its bases sunk?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
When the morning stars sang
together,
And all the sons of God shouted
for joy? Job 38:4-7*

Satan's Challenge:

Is There A God?

Betty Burton Choate

I wake in the morning to the consciousness of the presence of God. My heart words thankfulness to Him that while I slept He continued, watchful and loving, caring for all the parts of life that required His attention.

Satan trails a thought through my head. "You haven't seen God. Suppose He is, as the skeptics say, only a crutch in your head. What then?"

In willingness to be fair and open-minded, I try that concept. What then?

There is blankness in my heart. The warm love I had directed toward God dries up at its source. My feeling of security disappears. I no longer have an anchor and a certainty to life. There is no longer a sense of direction about where I am going, ultimately.

With nothing greater in my head than myself, no purpose greater than the demands of today's physical existence — because tomorrow may not come, and there is no eternal existence on the horizon — blankness, and then fear, and futility flood every crevice of my mind.

Without God, it is worse than,

"Nothing is left." It is, "I still exist, and all of the challenges of this world still exist, and yet I face this existence with the acceptance of the dead fact that I have no help. There is no one greater than this frightened self to turn to." I marvel that suicide is not imminently on the horizon for all of those who lose faith in a Higher Being.

But a persistent thought pierces the fear of aloneness. "Yes, you **do** exist. And all the wonders of life and of the physical world around you exist. And your greatest devastation would not be the loss of a husband, or the loss of a parent or a child, *whom you have seen*. The greatest devastation would be in the very loss of God, even though you have *never* seen Him. The absolute-ness of these facts in your heart speaks to Satan's mockery and doubt-raising. In all of man's 'progress' and 'sophistication,' would humanity not have outgrown this 'primitive' belief in God, if He were only a crutch, dreamed up in the minds of humans?"

But the very soul of humanity cries out the existence of God

GOD

(Psalm 27:7-10)!

Even today, there are two classes of people in the world: **the minority** who are conscious of their rejection of God and who would have, statistically, a higher problem rate (behaviorally and emotionally) and a higher suicide rate than believers.

On the opposite side are the believers, who are **the majority**. In some form or another, they cling to their conscious awareness of the existence of God. They may be a million miles from the truth in their understanding of Him, but their hearts confirm that there is a God.

In both minds, *the base-factor deals with God!* No other single topic can claim such universal and total preoccupation, even while some people are in the throes of denial! This fact alone speaks decisively. If there were no God, in Whose image we are made, and to Whom our spirits call as a lost child to a parent, this universal and continuing outreach to Him would have “evolved” out of existence aeons ago.

Another thought comes to mind: I’ve never seen Satan, either, but there is no doubt about his existence. Why? **Reason number one:**

I can look around and see his work on every hand, as sin and evil and the resulting destruction take their toll. **Reason number two:** In contrast to Satan’s tactics, God doesn’t trail through our minds a barrage of questions and doubts about Satan’s existence! God, Himself, tells us that Satan roams the earth, like a roaring lion, looking for the souls he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). God fosters our belief in the reality of Satan — because he *is real* — and God wants us to be forewarned so that our defenses will be up.

Following this line of reasoning, since the prevalence of evil in the world is unquestioned testimony to the existence of Satan, is not the unquenchable good, in contrast, evidence also of the existence of God? And would not we expect that the enemy of God would be the continual instigator of doubts, since God forewarns us that Satan is the father of all lies? (John 8:44)

“Thank you, Father, for Your watchful care while I slept, and for a living faith to sustain me during my waking hours.” †

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

“I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior. . . . Therefore, you are my witnesses,” says the Lord, “that I am God. Indeed, before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand . . .” Isaiah 43:11-13.

**Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling (Psalm 2:11).**

In the second Psalm, David describes godless kings who plot against the Lord and His people. They feel so proud, so powerful. But then, David continues, "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision" (Psalm 2:4).

W. S. Pulmer, a scholar who has researched the Roman emperors who brought horrible persecution on the early church, has reported that of thirty such officials, "one became deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one was blinded, one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in miserable captivity, two committed suicide, five were assassinated, five others died excruciating deaths by torture, and eight died in battle.

"Of these eight who died in battle, one was Julian the Apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said

to have pointed his dagger to heaven, defying the Son of God, whom he called 'The Galilean.' But when he was wounded in battle and realized he was dying, he exclaimed, 'Thou has conquered, O Thou Galilean.'"

**A
God
Who**

Laughs

Olden Cook

God's laughter at those who rebel and plot against Him is no laughing matter! It would be well for all to say with David, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the very way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12). What we do with Christ now determines what God will do with us later!

**God rules as Sovereign on His throne,
He judges great and small;
And all who would defy His will,
Beneath His rod shall fall. †**

Olden Cook preaches the Gospel in Kerrville, Texas, U. S. A.

WILLING AND ABLE

Ancil Jenkins

Why did the prodigal son stay away so long (Luke 15:11-32)? Several factors may have influenced him.

His pride might have overcome his desire to return. Underlying his thinking was his incorrect view of his father. He thought the best he could expect was to be hired as a servant. He did not anticipate that his father would run to meet him. He did not expect the great display of love.

Do we lack a similar unfocused image of God? Isn't it reasonable to assume that if we can find a clearer picture of God, it will do much to revolutionize our relationship with Him? How can we gain this better view of God? Jesus said, "...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8). Let's look to Jesus to see what God is like.

Two aspects of God's nature are seen in Jesus' treatment of the hurting and helpless. The father of the demon-possessed boy pleaded with Him, "*But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.*" "*'If you can'?*" said Jesus. "*Everything is possible for him who*

believes" (Mark 9:22-23).

With a true awareness of His and His Father's power, Jesus promises, "*Everything is possible for him who believes.*"

God is able to do far, far more than anything we ask or think. This power is not only His, but is also available to us who believe (Ephesians 3:20-21). If we can come to this understanding of Him, we can find our lives transformed.

Coincidental with His power is His willingness to use His power on man's behalf. "*A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.'* Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. '*I am willing,*' he said. '*Be clean!*'" (Mark 1:40-41).

Heartless is anyone who has power and is unwilling to use it for man's good. Impotent is one who is willing to use the power but not possess it. Thanks be to God that He is both **able** to do all things and that His **willingness** is equal to His power! †

Ancil Jenkins preaches for the Sunset congregation in Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

Is There Anything About Jesus That You Do Not Like?

Jack Harriman

I know — you don't like some religious people that you have observed. Neither do I. But I like Jesus. I do not know of anything He ever said or did that I don't like.

His religion was not impractical or ridiculous. He was not haughty or proud. He did not avoid the poor, nor did He favor the rich. Even His enemies never accused Him of hypocrisy. I like that! He was not consumed with Himself. He did not have a scribe following Him around recording every word and action. Nothing was done just for show. I like that!

He had a special compassion for people who were hurting in some way. The sick, the bereaved, the lonely, the troubled — all were objects of His compassion. He had all power, but never used it for His own sake or His own convenience. I like that. And there was no preju-

dice in Him. In a society where there was so much of it, how did He grow up without any of it? I don't know, but I like it.

And there was no vengeance in His heart. He was not enraged at Judas. His look at Peter was not a hateful look, but was for Peter's benefit. "*Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.*" I don't understand it all, but I like it. I like Him. And He was totally honest. He told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, even when it hurt Him and His cause.

Jesus was both divine and human. He was the God-man. And yet He lived life on earth as a human being. *Do you know of anything that He ever did, said, or was, that is distasteful or unattractive in a human being?* O how I want to be like Him! Don't you? †

Jack Harriman preaches for the Center Street church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U. S. A.

"Just as the Father
has loved Me, I
have also loved
you; abide in My
love."

John 15:9

My Reasons For Believing

Willard Collins

There are many reasons why I believe that there is an Almighty God who can be my answer in this world of insecurity. I believe in God because I believe in prayer. In the twenty-third Psalm, when David said, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,*" I believe that somebody heard David. Don't you? When in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, "*O my Father . . . not as I will, but as thou wilt,*" don't you believe that that message of Matthew 26 had somebody in the great beyond to hear it? My friends, when Stephen was being stoned to death and uttered a prayer to Almighty God in the name of the Savior, don't you believe that there was somebody to hear? When the Christian mother bows down by the bed of her sick child and talks to God, don't you believe there is a God to hear? "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16). The hand of God is in control of this universe. I believe that the prayer of righteous people can do things in this old



world. I believe in God because I believe in prayer.

I believe in God because of all the material things that I see. Think about a clock. This clock tells me that somebody made it. Is it reasonable for me to think that all the parts of this clock just came together and began to tick? My friends, I look around me and see a beautiful earth: flowers, birds that sing, and persons with physical bodies. I look around and see stars at night, and I see the great expanse that we call the sky. In the daytime I behold the sun. Is it reasonable to say that all these things just came together by chance, and thus we have the universe? The Bible declares, "*In the beginning God . . .*" (Genesis 1:1). I believe in God because of all these wonderful things that I can see with my eyes. †

Willard Collins is President-Emeritus of David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

Historical Evidence Of Jesus

Royce Frederick

Thallus, a Samaritan-born historian, wrote in Rome around A.D. 52. No complete copies of his writings have survived to our present time, but we do have some quotations from his works. Julius Africanus, who lived in the second century, quoted from the writings of Thallus. Africanus wrote, "Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun."

"This darkness" refers to the darkness which covered the land for three hours when Jesus was hanging on the cross. "*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land*" (Matthew 27:45; see Mark 15:33). Thallus claimed that the darkness was not a supernatural event, but merely a natural, solar eclipse — which occurs when the moon passes between the sun and the earth. But Africanus explained that the darkness could not have been a solar eclipse, because an eclipse of the sun cannot occur during the full moon. He observed that Jesus was crucified during the Passover, when the moon would have been full.

Thallus opposed Christianity. He did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. However, by trying to explain the darkness, Thallus confirms that a period of darkness **did occur** at the crucifixion of Jesus. Thallus only argued about **the cause** of the darkness, not about the fact of the darkness. Therefore, writing in A.D. 52, this historian verifies that the Bible is historically accurate regarding three facts: (1) that Jesus was a real person, (2) that Jesus was crucified, and (3) that there was a period of darkness when Jesus was crucified.

Jesus of Nazareth is not a myth or mere legend. Human historians reveal that He was a real person who lived and walked upon this earth. The New Testament reveals many more facts about Jesus of Nazareth, including His divine identity. The testimony within its pages shows us "*that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (John 20:31). †

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

God — Is He, Or Isn't He?

Bert Thompson

"In the beginning was matter, which begat the amoeba, which begat the worm, which begat the fish, which begat the amphibian, which begat the monkey, which begat man, who imagined God. This is the genealogy of man." So stated Charles Smith, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, in his booklet, "Godless Evolution."

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So stated the inspired prophet Moses in the first chapter, the first verse, the first book of the Bible — Genesis 1:1.

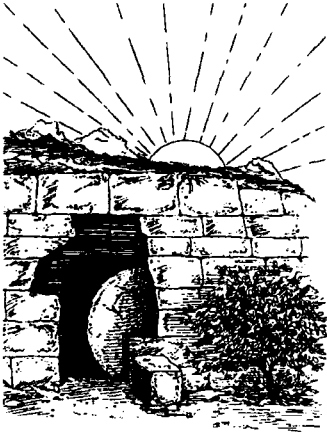
Who is right? Is there a God, or isn't there? Is Exodus 20:11 correct when it asserts *"For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day . . ."*? Or did organic evolution — the result of spontaneous generation billions of years ago — produce all that you see before you today? What is the answer?

This is a situation of intense proportions and tremendous magnitude. Either there is a God, or there

is not. There is no middle ground. Any attempt to remain neutral is automatically synonymous with unbelief. Whatever decision you reach, it is an important one. And who among us makes important decisions without first gathering, examining, and weighing all the facts of the case? The question then arises, what is the evidence offered for God's existence? Who is right? Is there a God, or isn't there?

If there is a God, then there is an eternal heaven to be gained and an eternal hell to be avoided. If there is a God, then nothing else really matters; if there is no God, then nothing matters at all. If there is no God, then the atheistic creed of life is entirely satisfactory. If there is no God, there is nothing to stop us from living by atheism's golden rule: "Do your own thing; if it feels good, do it." On the other hand, if there is a God, and if the Bible is His inspired Word to man, as Christians claim it to be, then we are faced with an entirely different realization that mankind was created with a purpose — and a lifetime to fulfill that purpose. To succeed means joy forever with God in eternity; to fail is to fail throughout all eternity. †

Bert Thompson writes and lectures widely on science and the Bible. He lives in Montgomery, Alabama.



If God Became A Man

Max Patterson

If God became a man, we would expect supernatural doings. The great miracles of Jesus testify to this.

If God became a man, we would expect Him to manifest the love of God. Christ was completely unselfish. He cared for the sinful, brokenhearted, the contrite, the despised, the poor. His supreme act of love is what He did on the cross.

If God became a man, we would expect His personality to be true humanity. God has shown us what a true, real man should be like.

He has shown us, as well as told us, what to do.

The character of Jesus is one of the greatest evidences of His deity that can be given.

I believe Christianity can be verified through the miracles Christ performed. Would the New Testament be worth believing without miracles? Miracles authenticate the message of Christ. Jesus appeals to His miracles for His true divinity (John 10:24, 37, 38; Luke 7:20-22). These miracles were performed in the full light of history. Many were performed before the public eye. Many were performed in the company of unbelievers. There were all types of miracles. We have the abundant testimony of the cured. There is no adequate evidence contrary to miracles.

I believe Christianity can be verified through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. The resurrection is the miracle. Despite the unbeliever's attitude toward this miracle, not one through the ages has been able to explain it away. And what about the hundreds of people who saw Jesus after His resurrection, and on many different occasions (I Corinthians 15)? The testimony is sure and our faith in Christ is certain. †

Max Patterson preaches for the Hillcrest church in Neosho, Missouri, U. S. A.

Nearness

I know not what Time is
But by the ticking of a clock.
I know not what matter is
But by feel of wood or rock.

And yet I live in Time
And Things I feel and see,
And what I hear in Rhyme
Is melody to me.

Yet things I do not see
Or hear or taste or feel
Mean so much, so much to me;
They are very, very real.

A goal beyond my reach,
A dream I cannot hold,
Ideals toward which I stretch
And Memory's perfect gold.

And so it is with God.
I see Him not, nor hear,
Yet every moment of my life
I know that He is near.

— G. C. Brewer



Tarnished

When the strains of life have
weathered us and tarnished the
good in us, O God, would You
send someone our way to buff
and polish our inner being, that
we may shine and have a lustre
as never before?

— Calvin Rader

Are all good people children of God?

A man dies. He has been a considerate husband, a kind father, a helpful neighbor, a model citizen. His associates call him 'good', and they consider him acceptable in God's sight, a child of God.

But is our *human goodness* enough to wipe away our sins and to qualify us to be called children of God?

The Bible explains, "There is *none* righteous, no, not one" and "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:10,23)

Jesus warned: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but *He who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 7:21)

So, even though obedience to God will result in moral and spiritual goodness, it is not our *human goodness* which makes us a child of God, but rather it is *faith in God and obedience to His will*. Jesus said, "...unless one is *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Only God can save us; deeds of human goodness, alone, are not enough.

Next: Who created evil?

How To Know Truth

David Deffenbaugh

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Thank God the Word did become flesh. Man desperately needed grace. Just as desperately, man needed truth. Only by it is man able to be free (John 8:32) and sanctified (John 17:17). By it is man’s only access to God (John 14:6).

However, it is sometimes difficult for man to discern truth. Many people today even believe that absolute truth is not a reality. But short of this abandonment of *knowable* truth, is the problem of *apparent* truth. Many ideas, concepts, and teachings exist that sound true, but simply are not. How is man to know what is true and what is not?

The brief statement from Jesus in praying to the Father that *“thy word is truth”* (John 17:17) is most profound. The Bible is not only the measure, but it is the very expression of truth. The reason this is so important is that man simply could not figure it out on his own. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he

addressed Greeks, a people quite proud of their attainments in human reasoning and philosophy. Paul proclaimed the *“foolishness of God . . . wiser than men”* (1 Cor. 1:25).

Left to his own devices, man would never arrive at an understanding of the kingdom, Christian living, baptism, or the cross. These have meaning only as they are revealed in the Bible. By the same token, the Bible is able to safeguard against ideas that under certain circumstances may have tremendous emotional appeal, but are not truth. Currently such ideas would involve the expanded role of women in the church, a relaxing of God’s marital laws, an easing of moral dictates, and so on. Only by adherence to truth can one ensure they are being led by the Spirit of God and not the spirit of the age.

Since God has explicitly revealed the absolute necessity of truth, we can be assured that such truth has been made quite accessible and knowable. †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the Northside congregation in Harrison, Arkansas, U. S. A.

GOD'S TRUTH

Don W. Walker

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Samuel 15:24).

Aristotle once said, "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth." The Bible stresses bountifully how we should respond to truth. In Proverbs 23:23 we are told to buy the truth and sell it not. Too many times, people's decisions are based on what the ramifications will be, rather than what is right and good and consistent with truth. In areas of doctrine, the question is not what will be the response, but rather what is right.

In Galatians 1:10 Paul wrote, *"For do I now persuade men, or God? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."* Paul's point was, if it is Truth, he will proclaim it no matter what the result. Again, in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 Paul writes, *"But as we were*

allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

These must have been the thoughts of Paul when he wrote young Timothy, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).*

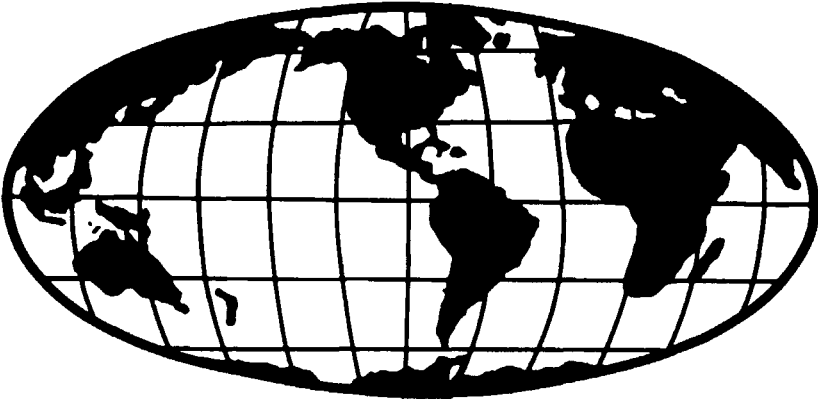
Like Amos, we must be ready to speak and follow truth, no matter what the end result (Amos 7:10ff). Stephen's concern was truth, no matter what the end would be (Acts 7), just as John the Baptist's actions would display the same.

We need to be men of courage and honor concerning God's Truth. We dare not compromise simply because it may be convenient. May we each be strong in the Lord and valiant for truth. †

Don W. Walker preaches for the church in Stephenville, Texas, U.S.A.

We would not love the sunshine
If skies were always clear,
Nor know the value of a smile
If we never felt a tear.

— Charles R. Brewer



Truth International

Bobby R. Key

Truth is the most precious commodity on the market. Nothing in this world is quite as valuable as truth; no word is more beautiful than truth; nothing is quite as powerful as truth — especially spiritual truth. We are instructed to “*Buy the truth and sell it not*” (Prov. 23:23).

Truth is truth in all generations. Truth is truth in every community — in every state — in every nation on earth. Truth will not perish. In his debate with Douglas, Abraham Lincoln said, “I will die and my name will be forgotten, but the principles for which I contend will live on forever.” *All truth will live on forever. The Word of God is truth* (John 17:17). It is truth even if no man on earth believes or practices the teaching of the Lord. “*The*

grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8). “*But the Word of the Lord endureth forever*” (1 Peter 1:25).

Suppose the earth should stand for a million years. A million years from today men would dig up the great cities of the earth, such as New York, London, and Paris. In that far off future day our political parties will have been forgotten and the issues over which they fought will have perished. The religious denominations will have disappeared. Things that divide us here will be buried beneath milleniums of oblivion.

Yet, the book of God will be there, and it will tell in whatever language that race may use that

THE WORD OF GOD

Christ was born in Bethlehem; that He was crucified on a Roman cross; that He was buried in Joseph's new tomb; that He arose from the dead on the morning of the third day; that He commanded His disciples to "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:15,16). They will read that the disciples were called Christians and came together on the first day of the week to break bread. They will read where Jesus is coming again to put the devil out of business and raise the dead and take His children home to Heaven.

It is thrilling to know that the truth is able to set us free. Error capitalizes upon ignorance. Let the people know the truth, love the truth, obey the truth, and proclaim the truth. Souls will be saved from damnation, and Heaven will rejoice.

Jesus died for our sins according to the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Parts of the Bible have been published in more than 1,400 languages and dialects. Among the 46 new languages which came to the attention of the American Bible Society in one year, 19 of them had Bibles printed in that language within the year. Some years add almost two translations in a new language within a month. Translation work is an endless task in which the Bible Societies assist in the goal of providing the Scriptures to every person on earth in the language he can read and understand.

Glory to God! His Truth marches on! It is powerful; it is timeless; it is international! The Gospel is for all. †

Bobby R. Key is editor of *Four State Gospel News* and lives in Miami, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Ten Mistakes to Avoid

REMORSE over yesterday's failures.

ANXIETY over today's problems.

WORRY over tomorrow's problems.

WASTE of the moment's opportunity.

PROCRASTINATION with one's present duty.

RESENTMENT of another's success.

CRITICISM of a neighbor's imperfection.

IMPATIENCE with youth's immaturity.

SKEPTICISM of our nation's future.

UNBELIEF in God's providence.

— from Bulletin Digest

Bible Reading And Bible Study

Tony W. Boyd

Christians are to be known as people of the Book. The only way that can be true is for us to spend much time with God's Word. The study of God's Word is the most enriching and beneficial activity a person can do in this world. Many of us, however, never learn how to study the Bible.

First, we need to develop the **habit** of regular Bible reading. Set aside a certain time each day to read the Bible. Do this each and every day at the same time, and in the same place. Begin and end each period of Bible reading with prayer. Psychologists say that if we do something for 21 days, it becomes a habit. If necessary, read from a text Bible that has no cross-references, to remove those distracting notes. Write down many questions for future study. This type of reading program promotes familiarity with the entire Bible. A broad overview is important to give a good perspective of what God's will is as a

whole. So often preachers and others get blinded to the whole picture because all they do is select various parts and never put them into their proper context. *The broad view will help us rightly divide the Word of Truth.*

Once we have the habit of reading the Bible, we need to cultivate the habit of study. Simply extend the time we have already allotted for reading, perhaps dividing it this way: spend a period of time reading from the Bible, a period of time in prayer, then a period of time devoted to personal prayer and study (not merely reading). A person who studies this way at home will go into Bible class prepared to participate. Somewhere we got the idea that Bible class was to study the Bible — when in reality it is designed to share the study that we have done on our own. The more we put **into** preparation for Bible class, the more we get **out**.

Use these guidelines for your

THE WORD OF GOD

study time:

(1) Study one chapter at a time. Read it over and over until you are thoroughly familiar with what it says. Be looking for promises, commands, conditions, sins, etc. that you should remember. Look at other translations.

(2) Take notes as you read (notes should include important information you want to remember and questions to look into later), but don't look into other passages yet. Write down words that you do not know and might want to look up.

(3) Use a good study Bible to run the cross-references and look up the words you wrote down in step 2. Use a **Bible** dictionary to look up words you don't understand. Use a good concordance (Young's, Strong's or Cruden's) to look up other occurrences of these words to help you understand their Bible meaning.

(4) After all this is done, write a clear concise statement of what you believe the passage means. Example: In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul is describing **agape** love as the most important spiritual gift, and one that will endure beyond the day of judgment.

(5) You will notice that there has been no mention of commentaries or a lot of books. These can be helpful, but should be used only

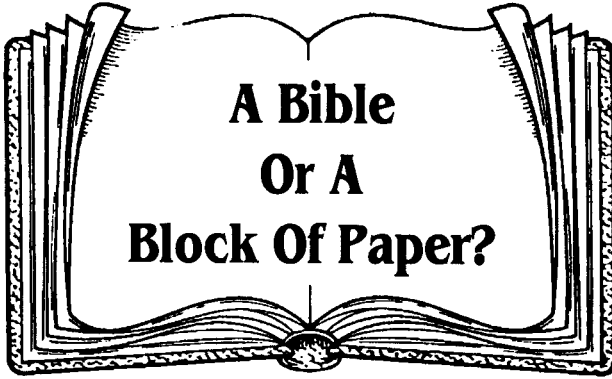
after a thorough examination of the passage(s) on your own. Even when you do turn to a commentary, don't accept that man's ideas as anything more than his opinion. His words are not inspired. While using these men's books, be sure to compare what they say with the Scriptures.

(6) This method is not going to get you through the Bible quickly, because to do this properly will take several hours per chapter, perhaps even longer if the material is complex or difficult to understand. You will find that any effort you put forth to study the Bible will be well-spent. The benefits of quality Bible study far outweigh the costs in time, money, and energy.

These are merely suggestions and can be modified to fit your desires and your schedules. This is just one method out of many. The key is to make your study plan **yours**, but continue it once it is developed.

Just reading the Bible is not sufficient. David speaks often in the Psalms of **meditating** on the Laws of God. This involves thought, memorization, application. Study is required to properly use the Word of God. †

Tony W. Boyd preaches for the Jadwin congregation near Salem, Missouri, U. S. A.



Jerrie Barber

“I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).

Historians have related the story of Abdul Kassem Ismael, the scholarly high-ranking official of Persia in the tenth century. He had a library of 117,000 volumes.

On his many travels as a warrior and statesman, he never parted with his books. They were carried about by 400 camels that were trained to walk in alphabetical order. His camel-driver librarians could put their hands on any book their master requested.

This leader valued his books very highly.

God’s Word, the Bible, is more valuable than all the other books

ever written. But many never profit from its riches of wisdom and instruction. As someone said, “A book, tight shut, is but a block of paper.” God’s truth must be read and obeyed to be effective.

Fred W. Cropp, a president of the American Bible Society, received a letter asking a question, “What do you recommend for keeping the leather on the back of Bibles from getting stiff, cracking, and peeling?”

His reply: “There is one oil that is especially good for treatment of leather on Bibles. In fact, it will insure your Bible to stay in good condition. It is not sold, but may be found in the palm of the human hand.”

Does your Bible need oiling?

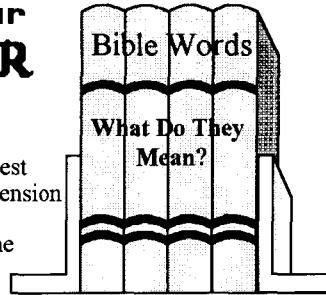
Is your Bible God’s book, or a block of paper? †

Jerrie Barber preaches for the West Nashville Heights Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

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 of Acts 2:24-39. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.



1. **Lord** *n.*—A: common byword. B: a member of the English parliament. C: supreme or master. D: Husband.
2. **foes** *n.*—A: hateful opposers, enemies. B: a visiting soccer team. C: the Mafia. C: the secret service.
3. **footstool** *n.*—A: a pedestal. B: a commode. C: to place a foot upon the vanquished. D: a coffee-table.
4. **Israel** *n.*—A: a modern nation south of Lebanon. B: the Arabs. C: the Muslims. D: posterity of Jacob.
5. **house** *n.*—A: a wooden or brick structure. B: a household or family. C: a genealogy or family tree. D: domicile.
6. **know** *v.*—A: appreciate. B: experience. C: reach an understanding. D: decide.
7. **assuredly** *adv.*—A: forwardly. B: believe safely. C: presumptuously. D: guardedly.
8. **crucified** *v.*—A: drove down stakes; B: put to death. C: hanged or suspended. D: nailed.
9. **pricked** *v.*—perforated. B: punctured. C: pain the mind sharply. D: to drill a hole through something.
10. **heart** *n.*—A: courage. B: soul. C: bosom. D: center of physical or spiritual life.
11. **do** *v.*—A: to cause to happen. B: response performance; C: to serve someone. D: chance.
12. **repent** *v.*—A: to change one's mind for better. B: to be sorry for something done. C: to make a resolution. D: to preach.
13. **baptized** *v.*—A: to be immersed in water. B: to have water poured or sprinkled upon one. C: to be anointed with oil. D: to undergo suffering or pain.
14. **for** *p.*—A: because one has received salvation. B: considering the goodness in one's heart. C: unto or in order to receive salvation. D: optional.
15. **remission** *n.*—A: liberty or deliverance from. B: temporary relief. C: negligent. D: delinquent.
16. **receive** *v.*—A: catch a ball. B: to inherit. C: to be subpoenaed by a court. D: to become a recipient of something.

"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"



1. **Lord**— (Gk. kurios) C: supreme, or master.
2. **foes**— (Gk. echthros) A: hateful opposers, enemies. The last enemy (foe) to be destroyed is death; see I Cor. 15:26.
3. **footstool**— (Gk. pous) C; to place a foot upon one's enemy. This means final victory such as described in Revelation 20:14 where both Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire.
4. **Israel**— (Gk. Israel) D: the posterity of Jacob.
5. **house**— (Gk. oikos) B: a household or family.
6. **know**— (Gk. ginosko) C: reach an understanding. They had crucified Jesus, now they must understand by his being raised from the dead that he is both Lord and Christ.
7. **assuredly**— (Gk. asphalos) B: believe safely. Peter had witnessed Jesus' resurrection, therefore the word of salvation he had preached to them that Jesus was the Son of God was unequivocally true.
8. **crucified**— (Gk. stauroo) A: drive down stakes. Crucifixion was performed by nailing a criminal's feet to a stake and nailing his hands to a transverse beam stretching behind his shoulders. They then drove or dropped the stake into a hole in the ground which supported the impaled felon until death.
9. **pricked**— (Gk. katanusso) C: pain the mind sharply. Peter, on the night he betrayed Jesus, wept bitterly. See Matthew 26:75
10. **heart**— (Gk. kardia) D: the center of physical or spiritual life. In this context it is obvious that the stabbing

pain was inflicted upon the spiritual center of emotions causing them to cry out for relief from their awful feeling of condemnation for having crucified Jesus.

11. **do**— (Gk. poieo) B: response performance. In each case of conversion in *Acts* the candidate is asked to make a responsive deed showing faith; e.g. in this context, to be baptized. Saul of Tarsus was caught in a similar situation in Acts 9 on the road to Damascus. Paul revealed what was told him to do in Acts 22:16. Upon being told to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins, he obeyed immediately.

12. **repent**— (Gk. metanoeo) A: to change one's mind for the better. It includes sorrow over sins, but joined with a turning from sin.

13. **baptized**— (Gk. baptizo) A: to be immersed in water. It also means to dip, plunge or overwhelm. It can mean overwhelmed in suffering or pain, but in this context water baptism is under consideration.

14. **for**— (Gk. eis) C: unto, or in order to obtain. In context here meaning to obtain the remission of sins.

15. **remission**— (Gk. aphasis) A: liberty or deliverance from. They were told to repent and be baptized looking forward to the deliverance from sins.

16. **receive**— (Gk. lambano) D: to be a recipient of something. In this context they would receive a cleansed conscious and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Vocabulary Scale

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

The Gehenna

Hans J. Dederscheck

There is a Hebrew word in the Old Testament which means “the valley of the son of Hinnom.” We find this terminology in Joshua 15:8 and 2 Kings 23:10. Indeed, it is a deep depression situated to the south of the city of Jerusalem. There was celebrated the pagan worship of the idol called Moloch. The kings Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their children (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). Josiah was the famous king who reformed the religious life in those days and called it an “unclean place” (2 Kings 23:10). In that place were burned dead bodies and refuse (Jeremiah 31:40; Isaiah 66:24).

The prophets of God pronounced judgments on that valley. In their preaching Hinnom became the scene of the coming punishment (Jeremiah 7:3-8; 19:6; Isaiah 31:9).

In the New Testament doctrine of Christ, Gehenna stands for eternal punishment, no longer localized in the valley of Hinnom as such. As we look at the term “Gehenna,” we find that there are many equivalent expressions:

- ❖ The eternal fire (Mat. 18:8-9; 25:41)
- ❖ Unquenchable fire (Mat. 3:12; Mark 9:44-48)
- ❖ The fire and the worm (Mark 9:48)
- ❖ The furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42)
- ❖ The lake of fire (Revelation 20:14)

- ❖ Fire and brimstone (Rev. 14:10; 19:20)
- ❖ The torment (Rev. 14:10-11; Luke 16:23)
- ❖ The pit (Revelation 20:3)
- ❖ Eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46)
- ❖ Outer darkness (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30)

Of course, the context confronts us with a little problem. How can Gehenna be a place of fire and darkness at the same time? The symbols are quite clear. To Israel, fire was always a symbol for the presence of God (Exodus 19:18; 40:38; Deuteronomy 4:12; 5:4). The same was said regarding God’s holiness, which cannot endure evil. God destroys by fire all that displeases Him. *“For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains”* (Deuteronomy 32:22).

The Gehenna as such has no power, but the Lord God imposes punishment by fire. The “outer darkness” stands in opposition to “light,” which is salvation and life eternal. This we will understand even better as we realize that outside the kingdom of heaven there is only darkness (sin), (Matthew 22:13). †

Hans J. Dederscheck preaches the Gospel in Vienna, Austria.



Precious Things Cost Nothing

Godfried Kwao

Life's indispensable and substituteless things cost almost nothing. Because they have no price tags, man does not see their importance: the sun, air, water, etc. There are no manufacturing companies which make these things. Our Divine Father has perfected and put them in place for us to enjoy and use. What if we did not have the sun, air, and water? Human, animal, and plant life would cease.

Man without the Gospel ceases to exist spiritually.

God has given us the Gospel in its perfect divine form, no blemish, no spots, pure! Because the Gospel is free, men do not see its importance. If God were to put a price tag on it, surely millions would be attracted to it. Instead of spending no farthing to embrace pure Christianity, man chooses to spend thousands to subscribe to lies and erroneous doctrines.

Our salvation was designed from the very beginning of human

life, Genesis 3:15. It is impossible to diminish the value of something that dates back to the beginning of human life. The Gospel has no equal; Christianity is second to none. Man gains everything in Christianity — safety from misery here on planet earth, and hellfire hereafter. Though difficult times do come in the Christian's life, these are nothing compared to the manifold blessings that come his way.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isaiah 55:1, 2). †

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

Should We Be Dogmatic?

Hollis Miller

In his introduction to Benjamin Warfield's work, **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible**, Cornelius Van Til said: "The Christian is bound to believe and hold that his system of doctrine is certainly true and that other systems are certainly false." If the system of doctrine to which Van Til referred is understood as the teaching of Jesus and His apostles as it is recorded in the New Testament, then every believer in the New Testament's authority must surely agree. A Christian cannot say, "God probably exists," or "Christ probably arose from the dead." These propositions belong to the very foundation of Christian faith. He who would come to God **MUST** believe that He exists, and if Christ has not risen, then we are still in our sins (Hebrews 11:6; 1 Corinthians 15:17).

Christian faith cannot be successfully compromised. When Jesus said that the man who rejects Him will be judged by His Word (John 12:48), He did not add, "Unless a more promising system of truth should later be unveiled." And when John declared that keeping God's commandments is equal to knowing Him (1 John 1:3ff), he did not add, "Unless one should discover a superior commandment."

If the Bible teaches a doctrine, then Christians may certainly be dogmatic in their belief of it. How can one believe something and at the same time be skeptical toward it? One can and should seek further enlightenment about Bible doctrines, but that is not the same as disbelief of them. Rather, it belongs in the biblical category of growth.

Every Christian owes both to himself and others the debt of properly distinguishing between Bible doctrine and personal opinion. In opinion, one should not be dogmatic. Romans chapter fourteen is quite clear in teaching that personal opinion should remain just that, personal opinion. Great liberty can be enjoyed among brethren in matters of opinion without disturbing the unity of faith which all believers hold in common. A good knowledge of the Scriptures will usually settle easily any question about what is doctrine and what is opinion. Problems arising over differences in opinion are more often the result of lack of love and ignorance of the Scriptures than of genuine desire to learn truth. †

Hollis Miller is a preacher of the Gospel in Elkton, Kentucky, U. S. A.

The Beauty Of Women's Roles

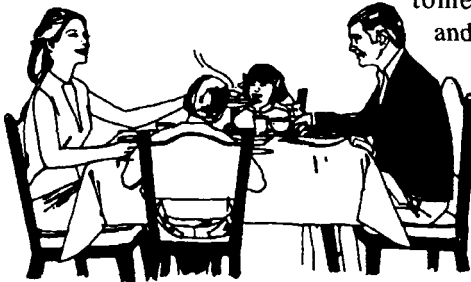
Jane McWhorter

When the church was established a wonderful team of both men and women was formed to take the Gospel to the lost world, to edify those within the church, and to care for the needs of mankind. In His infinite wisdom, God gave different roles to these men and women, and even today the effectiveness of the team depends upon how well each does his or her designated part.

Some cite Galatians 3:28 as proof that there is no distinction between the roles of men and women. This passage, however, deals with the worth of Christians in God's sight, not the abolition of roles. There are still the roles of husbands and

wives, parents and children, governments and citizens, elders and congregations, etc. The roles of men and women were defined at the time of creation, even before the fall, and they still apply today.

Others say that the early restrictions were simply based on culture, and since we are no longer living in that culture, those customs are not binding today. We must remember that 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 were addressed to a Hellenistic culture of people who were accustomed to hearing and seeing priestesses in religious leadership and delivering divine oracles at the tem-



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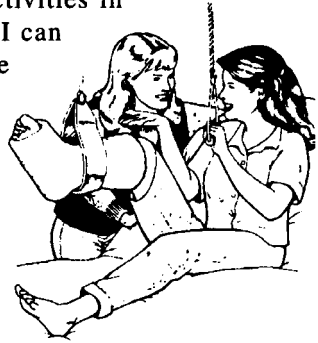
ples. Paul admonished the Christian women to be different.

1 Timothy 2, which involves a **BROAD PRINCIPLE** concerning the roles of men and women in spiritual matters, teaches that the woman must learn in a respectful quietness and in no way teach **OVER** the man or have **AUTHORITY** over him (because of the original hierarchy of roles according to verse 13), although she certainly is free to teach a man by her example (1 Peter 3:1), by quietly teaching as Priscilla did (Acts 18:26), or by making comments in a class situation.

The broad principle of 1 Timothy 2 was applied to a specific situation in 1 Corinthians 14, when the whole group had assembled and public speaking was being done. Although the men had to take turns and remain silent at times for the sake of things being done decently and in order, whenever any authoritarian roles of speaking were being exercised, the women had to remain silent (not a word) for an additional reason: "as also saith the law," the original law of roles given at the time of creation.

As a woman, God has given me a very special role in the work of the church. While I am forbidden to assume a position of authority, in any way, over a man in spiritual matters, there are more unquestion-

able activities in which I can engage than I can possibly accomplish in my life-



time. In His wisdom, God has delegated to the male the roles of authority, such as public prayers, public speaking, and decision-making. But I am a woman. God has given me different abilities from those of a man, and together we make a great team. It is a man who preaches about the Christian's responsibilities to those who are sick; but we women are the ones who usually send cards, keep the children, prepare food for the family, and generally minister to their needs. It is a woman's eyes and ears that normally look beneath deceiving outward layers and detect a heart that is troubled. We care for the needs of others in ways that most men never even think about. God has designed a very special role of women in His service; it is a beautiful place of honor. May we never doubt His wisdom. †

Jane McWhorter is a Christian writer living in Fayette, Alabama, U. S. A.

The Most Dangerous Sin

Gordon Hogan

The story is told of a young mother who left her baby in the shade of a big tree and went on her way working in the field nearby. Being busy, she forgot her child. When she finally returned, the summer sun had been shining for some time in the baby's face and blinded it for life. The mother meant no harm, but she and her baby had to pay heavily for her neglect.

The Bible repeatedly warns of the danger of neglect. Of all sins, the sin of negligence is the most dangerous. In the following paragraphs we will relate some reasons why this is true.

Neglect is dangerous because of its deceptive nature. God's people recognize murder, lying, drunkenness, adultery, and stealing as great sins, but are often deluded concerning neglect of the many deeds of righteousness that should be attended to. We are alarmed concerning sins of commission, but fail to become alarmed with sins of omission.

Neglect is dangerous because it requires no effort. Energy is required to involve a person in the sins of commission, but no effort in the sins of omission. For instance, it takes no effort to avoid those in need, ignore teaching all those to whom we have an opportunity to proclaim the truth, to fail to attend worship and Bible study periods, or to avoid doing whatever we have the ability to do in the service of God.

Neglect is dangerous because it is at the root of other sins. A cultivated field is free of weeds, but a neglected field is soon filled with weeds and thorns. The very best preventive against all forms of evil is the proper performance of our duty. When David of the Old Testament became idle, he was led into adultery with Bathsheba. When idle, we are liable to become fault-finders and sowers of discord among the people of God.

Neglect is dangerous because it is contrary to the spirit and purpose of the Gospel. The law of Israel said, "Thou shalt not." The Gospel says,

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"Thou shalt." The aim of many today is merely to "be good," but the Lord wants us to "do good," as well as "be good" (Acts 10:38).

Neglect is dangerous because negligent people will be lost. This truth is borne out when we read Matthew 25:14-30. The servant of this parable was not charged with cruelty or immorality or dishonesty, yet he was cursed — cursed because he buried his talent, neglected his opportunity. You have heard the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Now we are asking, "What must I do to be lost?" In one word, "Nothing!"

If a boy falls into a fast, rushing river, he must put forth effort in order to be saved, but no effort is required to be lost. Man is already lost in sin (Romans 3:23). He needs only to neglect the means of his salvation to be eternally lost. †

Gordon Hogan has been a missionary in Asia since 1961. He is Missionary-in-Residence at OCU.



- Watch your thoughts;**
they become words.
- Watch your words;**
they become actions.
- Watch your actions;**
they become habits.
- Watch your habits;**
they become character.
- Watch your character;**
it becomes your destiny.

No Time

I knelt to pray, but not for long,
I had too much to do.
Must hurry off and get to work,
For bills would soon be due.

And so I said a hurried prayer,
And jumped up from my knees;
My Christian duty now was
done,
My soul could be at ease.

All through the day I had no time
To spread a word of cheer.
No time to speak of Christ to
friends —
They'd laugh at me I fear.

No time, no time, too much to
do,
That was my constant cry.
No time to give to those in need;
At last 'twas time to die.

And when before the Lord I
came,
I stood with downcast eyes;
Within His hands He held a
book,
It was the "Book of Life."

God Looked into His Book
and said,
"Your name I just can't find.
I started once to write it down —
But you never took the time"

— Selected

The Blood Of Christ

Basil Overton

The Bible teaches that all are sinners (Romans 3:23). Surely this means all who are accountable to God, and would not include infants and small children who have not reached an age of accountability.

Neither would mentally-deficient people be included.

The Bible also teaches that sinners are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Everyone needs to know the meaning of this.

Blood Of Christ Incorruptible

To Christians, the Spirit said: "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (manner of life) received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

Obviously, Peter did not mean that the literal blood of Jesus was not corruptible.

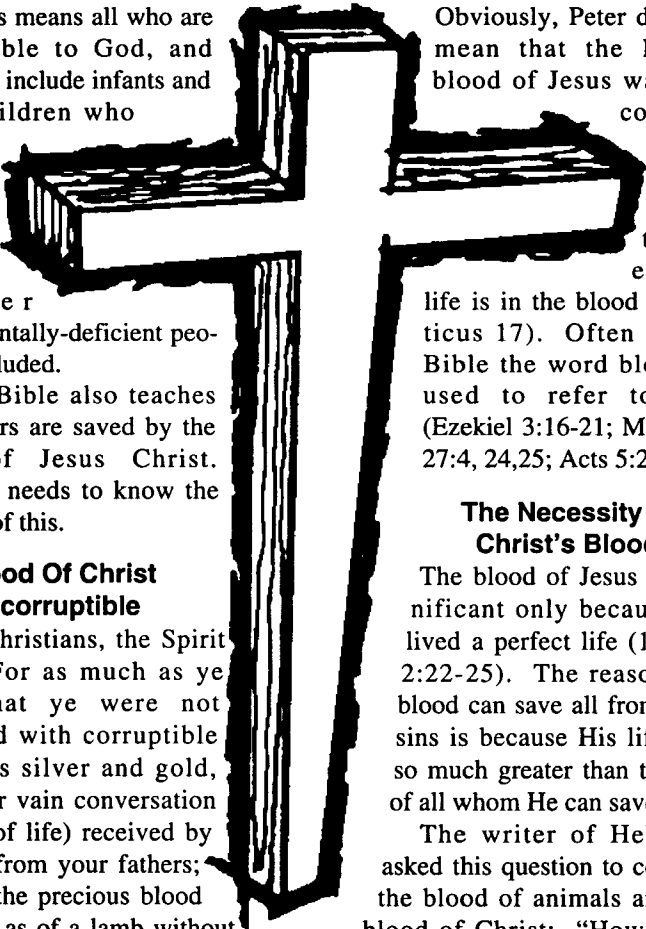
The Bible teaches that

life is in the blood (Leviticus 17). Often in the Bible the word blood is used to refer to life (Ezekiel 3:16-21; Matthew 27:4, 24,25; Acts 5:28).

The Necessity of Christ's Blood

The blood of Jesus is significant only because He lived a perfect life (1 Peter 2:22-25). The reason His blood can save all from their sins is because His life was so much greater than the life of all whom He can save.

The writer of Hebrews asked this question to contrast the blood of animals and the blood of Christ: "How much



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more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Paul told the Ephesian brethren that they were once away from God because of their sins, but that they had

Where Does The Blood Of Christ Save?

God's Son died and shed His blood, and this suffering is accepted by God as punishment for our sins, if we meet His conditions of pardon. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our

"In whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14).

been made near to God by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:12,13). Paul also explained: "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14).

Without controversy, precious is the blood of Christ! Because He died and shed His blood we can have the remission of our sins. But, to be saved by His blood there are certain conditions that we must meet. If there were no conditions, then all would be saved, because God's word says that Christ died for all of mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:9).

iniquities . . . " (Isaiah 53:5). It is because Jesus shed His blood that God pardons the sinner who obeys His will (Hebrews 5:8,9). But, where does the sinner reach the saving power of the blood of Christ?

The Bible says that redemption by the blood of Christ is in Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). Hence, no one can be saved by the blood of Christ out of Christ! It is not enough to tell people that the blood of Christ saves; we must also tell them with equal clarity where the blood of Christ saves, and how to reach the place where it saves!

To get into Christ where the

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blood of Christ saves, one must believe that Christ is the Savior (John 8:24). Those who thus believe must also repent of their sins, and then be baptized into Christ, where they can be saved by the blood of Christ.

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3, 4).

One cannot reach the benefits of the death of Christ until he is baptized into His death. This is exactly why we urge people to obey the Gospel; we urge them to be baptized into Christ and into His death. Baptism puts one into Christ, or into His body, which is His church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The same obedience that makes one a Christian at the same time makes one a member of the church of the New Testament. Gospel obedience will not make one a member of a denomination, but of the Lord's church. The blood saves in the body of Christ, His church. †

Basil Overton is editor of *The World Evangelist* in Florence, Alabama.



“There Is One Body”

Perry N. Hall

The one body, of which the apostle Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:4, is the one church, or kingdom, founded by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Christ is the Savior of the body, or church (Ephesians 5:23), having purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He adds to it those penitent believers who have been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; Mark 16:16). It is governed by Christ through the Word of God, its only creed book (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Human churches, wearing human names, teaching human doctrines, and governed by human arrangements, exist without the authority of God. †

Perry N. Hall preaches the Gospel in Tyler, Texas, U. S. A.

Who Can Be — And Is — Accepted Of God?

Robert L. Moss

“Who can be — *and is* — accepted of God?” This question is important. It deals directly with the salvation of one’s soul, for the soul cannot be saved and dwell eternally with God if it is not first accepted of God. Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, answers our question: “. . . *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him*” (Acts 10:34,35).

Not only did Peter state the fact that God is no respecter of persons, but Paul also realized this, stating, “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” (Romans 10:12).

The Scriptures reveal that all people have the opportunity of salvation through the Gospel. Paul stated that God “. . . *will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). Other passages note that “*all*” may come unto Jesus (Matthew 11:28); that “*whosoever will*” may come (Revelation 22:17); and “*all that obey Him*” (Jesus

may be saved (Hebrews 5:9).

Peter said that the fear of God is essential to being accepted of Him. Romans 1:18 warns of the condemnation of those who reject the supremacy of God.

Peter stated that in order for one to be accepted of God, he/she must work righteousness. We are told that righteousness does not come by the law (Old Testament law), but by faith (Revelation 3:22; 4:13; Philippians 3:9). We are also told that righteousness is found in Christ (1 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:29). Therefore, one must get into Christ through faith. “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:27). Romans 6:3,4 further defines how our salvation is achieved through a living, acting, working faith. “Working righteousness” demands obedience to God’s teachings in the New Testament.

We conclude, therefore, that everyone who fears God and works righteousness, may be — *and is* — accepted of Him. †

Robert L. Moss is the preacher for the church in Branson, Missouri, U. S. A.

Grace Through Faith

Ray Hawk

Before I became a member of the body of Christ, I visited with a woman's husband who was a member of the church of Christ and dying of cancer. He told me, "Preacher, the church of Christ religion is a good one to live by, but a poor one to die by." That man's problem, and the dilemma in the mind of many others is, "How can I be saved when I have not lived a sinlessly perfect life?"

The problem with that question is that the one asking is looking at salvation from the view of the Old Testament. The Law of Moses demanded sinless perfection. Paul bemoaned the fact that he could not measure up to that standard (Romans 7:10, 15, 19). No one but Jesus did. The idea that we must live perfect lives or have more good points than we have bad ones, is not New Testament Christianity. We are not saved by the works of the Law, nor by a good point — bad point system, but by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Even under the Law of Moses, God showed that one could not be saved separate and apart from Him. The first time one sinned, he was

just as guilty as someone who had broken all the commandments ("For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," James 2:10). Since the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins, there was no justification in the Law or its works (Hebrews 10:1-4; Galatians 2:16). How then could Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, or others be saved? By grace through faith. "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Some think grace is restricted to the New Testament. No so. Noah found "grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Those who lived by faith under God's grace in the Old Testament "obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39, 40). In Jesus, those who lived by faith under the Patriarchal and Mosaic systems, are made one with us (Ephesians 1:10).

Regardless of what one has done, when he believes the Gospel of Christ, repents of his past sins,

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confesses the precious name of Jesus, and is buried with his Lord in baptism, he is saved by God (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9, 10; Romans 6:3, 4). That is salvation by grace through faith. Christians are not saved because they live sinless lives, but because they walk in the light. From Adam to Christ, men were saved by grace through faith. From the cross to our day, men are saved by grace through faith. As Paul puts it, "from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17).

Abraham was called "The Friend of God," yet he did not live a sinless life (James 2:23). If Abraham was saved without sinless perfection, we are too.

No matter how good a person is, when he is confronted with the perfection, glory, and majesty of God, he cries out as did Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). That does not mean we are lost. In and of ourselves we are undone. Our hope rests in God's grace through our faith. May we learn to appreciate God's love, mercy, and grace. When we do, we will not make the statement which that dying member of the church did back in 1956. †

Ray Hawk works with the Campbell Street church in Jackson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

WHEN NO ONE CARES...

"... as you have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

The apostle Paul commended these good people because they were just as faithful in their obedience to God when he was gone from them as when he was with them. It isn't always this way. We have the Sunday Christians who wouldn't be recognized as such on weekdays. There is nothing finer than to be consistent in our actions and attitudes. It is unfortunate when Christian parents can't be the same at home as on the job, or at church services.

A flower does not bloom more beautifully because there are many who are watching with appreciation. It would be just as lovely in a deserted place with no eyes to admire it. The stars shine down with as much wonder and mystery in the untraveled desert as in the crowded cities. We are still who we are . . . wherever we are. To wear the name "Christian" is an honor . . . and a responsibility.

— A. W. Chism

Moving Ahead To Finish Our Faith

Garell L. Forehand

Most of those who will read this article will have already recognized the intense need for each accountable human being to respond to God with faith. How else could this concept be viewed by Bible believers in light of the tremendous amount of evidence in its favor? Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). At the commissioning of His apostles, He also said, "He who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Paul was led by God to tell Christians that they had been justified (or made righteous) "by faith" (Romans 5:1). The Hebrews writer pointedly declared, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). There is just no denying the necessity of faith in order that accountable people may obtain true hope of salvation.

But having read and accepted that much of the story, it appears that probably a majority of people in the religious world today have

not yet finished the biblical account on the subject of faith toward God. You see, it is possible for a farmer to sow his fields and to never harvest them. It is possible for a runner to start a race, but to never complete it. And the Bible makes clear that it is possible for an individual to begin the faith process, feeling that his response is adequate, but to have left the process unfinished and incapable of completing his salvation.

Let's notice a couple of examples. John 12:42, 43 reveals, "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Clearly, those Jewish rulers had begun the faith process toward Jesus Christ. But faith is not finished until it leads one to obey the requirements of faith. Jesus has made clear to us that confessing Him is a part of the process of finishing faith (Matthew 10:32,

33). And those two elements of response are separate from one another (e.g., you believe with the heart, and you confess with the mouth, Romans 10:10), though they are both contingent upon one another in finishing the required response to the Lord.

Another compelling example is brought to our attention in the inspired epistle of James. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!" (James 2:19). Several examples in the first part of the book of Mark demonstrate that potent belief in God and His Son by the demons. They accept the reality of Christ's existence and authority. They even will go the next step of confessing Jesus to be God's Son (Mark 5:7, 8). But their deep-seated intellectual faith did not provide the obedience in their lives required by God of all those who will come to Him for salvation.

James indicates that if you intellectually believe in the true God, then you are on the right track of completing the process of faith; and that is good, to that degree. But he goes on to indicate the vanity of stopping at that point. Saving faith is just not finished when one arrives at that moment. †

Garell L. Forehand preaches for the Granbury Street church in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.

Bible Vitals For Salvation

There are a number of things to which salvation is ascribed to in the Holy Scriptures. We are saved by:

1. Hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17).
2. Faith (Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 17:30, 31).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10).
5. Baptism (1 Peter 3:21).
6. Calling on His name (Acts 2:21).
Please note that there is a difference in calling out the Lord's name and calling on the name of the Lord (Matthew 7:21).
7. Hope (Romans 8:24).
8. Preaching (1 Corinthians 1:18).
9. The gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1, 2).
10. Love (Galatians 5, 6).
11. Grace (Ephesians 2:8, 9).
12. Working (Philippians 2:12).
13. God's mercy (Titus 3:5).
14. Obedience (Hebrews 5:8, 9).
15. The blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14).

Are you leaving out any of these Bible vitals? Not one of these alone will save but all combined result in salvation.

Bill Dillon

There Is No Difference

T. Pierce Brown

Paul, in speaking of the salvation of the Jew and Gentile, said in Romans 3:22, “. . . *There is no difference.*” There are many things in which there is difference, but it may be of value for us to consider the common lot of mankind and think of some things in which there is no difference. It may not only help us to sympathize with those in sorrow, or help those in trouble, but also aid those in a search for salvation.

First, there is no basic difference in the physical processes and needs of mankind, whether he be rich or poor, black or white, wise or foolish, old or young, Indian, African, or American. We all have sorrow and gladness, hope and despair, fear and courage, love and hate. Those are common, although they may not be about the same things or to the same degree.

Second, there is no difference in the fact of sin in every accountable person. Romans 3:23 says, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” All mankind

needs Christ as a Savior. Many times we have heard persons say, “Sin is sin, and there is no difference in sin, for it will all cause you to be lost.” It is true that sin is sin, and any sin of which one does not repent and of which he is not forgiven will cost him his soul. It is true that there is no difference in the FACT of sin. It is not true, however, that there is no difference in the kinds or degrees of sin. It is not simply the case that mine are little and yours are big. We have heard persons pray something like this: “Lord, save the lost from their sins, and forgive us of our mistakes and shortcomings.” So, it is not that you have sins and I have merely mistakes and shortcomings. Yet, no one can read the Bible thoughtfully without being aware that there is a difference in the kinds and degrees of sin. Jesus said to Pilate in John 19:11, “. . . *They that delivered me unto thee had a greater sin.*” Matthew 21:31 indicates that the sin of self-righteous hypocrisy is worse

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in some respects than harlotry. It is also clear that Jesus measures the punishment to fit the sin, for He says in Luke 12:47, "*And that servant which knew his lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*" In Matthew 12:38-40 He shows that there will be "greater condemnation" for some than for others. The point in this article is that there is no difference in the fact that every person sins. Whether the sin is looked upon as great or small, it will cause us to be lost until we are saved by the blood of Christ as we accept His gracious offer on His terms.

Third, there is no difference in the fact of God's love for each of us. He may love us in different ways, or in different amounts. But regardless of how bad your sin, He loves you and wants you to be saved. It is still hard for me to grasp that fantastic truth. Man cannot fall so low that God will not love and save him if he will repent and turn to God in God's appointed way. It is true that men may become so depraved and refuse to have God in their knowledge that God will give them up to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:22). It is also true that God ". . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Fourth, there is no difference in the plan of salvation for all mankind. When Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6), He left us no alternatives. It is still true that if one does not believe in Jesus, he will die in his sins (John 8:24). It is still true that if one does not repent, he will perish (Luke 13:3). It is still true that if one is unwilling to confess Christ as Lord, he has no promise of salvation (Romans 10:10). It is still true that baptism (the kind authorized by Christ) saves us (1 Peter 3:21). If you have not done those things, we hope you will realize that it makes no difference what else you do, you have no promise of salvation from God. †

T. Pierce Brown, preacher and writer, lives in Wartrace, Tennessee, U. S. A.

...For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:22-26

We Can Never Leave The Fundamentals

Wendell Winkler

A builder will lay a good foundation, and then build his superstructure. However, when the building is completed he does not remove the foundation. If anything, he will strengthen it.

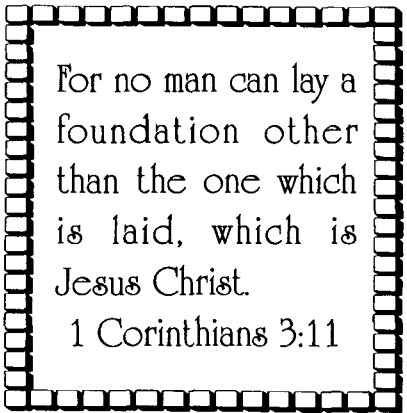
In like manner, in the field of mathematics, the student may study algebra, geometry, trigonometry, multiplication, and division.

Similarly, in studying our Bibles, we must “*go on unto perfection*” (Hebrews 6:1). We must “*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord*” (2 Peter 3:18). We must learn the meat of the Word (Hebrews 5:12-14). But, we must never forsake or depreciate the basic fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ. Rather, we must emphasize and re-emphasize them. If we do not know what the Bible teaches on basic Bible themes, we need to learn such. If we have studied them extensively, we still need to have

our minds stirred up by way of remembrance (2 Peter 1:12-15). After years of thorough and extensive study of the Sacred Text, David Lipscomb was studying the subject of baptism one day when he was discovered doing so by a student. The student expressed to brother Lipscomb his surprise that he would be studying such a fundamental theme. Brother Lipscomb replied to the young man, “I’m afraid there is still something about the subject I do not know.” We can never leave the fundamentals.

Then let us never forget that each new generation must be taught anew the fundamentals. Only herein does our safety lie! Seriously, may we remain cognizant that we are only one generation from apostasy. †

Wendell Winkler is Chairman of the Bible Dept. at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, U. S. A.



For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11

The Book of John for adults

Fill in the blanks, then arrange the numbered letters to solve the Key Verse.

Jesus said, "I am the..."

_____ of _____ -John 6:35
6 9 3

_____ of the _____ -John 8:12
8 5

_____ of the _____ -John 10:7
12

_____ -John 10:14
11 7 2 13

_____ and the
10

_____ -John 11:25

_____ , _____ and the _____
4 1 _____ -John 14:6

_____ -John 15:1

Key Verse:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

The Value of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:44-46

Gary C. Hampton



Men who find the Kingdom of God find His pearl of great price.

The Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price

These parables are short and simple, yet powerful. In the first, a man found a treasure in a field. He

then hid it and went to buy the field so that he could possess the treasure. In those days it was common for one to hide treasure in the ground for safekeeping. If the one

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who hid it died, the treasure's whereabouts might not be known. Some have suggested that hiding the treasure again was unethical. However, Edersheim says in *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*, "It was, at least, in entire accordance with the Jewish law . . . The law went so far as to adjudge to the purchaser of fruits anything found among these fruits."

In the second parable, a merchant was seeking beautiful pearls. When he found one of great value, he sold everything to buy it. While the man who found the treasure in the field likely did so by accident, this merchant knew he was looking for valuable pearls. The truth can be found accidentally or very intentionally. McGarvey suggests that the Samaritan woman was an example of the former and the Ethiopian eunuch of the latter (John 4; Acts 8). It does not matter how one finds it, as long as he recognizes its potential and gives up all to possess it.

The Supreme Value of the Kingdom Calls Us To Sacrifice All

The kingdom of God is worth more than all other possessions. Its

value can be seen in the purchase price Jesus paid, His own blood (Acts 20:28)! One can see the worth of the kingdom by comparing the greatest possible wealth with losing one's soul (Matthew 16:24).

Knowing the true value of the

Once one realizes the true value of the kingdom, he will have an unquenchable desire to possess it.

kingdom should motivate one to seek it as the top priority in his life.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The Lord had noted the importance of following God as one's only master, because divided loyalty would cause one to fail (verse 24).

Once one realizes the true value of the kingdom, he will have an unquenchable desire to possess it. In fact, he will sacrifice all else to have the kingdom in his life (Matthew 16:24, 25). Paul described himself as a Jew of the highest standing. Yet, he willingly counted everything as loss in order to gain Christ (Philippians 3:7, 8). He also urged the brethren at Rome to present their bodies as living sacrifices — a reasonable service — which would be acceptable to God (Romans 12:1, 2).

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The Joy of Possessing the Kingdom

The man who found the hidden treasure reacted in a noteworthy way. *“And for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”* We have already seen that Paul gave up much to be a part of Christ’s kingdom. Yet, he could write in Philippians 4:4, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* He learned contentment in times of abasement or plenty. Want did not keep joy from Paul, because he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him (Philippians 4:10-13). One can rejoice in giving up all else because he has found something of ultimate value!

Perhaps the pearl merchant of Christ’s story gives us insight into the source of joy. He had a single purpose. When he found the object of that purpose, all else was surrendered to obtain the pearl (compare Philippians 3:13, 14). If we would experience the ultimate joy, we must focus on the single goal of heaven. Like the Ethiopian, those finding the will of God will not want to be hindered in their obedience. Once such is completed, they too will go on their way rejoicing (Acts 8:26-39)! †

Gary C. Hampton preaches the Gospel of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia, U. S. A.

What Does Baptism in Water Provide for a Person Who Accepts It?

Salvation

Salvation	Mark 16:16
Remission of Sins	Acts 2:38
Sins Washed Away	Acts 22:16
Putting Off Sins	Col. 2:11, 12
Forgiveness	Colossians 2:11, 12
Cleansing	Ephesians 5:26
Sanctification	Eph. 5:26
Redemption	Eph. 1:7

Born Again

Being Born Again	John 3:3-5
Blood of Christ	Romans 6:3, 4
Can Call on the Lord ...	Acts 22:16
Raised with Him ..	Colossians 2:12
Wear Christ’s Name ...	1 Cor. 10-15
Being God’s Child ...	Gal. 3:26, 27
Putting on Christ ...	Galatians 3:27

A New Creature

Being a New Creature ..	2 Cor. 5:17
A Good Conscience ...	1 Peter 3:21

Added to the Church

Added to the Church ...	Acts 2:41,47
Entering the Body	1 Cor. 12:13
Entering the Kingdom	Jn. 3:3-5

In Christ

Get into Christ	Galatians 3:27
All Spiritual Blessings	Eph. 1:3
Accepted of God	Eph. 1:6
Faithful	Eph. 1:2
Holy, Without Blame	Eph. 1:4
Heir to His Inheritance ..	Eph. 1:11
Sealed with His Spirit	Eph. 1:13

The



Body

Bill Nicks

That there is one body and only one body, the church, is made clear in the New Testament in Colossians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13,20; and Ephesians 4:4-6. In the latter passage, the same emphasis is given to the unity of the church as to the unity of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**Is the Bible
the Infallible Word of God?**

If so, and we earnestly believe it is, then there is no truth to the propositions that there are many true gods and many true churches. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 8:5ff, *"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."* In the same vein, there are many that are called churches, but there is only one true church, and that is the one built by Christ and described in the New Testament (Matthew 16:18).

Someone may say, "Do you mean your denomination is the only true church?" No, far from it. We are contending that the church revealed in the Bible is the only right church. There is a pattern revealed in the New Testament revealing every facet of the church of Christ (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1,7,8; Romans 6:17f). The church is a monarchy ruled over by Christ, the *"King of kings and the Lord of Lords"* (1 Timothy 6:15). He has all preeminence (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:18), since He died for the church (Acts 20:28). Therefore, the church is not a denomination at all, but is non-denominational and undenominational. Denominations feel they are branches of His body, but in reality, they are placing themselves in competition with and in rivalry to the body of Christ. Their man-given names and man-written creeds indicate their dissatisfaction with the names and doctrines given in the Bible. †

Bill Nicks is a former missionary to Africa and is now serving on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies.

The Changeless Church

W. Douglass Harris

Many in the church today are clamoring for change. They are saying that unless the church changes and becomes more contemporary that it cannot survive. This clamor is almost paradoxical, because man is constantly searching for the unchangeable – that which is constant, certain, and secure. Among those things which are unchangeable is the Lord's church. It is unchangeable in its essential features. Methods and expedients may change as good judgment dictates, but its divine structure can never be changed with God's approval.

A Subject of Inspiration

The changeless nature of the church is a subject of divine inspiration. Daniel predicted that it would never be destroyed and would stand forever (Daniel 2:44). It is affirmed by the writer of Hebrews that his readers had received a kingdom that could not be shaken (changed), or moved (Hebrews 12:28). This con-

cept also conforms to the teaching of the Lord, the builder of the church of the New Testament (Matthew 16:18).

Why The Church Is Changeless

1. It is the culmination of God's eternal purpose. To the Ephesians Paul affirmed that "*to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Ephesians 3:10, 11). The church is not an afterthought of God, or an accident or contingency that He was forced into as a substitute for the kingdom. In fact, the Scriptures teach that they are one and the same (see Matthew 16:18, 19; Colossians 1:13). God purposed the church from the beginning. What God designs He never needs to change. He does not reach conclusions by experimentation. He knows before He starts whether or not and how a thing works. The church is changeless because its architect designed it perfectly.

2. Sin, which made it necessary, has not changed. The church is composed of people who have been saved from the practice of sin (Acts 2:47; 1 John 5:19). The church is the sinner's only access to God (Ephesians 2:16-18; 3:12). As

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long as sin exists, the need for the unchangeable church will continue. It was designed to give sinners access to salvation from sin, and that need has not changed.

3. The blood, which made its existence possible, has not changed. It was purchased by the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). Churches not purchased by the blood of Christ can be changed structurally, but Christ's church is as changeless as His blood (Hebrews 10:11,12,14).

"I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode;
The church our blest Redeemer
saved
With His own precious
blood."

— Timothy Dwight

4. Christ, its head, is changeless (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever*" (Hebrews 13:8). When knowledgeable members are asked as to who the head of the church of Christ is, the answer today is as it has been for centuries, "Christ is the only head of the church." For nearly 2,000 years the divine church has not changed heads, and it will not change heads as long as time shall last. The church authorized by God has a **living** head, not a **dead** head whose remains are preserved in

some tomb today. This gives Christianity a distinction that no other religion has. In Christ, the unchangeable head, resides all the executive, legislative, and judicial authority over the church. †

W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger* and lives in Decatur, Alabama, U. S. A.

Ultima Veritas

I know that right is right
And givers shall increase;
That duty lights the way
For the beautiful feet of
peace;

That courage is better than
fear
And faith is truer than
doubt.

And fierce though the
fiends may fight
And long though the angels
hide,

I know that truth and right
Have the Universe on their
side,

And that somewhere
beyond the stars
Is a Love that is stronger
than hate.

When the night unlocks her
bars

I shall see Him and I will
wait.

—Washington Gladden

The New Testament Church

V. P. Black

The church of our Lord is the most glorious institution in the world. The prophets of God prophesied about the church hundreds of years before the church was established.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3)

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).

When the church was set up on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, the prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel were being fulfilled.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon

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this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:13-18).

If there were no other statements in the Bible concerning the founder and builder of the church, the fact that Jesus said He was going to build His church (Matthew 16:18) is enough to convince anyone who respects the Word of God that Jesus did build His church. If anyone admits that Jesus built His church, and He did, then any church that you cannot read about in the New Testament cannot be the church for which Jesus died.

One does not have the scriptural authority to build a church of his own. Yet, there have been men through the ages who have built their own churches. The Lutheran church bears the name of its founder. Joseph Smith built his church. Mary Baker Eddy founded her church. And on and on we could go, naming those who founded their own church. The simple truth is this: any church built by anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be the church we read about in the New Testament.

It is sad indeed that millions of people never ask themselves such questions as: "Is the church to which I belong found in the New Testament? Was the church to which I belong founded by Jesus Christ? Does the church to which I belong wear the name of Christ?"

If the answers to these questions are "no," then let us read what Christ said about these churches that He did not build. "*But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*" (Matthew 15:13).

Isaiah said many years ago, "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord*" (Isaiah 1:18).

Let us reason together about the cost of the church.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

We value a thing by the price we pay for it. How can anyone come to the conclusion that the church is non-essential, in view of the fact that Jesus gave His life for it?

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Let us picture Christ hanging on the cross. The pain is so excruciating that God sent a blanket of darkness over the earth. In the midst of that darkness, Christ cries out, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Let us ask Christ while He is on the cross, "Christ, why are you dying?" He

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replies, "I am dying for the church." "Is the church essential?" Christ says, "No." Can you believe this?

Would Jesus suffer, bleed, and die for something that is non-essential? Can't you see, my friend, that if Christ died to purchase the church, and one can be saved outside the church, what was the purpose of His death? Notice these expressions: "*Christ gave Himself for the church*", "*He purchased the church with His own blood*", "*Even as Christ is head of the church*", "*Upon this rock I will build my church.*"

One cannot separate the church from the blood of Christ. One cannot separate the church from the death of Christ. If the blood of Christ is essential, the church is essential, for He purchased the church with His blood. If the death of Christ is essential, the church is essential. The church is essential, because He died for the church.

When one speaks lightly of the church, he is speaking lightly of the blood of Christ. When one teaches that people can be saved outside the church as well as in the church, he is teaching that the death of Christ was not necessary. Why? Because Christ died for the church.

The mission of the New Testament is to evangelize the world. Jesus said, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15).

The early church realized the importance of proclaiming the Gospel, obedient to the summons of the Master to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

The apostles, and their co-laboring saints of the cross, embarked on their sublime and hazardous journey, beginning at Jerusalem. They went forth to regions beyond, and preached Jesus and His resurrection. In a few years after they started, the Gospel had sounded its report all over the Roman Empire, even in the ranks of Caesar's household.

Many churches are very unconcerned about the preaching of the Gospel to those who have never heard it. Many churches are like the one in Laodicea. This church was not disturbed by heresies. No one seemed to be of a contentious disposition to disturb the peace. Laodicea was lukewarm about everything. It was dying, as churches can die, of moderation and respectability and apathy.

Let us pray that the Lord will send forth more preachers to the parts of the world where people have never heard the Gospel. †

V. P. Black is a Gospel preacher and writer living in Chickasaw, Alabama, U. S. A.

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By studying the Scriptures one can determine that God does want His family to grow. Is the goal of the church today one of quality and not quantity? Is church growth a legitimate concept? Is it appropriate for the church to aim at numerical growth in membership?

Church growth is a desire of God. God's concern for lost people originated

in the Garden of Eden. His very first words to man after the fall were: "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:19). God hurts when those made in His image are not in accord with Him.

God sent His Son to die at Calvary and resurrected Him so that all might have the opportunity to become His followers. What we call the "Great Commission" is so important that a form occurs in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. It emphasizes God's desire for the salvation of the lost.

In Matthew's account there are four action words: go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. The goal that Jesus set for His followers is to make disciples. The going is not the fulfillment, neither is the baptizing or teaching. For too long we have been content to baptize with-

out enough emphasis on the teaching necessary to make a disciple.

In more recent years the concept of "discipleship" has become a term denoting undue restrictions by some; however, it was not this which Christ intended. Christ's disciples are those whose lives are committed to Jesus, who have repented of sin, been baptized for the forgiveness of sin, and are

responsible members of His family.

Church growth occurs when people become disciples of the Lord and when the borders of the Kingdom of God are expanded by successful evangelistic efforts.

God has much interest in church growth. Church growth is the result of God working through us with the Gospel. The church is important to God, for it is through the church that men pass as they make their way to heaven. All those saved are added to the church by the Lord, and in the church His children are to glorify His name. Is the church growing as God desires? If not, we had better make some significant changes! †

**Jerry Jenkins preaches for the
Roebuck Parkway church in
Birmingham, Alabama, U. S. A.**

*DOES GOD WANT
THE CHURCH
TO GROW?*

Jerry Jenkins

In Order To Serve, Elders Must Lead

Ron Bryant

Our favorite word for those men who are charged by God to serve the local church, watching for the souls of the saints, is "elders." We apparently prefer this term or another very similar ("eldership") to all the other terms given in the New Testament. Elders were to be appointed in every local church (see 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1).

Elders have been given the responsibility by the God of heaven to lead, to shepherd, to tend, to feed, to oversee, to watch for the souls of those given to their charge (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1ff; 1 Timothy 3:1ff; Titus 1:5ff; Hebrews 13:17). One cannot be loyal to the New Testament and deny that the elders have this divinely appointed authority to serve the spiritual needs of the local church. Nor must elders court special interest groups or individuals to receive permission to lead.

But, lead they must! As lead-

ers they must be out front calling to the disciples that follow; equipping, enabling, and encouraging those they serve. Part of their leading is a matter of delegation, wherein they entrust others with responsibility, respecting them and allowing them to lead and to serve in appointed and necessary endeavors. They also call them to a recognition of the vital role each one plays in service.

The elders are able to encourage good work and to call others to greater commitment as they lead, set the tone, serve as examples, function as mentors in the family of God. **But, they must lead!** The church is not a democracy, in which leaders check the wishes of the group and then follow the majority. Men who accept the responsibility of elders *must lead!*

No congregation can do everything well, but every congregation can do more to the glory of God and in reaching the lost. Elders must lead, if they are to be servants of God. They must equip others to lead in meeting the needs they confront, even appointing them to those matters. Fortunate is the congregation that has godly men who serve them and lead them, as the servants of God, as elders, as shepherds. †

Ron Bryant preaches for the Camelback congregation in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A.

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 to follow as a Christian.

1. **100**

I lived in the first century A. D.

2. **90**

I was born in the city of Thyatira (in today's world, western Turkey), but I moved to Philippi in Macedonia (modern-day Greece). (Acts 16:12,14)

3. **80**

I was a Jewish lady, a worshipper of the true God of heaven. (Acts 16:14)

4. **70**

My home-town was famous for its dyes, and I made my living by selling purple dye. (Acts 16:14)

5. **60**

On the Sabbath day it was my custom to gather at the riverside with a group of women, to worship God. (Acts 16:13)

6. **50**

A man by the name of Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, heard of our meetings and joined us. (Acts 16:13-14)

7. **40**

The words that he spoke to us – of salvation from sin through the death and resurrection of the Son of God – opened my heart. (Acts 16:14)

8. **30**

I was baptized immediately, along with the other members of my household. (Acts 16:15)

9. **20**

In my eagerness to serve God, I begged Paul, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." (Acts 16:15)

10. **10**

Later, when Paul had been released from the prison, after being unjustly beaten and kept overnight, he came back to my house for a farewell meeting with the brethren in Philippi. (Acts 16:22-40)

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.



Faith and Joy

Wayne Jackson

It is easy to be happy when all is well. It is difficult to rejoice in tragedy — some think that it is very nearly impossible. The prophet Habakkuk suggests otherwise.

When Habakkuk had been confronted with the reality of the impending Babylonian invasion, he was sick to the bone. His body trembled and his lips quivered. Each day, with deep dread, he awaited the promised judgment upon his nation. In that time of terror no crops would be harvested; flocks and herds would vanish. What devastation there would be (Habakkuk 3:16, 17).

Habakkuk could not divorce himself from his human emotions, but he determined that they would not dominate him. In the midst of his darkness he could courageously say: “. . . *there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation*” (Habakkuk 3:18).

What a brilliant flash of faith! And what a lesson we can learn

from it. Habakkuk's confident affirmation heralds this truth. Joy is an inward quality of choice. It does not depend upon external circumstances. It is grounded in a relationship with the Creator. Hard times may come, but if we know that we are with God, and that He is with us, our souls can be bathed in joy. Consider Habakkuk 3:18 carefully, and remember that joy depends upon the internal, not the external; it is intellectual, not circumstantial. This is the Christian view of life's events. One cannot but recall these words of an unknown poet:

I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she,
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me! †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of *Christian Courier* and lives in Stockton, California, U. S. A.

You Will Want To Be A Christian

Charles Curtis

In Acts chapter 24, Felix and his wife desired to hear Paul concerning the faith in Christ. *"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled and answered, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee'"* (Acts 24:25).

Many people would like to be a Christian, but they do as did Felix; they put it off too long. Let me in love point out to you three times that I am sure you will want to be a Christian.

You will want to be a Christian when you die! *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). Whether we like to think about it or not, we must all die someday, unless the Lord should return first. I have never heard anyone say that he regretted a life of service to Christ, but I have heard regrets in regard to a life of sin.

You will want to be a Christian in the memory of your loved ones! There is no pleasure in the memory of a loved one or a friend that dies in sin, thus away from God. Precious memories linger in our hearts in regard to the lives of those who have gone on before, having died while walking in the Faith.

You will want to be a Christian at the Judgment! When all men appear before Christ to receive the decision that has been sealed by the way they have lived and thought, I want to be found a Christian. If I wait until then, it will be too late. Jesus will cease to be my Savior and become my Judge.

In order to be a Christian at the times mentioned above, you must become one now, while you have a "today" in which to obey. †

Charles Curtis is the preacher for the Broad Street church in Scottsboro, Alabama, U. S. A.

The Bible does not say that a man cannot possess riches. It does say that a man's riches must not possess him.

The Sin of Lust

John Stacy

Several centuries ago Lucian said, "We live in a time when shame has vanished from the earth." Demosthenes exclaimed, "We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for the day-to-day needs of the body, and wives for legitimate children." The Roman Seneca wrote, "Roman women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married. Chastity is ugly. Innocence is not rare, it does not exist!" We can see from these statements that immorality was ingrained in pagan life. Things are not much different today.

Paul wrote, "*The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh*" (Galatians 5:17). The word lust means "a strong desire, an inordinate affection, a passionate craving for pleasure, or to covet."

We must consider the different kinds of lusts found in Scripture. Obviously, there is the "*lust of the flesh.*" "*Abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul*" (1 Peter

2:11). We lust after food, drink, money, power, position, recognition, drugs, etc.

John writes of the "*lust of the eye*" (1 John 2:16). Peter wrote of those who had eyes full of adultery (2 Peter 2:14). Christ said, "*Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*" (Matthew 5:28). Solomon suffered from the lust of the eyes. Whatever his eyes desired, he kept not from them (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

Secondly, what are sources of lust? The devil is a major source. Jesus said to the Jews of His day, ". . . *the lusts of your father* [the devil], *it is your will to do.* . ." (John 8:44).

Fashion provides a source of lust. This is why Paul told women to adorn themselves in modest apparel (1 Timothy 2:9).

Pornography, movies, television, and books have flooded our homes and minds with a tidal wave of Satanic trash! Add to these things dancing and today's music, with its filthy lyrics, and mix them with drugs and alcohol, and you know full well why lust is king in the lives of untold millions.

Thirdly, how can we overcome lust? We must crucify the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof (Galatians 5:24). We must

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also be reborn, born of water and of the Spirit, that we might enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5). Then we must live *"soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"* (Titus 2:12). That would involve controlling the mind, *"For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"* (Proverbs 23:7).

Lust can be overcome through discipline. Paul wrote, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway"* (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Finally, consider the consequences of unbridled or unrestrained lust. In some places there are more abortions than births. Unrestrained lust is widespread and people don't want to face up to the terrible consequences. More innocent babies have been killed by abortion in the U. S. A. alone since 1973 than the total number of people killed during the Nazi holocaust!

Adultery is another bitter fruit of lust. So are divorce and the destruction of homes that arise from adultery. Herpes and other venereal diseases that characterize those who engage in adultery are out of control.

We are seeing in our world today what Isaiah 5:20 spoke about. The prophet said, *"Woe unto them that call good evil and evil good."*

What used to be evil is now called good. What used to be good is now considered evil in our generation! How tragic!

Ezra 9:6 says, *"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee my God, for our iniquities are increased over our heads, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens."* The people of God used to be ashamed of ungodly lust. They used to blush. Have we lost the ability to feel shame and blush?

Jude 7 sounds a most somber warning: *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."* This verse is just as applicable today as it was in Bible times. If not, why not?

In conclusion, we tolerate today that which was shocking a few years ago. We laugh at these things and even enjoy them now. We have pushed God out of our hearts, so now sin is *sickness*, drunkenness is *alcoholism*, perversion is *an alternative life style*, immorality is *the new morality*, pornography is *adult entertainment*, and murder is *abortion*. There is only one thing for this lustful, lewd generation to do — **Repent!** †

John Stacy is a preacher and writer living in Newbern, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Are You Listening?

Bill L. Williams

How many Bible classes have you attended? How many sermons have you heard? Are you gaining anything from them? Are you growing, as Peter exhorts in 2 Peter 3:18, in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? This is the real challenge! Please consider these thoughts to help you to improve your listening skills.

Consider Carefully How You Listen

This is what Jesus told His disciples in Luke 8:18, following the parable of the Sower. How we listen determines what kind of soil we are. When Ezra stood before Israel to read the law of Moses, they all stood up (Nehemiah 8:5), thus signifying their respect and singleness of purpose. When we open our Bibles to study, we need to show proper respect. We also need to clear our minds of this world's cares and focus on the matter at hand – listening to the Word of God.

Listen With An Open Heart

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul commended the Thessalonians for accepting the word preached to them for what it actually was, the Word of God. This is a challenge to preachers also, for the inspired mandate of gospel preachers is to preach the Word, being prepared in season and out of season, in order to correct, rebuke, and encourage (2 Timothy 4:2). When this is

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done, the listener's duty is to hear the message for what it is — God's Word being preached. The Berean attitude is our model. Acts 17:11 says that those people received the message with great eagerness!

Listen With An Analytical Mind

Acts 17:11 also says that the Bereans examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Check it out! Take notes and look at them closely when you get home. Then, in the words of a preacher friend of mine, "Look at the verses!" This has a two-fold purpose. First, doing so will enable you to know whether or not the message is sound. Second, your faith is made stronger through personal study of God's Word.

Listen With A Yielding Spirit

Be ready to make personal application of the truth of God's Word to your life! Remember that the Scriptures are God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. If the preacher or teacher does his job, and you leave the assembly without being taught, rebuked, corrected, or trained in righteousness, might not this be an indication that you need to re-examine how you are listening?

Listen In View Of The Vastness Of Eternity

A dearly loved elder, who has now gone to his reward, expressed these words each time he led a prayer before an assembly. We must listen with a view toward things eternal. The Word of God tells how to prepare for what is to come! And, by His Word we will be judged (John 12:48).

Yes, we must be careful how we listen!

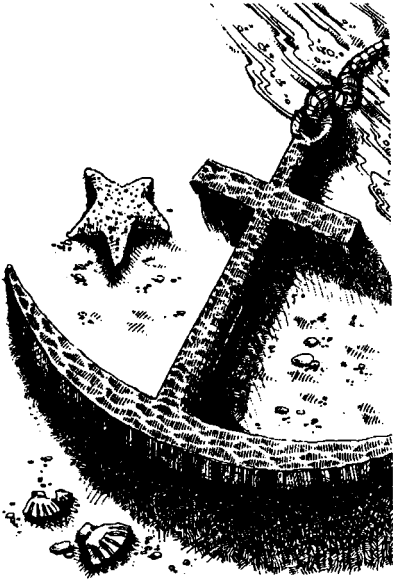


Bill L. Williams is a preacher of the Gospel of Christ.

Discernment

A man had three sons. He wanted to test their ability to discern. So he gave each of them a piece of apple with a rotten spot in it. The first ate the whole thing. The second threw the whole thing away. The third separated the bad and ate the good.

The father noted that the third was the wisest, and he explained, "When we receive instruction, some of us believe everything we hear; others reject everything because some is bad, but the wise separate the bad from the good and benefit from the good."



Anchors In Times Of Storm

William Woodson

One quickly learns in life that difficult times occur, even in the best of families. Oh, there will always be lost keys, missed appointments, overdrafts at the bank, etc., but there are other times when things seem all wrong, nothing seems to work, and the end is not in sight. In short, there are real times of storm which come. What is one to “do” in such times? Perhaps the following will assist:

1. Remember the love of God as given in Scriptures. There is a reality to the love of God which sustains His people. We learn of this with our minds in Scripture; we learn of it in our heart of hearts by the experiences we survive by this truth of God’s love as we read in the Bible. Whatever the reason otherwise to fail to see this, times of real stress give awareness of the meaning and depth of the love God has for us.

2. Draw strength from one’s family. There are times when we come, weary and broken, to our homes — not just where we stay, but our “home” and all it means. It may be husband or wife, parent or child, or family member(s) otherwise, but we are accepted for what we are, loved and mended by gentleness, assurance, and the warmth of family ties. The times of happiness and joy are the times to weave these patterns of family love; the times of storm allow us to experience the power and strength of it.

3. Allow fellow Christians to assist. The love of God and the power

of the Gospel have united us in the common obedience to the Gospel, and we are fellow Christians. There is a love which bonds us to God and to each other in the fellowship of the church. Though it is often easier to give than to receive such love, when it is allowed a place in one's heart, the stress becomes more bearable.

4. Reaffirm the integrity of one's genuine character. There is being formed in each of us, along the way, the kind of man or woman we really are — no pretense, no imitations, just the real person we are. Stresses erode the coverup and the pretending; there is no magic formula which will make the bitter time go away. Now we are face to face with who we genuinely are and what we really believe. Reaffirmation to one's self of the genuineness of faith, love, strength, and character will fortify the soul to endure.

There are no easy answers to the puzzles of life's storms. The way is that of strength to endure and overcome. The thoughts above have stood many in good stead in such times. They are worth a good try. †

William Woodson teaches Bible at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Father, Just this once, Lord, I want to come to you without problems, simply to say Thank you:

For your forgiveness when I fail.

For the sheer joy of sleep when I'm terribly tired.

For the silent strength of humility when pride overtakes me.

For the justice of your laws when men are cruel.

For the remedies for sickness when I am ill.

For the simplicity of orderliness when I face confusion.

For the assurance that you have made a place especially for me when I feel inadequate among my peers.

For the joy of helping others when I see people in need.

For the earthly evidences of your will when I'm trying to find out what life is all about.

For the reality of your world when I stray too far into fantasy.

For the rightness of reasonableness when I panic too quickly.

For the fun that refreshes when everything gets too serious.

For the renewal in moments of silence when I'm dizzy from being busy in a hectic world.

Thank you, Lord, for all these things. but most of all, thank you for your abiding presence that makes every day I live a day of thanks.

Is Religion Relevant?

Dayton Keesee

Religion cannot be relevant if it is not right! Christ was crucified by religious leaders who were strong on traditional trends but weak on weighty matters of truth (John 18:28; Matthew 23:23ff; Mark 7:8-13). *Many have been confused and some disillusioned by religion, who would have been impressed by truth in its purity.* Paul stated that none of the rulers would have crucified the Lord if they had only seen the grandeur and richness of Gospel truth (1 Corinthians 2:7ff).

Jerry Noble was making some worthy observations when he wrote: "Religion is man-made; the Gospel is God-given. Religion is what man does for God; the Gospel is what God does for man. Religion is good views; the Gospel is good news. Religion ends in outer reformation; the Gospel ends in inner transformation. Religion often becomes a farce; the Gospel is always a force — the power of God unto salvation."

Of the five times the word *religion* is mentioned in Scripture, it is referred to as "man's religion" — referring to that of the Jews — and only once as "pure religion" (James 1:26ff; Acts 26:5; Galatians 1:13ff).

The basic meaning of the Latin term *Religio* is "to bind back or to bind together." The intent of the term is to bind man back to God — A GLORIOUS IDEA! The fundamental need is for us to listen to God and let Him do the binding.

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and HE SHALL EXALT YOU" (James 1:8, 10).

Being bound to Him Divine is an UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE! By His grace we are lifted up from the waters of baptism (Romans 6:3ff), lifted up in victory from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:15-57), and lifted up to meet the Lord in the air and into heaven itself (1 Thessalonians 1:14-18; John 14:1-6)!

The foregoing proves that His pure religion is **VERY RELEVANT!** Therefore, give attention to His Truth. May our attitude be, *"Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth. Command and I will obey."* †

Dayton Keesee preaches in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Daily Manna

Tom Holland

While God's people, Israel, were journeying to the promised land the Lord provided for their food manna from heaven. Except for the Sabbath day, the Israelites could anticipate the daily provision of manna. They were permitted to gather enough on Friday to meet their needs on the Sabbath day (Exodus 16:15-26).

The daily manna under the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13) is not gathered from the earth each morning. However, God provides for His people according to their needs (Matthew 6:33).

The Lord instructs His people to live one day at a time and not to be filled with anxiety concerning tomorrow (Matthew 6:24).

God will provide strength while we fulfill our Christian duty (Luke 17:10; John 15:5). The Lord gave this promise for those who go forth by the Great Commission, ". . . I will be with you always . . ." (Matthew 28:18-20). The blind hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, caught the idea in the song "Rescue the

Perishing" when she wrote, ". . . strength for thy labor the Lord will provide."

God will give us help when "the woes of life o'er take us, hopes deceive and fears annoy." Hurts, pain, trouble, and disappointment are inevitable (Job 14:1, 2). God will comfort, sustain, and strengthen His people. He comforts through His Word (1 Thessalonians 4:18). He comforts through His people (2 Corinthians 1:4). He providentially will protect us from impossible experiences (1 Corinthians 10:13).

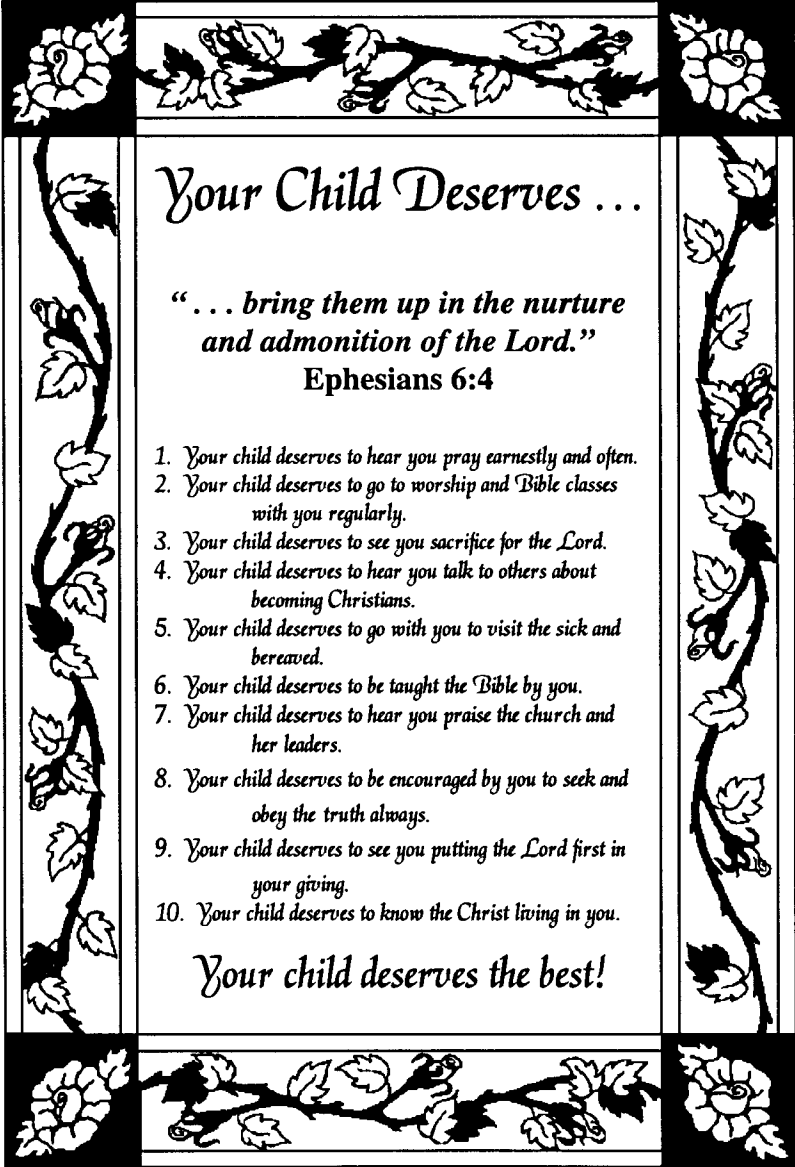
If we live our lives one day at a time and "abide in" Christ, we may anticipate the "daily manna" of God's provision for our lives.

In the second stanza of the grand old song, "God Be With You," is a refreshing thought: "Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again." †

Tom Holland is a preacher of the Gospel, educator, and writer in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

The Dreaded Task

*I found the task I had dreaded so
Was not so difficult when once
begun;
It was the dread itself that was
the foe,
And dread once conquered
means a victory won.*



Your Child Deserves ...

*“... bring them up in the nurture
and admonition of the Lord.”*

Ephesians 6:4

1. *Your child deserves to hear you pray earnestly and often.*
2. *Your child deserves to go to worship and Bible classes with you regularly.*
3. *Your child deserves to see you sacrifice for the Lord.*
4. *Your child deserves to hear you talk to others about becoming Christians.*
5. *Your child deserves to go with you to visit the sick and bereaved.*
6. *Your child deserves to be taught the Bible by you.*
7. *Your child deserves to hear you praise the church and her leaders.*
8. *Your child deserves to be encouraged by you to seek and obey the truth always.*
9. *Your child deserves to see you putting the Lord first in your giving.*
10. *Your child deserves to know the Christ living in you.*

Your child deserves the best!

A Worthy Woman

G. F. Raines

Concerning his mother, Booker T. Washington, an early leader in the education of blacks in America, wrote: "In all my efforts to learn to read my mother shared fully my ambition, and sympathized with me and aided me in every way that she could. Though she was totally ignorant so far as mere book knowledge was concerned, she had high ambitions for her children, and a large fund of good, hard, common sense which seemed to enable her to meet and master every situation. If I have done anything in life worth attention, I feel sure that I have inherited the disposition from my mother."

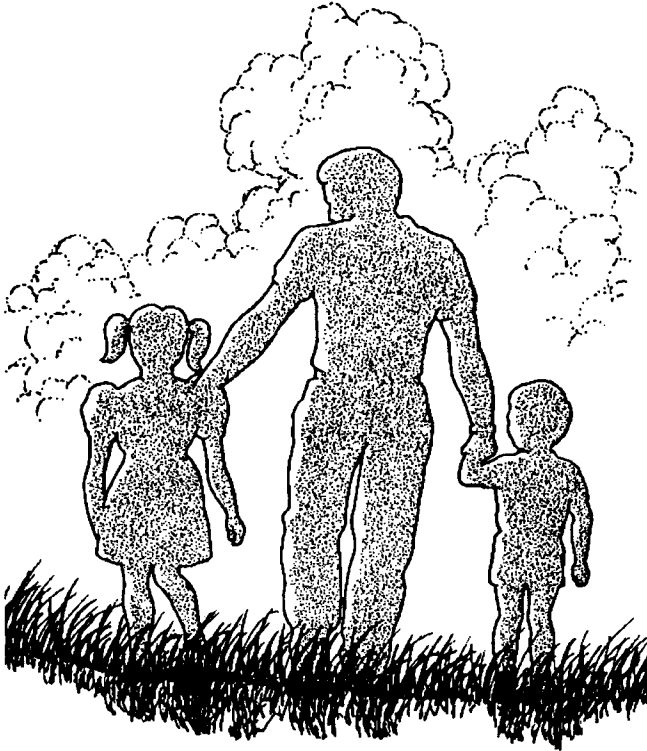
This description of the diligence with which Mrs. Washington reared her son and his gratitude for her efforts perfectly illustrates Solomon's description of a worthy woman: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies . . . Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:10, 28).

Felicia Hemans said: "There is in all this cold and hollow world no fount of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within a mother's heart." †

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



"Her children arise and call her blessed..." *Prov. 31:28*



What Will You Leave Your Children?

Bobby Dockery

“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children....”
(Proverbs 13:22).

A good father is concerned about providing for his family’s needs. The Bible says, “. . . if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). But a father has not done nearly enough for his

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children if material things are all he leaves them when he is gone! How tragic for a man to die leaving his heirs houses, land, possessions, stocks, bonds, money — and nothing else! As fathers, we need to be concerned about leaving our children something which will endure when all of earth's treasures have turned to dust; something that will help them prepare for the day when they, too, must die. Here are some of the things a good father must be concerned about leaving to his children's children.

1. A Faith To Live By.

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him . . ." (Hebrews 11:6). The father who neglects the religious faith of his children is guilty of the cruelest, most blatant form of child abuse.

2. A Good Name.

Will the name you leave your children be an asset or a liability? Solomon wrote: *"A good name is to be more desired than great riches..."* (Proverbs 22:4).

3. A Strong Sense of Duty.

"Duty" is not a popular word in today's self-indulgent society. But, as fathers, we fail if we do not instill in our children a strong sense of responsibility and obligation!

4. A Deep Love For The Word of God.

Fathers are commanded by God to bring up their children in *"the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). In spite of that plain command, Biblical illiteracy is epidemic. Millions of fathers are failing to provide their children with the very thing they will need most when it comes time for the final audit!

All of us must eventually depart this life. The question is: What then? What will you leave behind for your children and grandchildren? The answer to that question will be determined by what you are doing now! †

Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U. S. A.



When Children Go

... No bickering echoes down the hall
No music
No laughter
No sound at all.

I stand in the silence, a world apart
And listen to teardrops fall in my heart.

— Betty Burton Choate

Teach

RESPONSIBILITY!

Eulene Ramsey

I'm sure we will all agree that the status of the American home is a very serious matter. Even more serious is the fact that the problems have spilled over into the homes of members of the Lord's church. Of course the problem does not consist of only one factor, but of many, therefore there is not **one** solution, but each factor must be faced and separate solutions found.

One of the factors is a reluctance of marriage partners to take the responsibilities which the Lord expects of them. The Lord's plan for Christian marriages is without flaw; so whatever flaws found in our marriages today are caused by the weakness of the humans comprising those marriages. I can see one weakness which should be corrected through early training..

Christian mothers usually are careful to teach their daughters the proper role expected of them. In today's age of "Women's Lib" they understand that their daughters must be taught to follow the Biblical pattern in order to have a happy home, and that always includes the com-

mand for the wife to be in subjection to her husband. Christian wives found long ago that this is not difficult when she has a truly Christian husband. But are those Christian mothers teaching their young sons to take the responsibility that God has given to the head of a household?

One dear lady asked me one day in a Ladies class, "But how can I be in subjection to a husband who refuses to **subject**?" In many marriages that question zeroes in on the problem. Each young son should be taught that he has no right to marry until he is mature enough to take the responsibilities that go with the job. Of course the mother's teaching job is much easier if the son can see the role demonstrated in the life of his father!

A young wife has many problems and many adjustments to make at the beginning of a marriage, without having to deal with a spoiled, immature "little boy", whose idea of being "head of the house" simply means getting his own way when there is a difference of opinion.

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The same scriptures that teach that a wife is to be in subjection to her husband also teach that the husband is to "love his wife as Christ loved the church." One scripture is just as binding as the other. The husband has the responsibility of strengthening the spiritual life of the family. Family prayer, Bible study, and teaching the moral standards to be followed by his family are his responsibility. Of course he will have the help of a Christian wife, but HE IS TO LEAD.

Many Christian husbands expect their wives to work, bring home a paycheck to help with family expenses, then after work to serve as cook, housekeeper, shopper, laundress, etc. while they read the paper or watch TV. Apparently the admonition to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" doesn't apply in a marriage!

So, mothers, don't neglect to teach your daughter what the Lord expects from her as a Christian wife, but please don't forget to teach your son that God places a great responsibility on his shoulders when he becomes a Christian husband. And stress the fact that he has no right to marriage until he is mature enough to take on those responsibilities. †

Eulene Ramsey works for the Lord with the J.C. Choate family in Winona, MS, U.S.A.

I'd Rather

I'd rather teach a little child
To do his duty well,
Than have the finest medal
known
Pinned on my coat lapel.

I'd rather help a little child
To overcome his fear,
Than be a hero in a book,
Though lauded far and near.

I'd rather hold a little child
Securely by the hand
When he needs confidence
and hope
Than, fair, possess the land.

I'd rather save a little child
A few sad, bitter tears
Than have a lot of fancy things
That fade with passing years.

I'd rather cause a little child
To wear a happy smile
Than wear the finest clothes,
myself,
Or keep the latest style.

I'd rather help a boy or girl
To keep the path that's
straight
Than hear ten thousand
voices shout
My name among the great.

— Ruth Carruth

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Just as weeds will take over in an untended garden, so the weeds of doubt and unbelief take over the minds of our children in due time unless we teach them from the beginning that there is a God and that Jesus is God's Son.

Weeds Or Strawberries?

Maxie B. Boren

A close acquaintance once remarked to Samuel Coleridge, the noted Englishman of the early 19th century, about his infant son of whom he was so proud, "I don't intend to teach my son anything about God. I will let him grow up, and when he is old enough to judge for himself, he can choose whether to believe or not."

As the two men walked together, they paused at the site of Mr. Coleridge's garden. Samuel spoke, "I had thought about setting out some strawberry plants this spring, but you have given me an idea. I think I'll wait until about mid-summer and see whether the garden would prefer the strawberry plants or weeds." "But, Samuel," intervened the friend, "by then the weeds will have taken over; you can't afford to wait." Then thoughtfully,

Mr. Coleridge looked his friend in the eye and replied, "Yes, you are right about that. And in like manner, so also will the weeds of doubt and unbelief take over the mind of your son in due time unless you start teaching him now that there is a God, and that Jesus is God's Son."

Why can't Christian parents seem to grasp that simple truth? . . . **the time to set out the strawberry plants is before the weeds have taken over the garden area.** And the time to train a child about God, about Jesus, and the way of righteousness is NOW! . . . while little minds are receptive and pliable. One of the greatest tragedies of our time is that the church, yea, Christian parents, are losing so many of our young people! †

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

Verse Search

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

1. Are Galilee, Samaria, and Sychar literal, historical places in the real world? (V. 3,4,5)
2. Why was Jesus waiting at the place called Jacob's Well? (Two reasons) (V. 6,8)
3. He taught the Samaritan woman about _____ water, and promised, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but _____." (V. 13,14)
4. Jesus said that the time was coming when the place of worship would not be important but, rather, that true worshippers would _____ the _____ in _____ and in _____. (V. 23)
5. When the woman said that she was looking for the Messiah, who is called _____, Jesus said to her, "_____." (V. 25,26)
6. The woman went into the city, saying to people, "Come, see a Man who told me _____." Could this be _____? (V. 29)
7. When the returning disciples offered him food, Jesus explained that His real food was what? (V. 34)
8. Jesus said that the harvest field of souls is _____. (V. 35)
9. Did the Samaritans want to listen to Jesus teach? _____, they asked Him to stay _____. (V. 40)
10. After hearing Him, they said to the woman, "_____, _____, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know _____." (V. 42)
11. At Cana of Galilee, where Jesus had turned water into wine, a _____ asked Him to _____ his _____. (V. 46,47)
12. At what hour did the son recover? (V. 52,53)
13. As a result, he himself _____, and his whole _____. (V. 53)
14. This miracle showed Jesus' power over _____. (V. 52,54)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

A Way To Win Others

Jack W. Carter

In varying degrees of intensity, attracting others to Christianity is one of the abiding aspirations of Christians. I hear and read about the decline of evangelistic fervor constantly. Nearly every Christian has something in mind as to why we are not leading others to Christ as we should.

I have always felt that the primary consideration of evangelism is the example of the evangelizer or evangelizers. If others see something in us that is especially attractive, they will be attracted.

One of the best passages of Scripture in God's Word that pertains to this very reality is 1 Peter 3:1-5. Though it addresses the behavior of women, we can readily see that influence is the primary consideration.

"Wives, in the same way, be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful"

When we finally decide that what we are and what we do does matter as far as influencing others is concerned, we will solve the declining evangelistic dilemma very quickly. †

Jack W. Carter is the editor of *The Rocky Mountain Christian* and preaches in Castle Rock, Colorado, U. S. A.

The miracles of Jesus had purpose: (1) To show that He was unique from the many others who claimed to be the Christ; (2) To show that He had authority that no other had; (3) To confirm not only His identity, but also His message.

John records seven of the miracles Jesus worked, and he summarizes by saying, "Many other signs, therefore, Jesus performed in the presence

of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30,31).

We know that the miracles fulfilled the purpose for which they were worked, for we find a man named Nicodemus who came to Jesus. He acknowledged the fact that Jesus is unique by saying, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). Today, the miraculous works have ceased, but that does not mean that Jesus is no longer unique. "And

there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Nor does it mean that Jesus no longer has authority: "... all authority has been given to Me in

heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). Nor does it mean that Jesus' message has lost its identity: "... the word I spoke is what will

judge him at the last day" (John 12:48).

So, what takes the place of the miracles to fulfill these characteristics? The church! As the called-out of God, we have been called to show to the world the importance of Jesus to their lives. That is why we exist: to evangelize! Speaking of Christians, Peter writes, "... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). †

Raymond Glendinning preaches for the Central congregation in Topeka, Kansas, U. S. A.

**The
Purpose
Of The Miracles
Raymond Glendinning**

Are You *A Radical?*

Tom Kelton



Jewish leaders counted Jesus as such a radical, they crucified Him.

Some of us gospel preachers and members of the church hesitate to take a stand publicly for what we believe to be the truth because we do not want to be called a radical.

What we fail to consider is that the Christian faith is radical. Those of us who have been Christians a long time forget how radical our

faith really is.

We believe that there really is a God who created the world for His purposes and that those purposes are being worked out in history. We believe this God is holy and righteous and is our Father.

We believe that God called a particular people, the Jews, and told

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them that He would be their God and they would be His people. The Jews were not educated, sophisticated, or great among the peoples of the earth.

We believe that God brought forth a Messiah from that people. We believe that Messiah was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and His mother was a virgin.

It is enough that we believe that the Messiah came from such a strange place and from such an obscure people, but there is more. We believe that the Messiah was the incarnation of God — that God Himself entered time and space as a Jew in Bethlehem, a small out-of-the-way town nobody ever heard of. We believe the Messiah walked our dirty roads and died in the manner of a common criminal.

We believe that after the Messiah died, a dead man was raised from the grave. We believe He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father.

We believe that this Jewish rabbi has become the measurement by which the world will be judged — that His horrible death is directly related to the forgiveness, meaning, and eternal life of His people. We believe that He died for us, and that someday He is going to return.

That is what we believe. The very fact that we do believe it suggests that either we are crazy, or it is

true. It means that the facts upon which our faith is built are so big and so unexpected that nobody would ever dream them up, and no one in his or her right mind would try to build a faith on something so radical.

The Christian faith is radical. If it were our idea, nobody would have believed it. But it isn't our idea. It's God's idea. Why? Because God is radical. It should be no surprise, then, that what is clearly taught in the Scriptures is radical.

In light of this, none of us should ever fear being labeled a radical for standing for the truth. †

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

Influence

Drop a pebble in the water,
And its ripples reach out far;
And the sunbeams dancing on them
May reflect them to a star.

Give a smile to someone passing,
Thereby make his morning glad;
It may greet you in the evening
When your own heart may be sad.

Do a deed of simple kindness;
Though its end you may not see,
It may reach, like widening ripples,
Down a long eternity.

— Joseph Norris

Seeking The Lost

Dan R. Owen

The kingdom of God is about lost people finding salvation. Some of Jesus' greatest allegorical stories of the kingdom are about the "lost." These stories reveal much about God and our relationship with Him.

Some of Jesus' stories were told to describe God as the Seeker of the lost. Notice these stories in Luke 15. The story of the lost sheep is really about the Shepherd. He discovers his sheep is missing, he leaves the flock and pursues the lost one, and he rejoices with all of his friends when the lost sheep is found. The story of the lost coin is about the woman who lost the coin. She realizes it is lost, lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches diligently until she finds it. She rejoices greatly when she finds the coin. The stories are similar to the account of Zacchaeus, when Jesus called out to Zacchaeus, invited Himself to Zacchaeus' home, and says, "*the Son of Man came to seek*

and to save that which was lost," (Luke 19:10).

Jesus also told a story in Luke 15 from the point of view of the "lost." The lost son got into his lost condition because of his own foolishness and selfishness. He took his inheritance. He left his family and went to a far country. He wasted his living in the frivolous pursuit of pleasure. It was his fault when he found himself depressed and poverty-stricken. It was the lost son who finally decided to get up and go home to his father. He went humbly, admitting his faults, asking for nothing but mercy. He is much like the sinful woman who came humbly weeping to Jesus. He is like the publican in Luke 18 who cried, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" The lost Son found a glorious welcome when he came home. He found a loving, forgiving Father who rejoiced greatly over his return. His older brother was like the Pharisees, who resented Jesus' attention to the sinners.

The kingdom of God is about the Great Seeker pursuing lost humanity. It is about lost, sinful humanity coming home to God and finding forgiveness and the richest of blessings. These things must be what the church of Christ is about. †

Dan R. Owen is the preacher for the Broadway church in Paducah, Kentucky, U. S. A.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Hershel Dyer

The first recorded words which we have from God are these: "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3).

How significant that this command of God should be the first utterance which we have in the Bible. In this book of sacred writings, without which we would be in total spiritual darkness, the first words spoken give the order for light to appear.

Much later, the apostle John tells us that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). As there would have been no light for the cosmos or material world apart from God, so there is no light to do away with spiritual ignorance and error apart from Him.

When light appears, the darkness disappears. Neither can exist in the presence of the other. Walk into a room of pitch darkness, turn on the light, and immediately the darkness is gone. Again, turn off the light, and the darkness reappears as pitch black as before.

Christ sent His apostles out into a world that was in the darkness of sin, religious error, and vain super-

stitions. John even remarked, "the whole world lies in the wicked one" (under the influence of Satan), (1 John 5:19). Christ intended that the Gospel which His apostles preached

should illuminate the hearts of men with truth so that the darkness imposed by Satan would be eliminated.

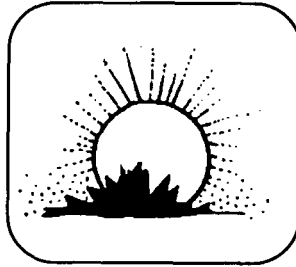
How sad it is that, though the Gospel is preached, men prefer the darkness of sin

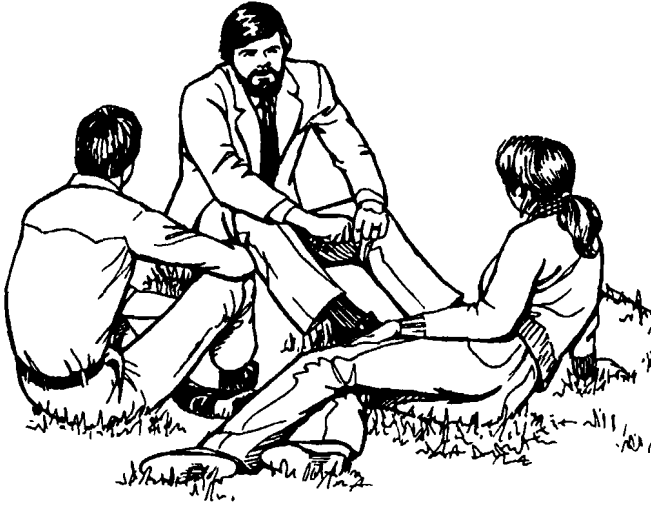
and error to the light of salvation and truth. Of such the apostle Paul wrote:

"Whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

There are probably more open doors in the world today for the preaching of the Gospel than at any time in human history. Let us continue to not only "send the light," but let us "take the light" to those who are in darkness. †

Hershel Dyer preaches for the Tenth & Rockford congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, U. S. A.





Seeking And Saving

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

Note the two verbs! Seek! Save! See the order! Jesus was a seeker! The Son of Man pursued man! Man is lost and cannot find his way.

Christians who follow Jesus must also seek and save. We have been sought and found, and now we can identify in the work of Christ. Unto us has been committed the “*ministry of reconciliation*” (2 Corinthians 5). It is a treasure we hold in trust. We are “*earthen vessels*” with a heavenly message.

What will insure success in reaching out to people? What traits must be evident in the soul-winner? The Psalmist in Psalms 126:5-6 states:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

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What a power-packed passage! It focuses on three ingredients of the successful soul-winner:

(1) **First, we must simply go after them.** We cannot be passive! We must confront! Why do most fail? Simply because they do not try! If each Christian would concentrate upon one or more in their own circle of friends (develop a comfortable relationship and then patiently introduce them to Jesus), we would be surprised at the results.

(2) **Second, be sure we hurt for the lost.** We must possess a compassionate spirit! Empathize with them! Do we have the capacity to shed tears for the lost? Paul did! "I ceased not to warn you day and night with tears" (Acts 20:31). Jeremiah wept for the fallen of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 9). We, too, must be moved to act from a realization that one soul is worth more than all the world.

(3) **Third, we must present the correct message.** The precious seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). That Word centers on Christ, the living Word (John 1:1). It is the truth that makes men free (John 8:32). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and Paul identifies that Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Let the power of the Word do the work of convicting and saving. †

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

THE PEOPLE BUSINESS

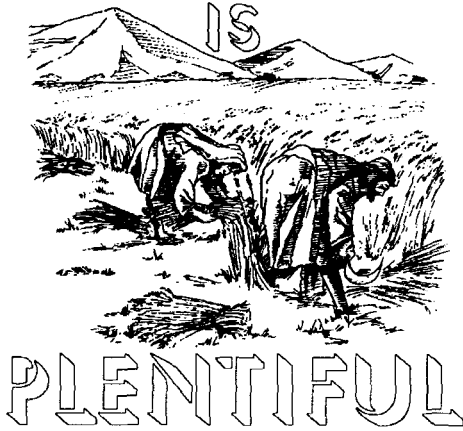
1. SPEAK TO PEOPLE! THERE IS NOTHING AS NICE AS A CHEERFUL WORD OF GREETING.

2. SMILE AT PEOPLE! SMILING IS THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE. IT TAKES 72 MUSCLES TO FROWN; BUT ONLY 14 TO SMILE. AND IT PAYS DIVIDENDS!

3. CALL PEOPLE BY NAME! THE SWEETEST MUSIC TO ANYONE'S EARS IS THE SOUND OF HIS OWN NAME! "GREET FRIENDS BY NAME" (III JOHN 14).

4. BE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL! THE BEST WAY TO HAVE FRIENDS IS TO BE A FRIEND. JESUS WAS CALLED THE "FRIEND OF SINNERS" (LUKE 7:34).

THE HARVEST



Frances Parr

“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”
(Matthew 9:37, 38).

Those words were spoken by Jesus to His disciples when He saw the multitudes in the cities and villages. He had healed physical illnesses, but He realized they needed far more. They were spiritually ill — distressed, downcast, and lost, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus felt compassion for them.

Matthew, in chapter 10, names the twelve apostles and then quotes Jesus as He advises them of their mission in the fields, the place of harvest. He told them what to take along and how to care for themselves. He also warned them that it would not be easy. In fact, it might be dangerous, possibly death-dealing. They were not to worry, however, because God was with them.

The twelve apostles were not preachers, men well-versed in the Scriptures, or what the world might consider gifted. They were fishermen,

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boat owners, and general laborers. Matthew was a tax collector. They were ordinary men with one big thing in common: they loved Jesus and wanted to tell others about Him.

Today the fields are still white and ready for harvest. Many are lost and eagerly waiting to hear the Gospel. You and I are the laborers Jesus is sending out into the fields. Does this seem like a monumental task? Are we already thinking of reasons why we might not be able to fulfill the Lord's supplication?

Let's take a look at others God used in His service. Moses was a shepherd to his father-in-law's sheep. True, he had been raised as an Egyptian prince. He had killed a man, however, and left that country, fleeing for his life. God appeared to him with the task of going back to Egypt, to rescue almost a million Israelites. Moses gave several reasons why he should not be the one, including the fact that he just did not want to. "Send some other person," he appealed to God. The Almighty had a remedy for each of Moses' problems, and with His power to assist him, Moses was able to overcome Pharaoh's army and lead God's people back to the promised land.

Gideon was the least man from the weakest tribe of Israel when God chose him to lead the people in a battle. With only 300 men, against thousands of Midianites, Gideon and God won a tremendous victory.

One woman saved the entire Israelite nation from death by preparing a feast for a king and exposing an evil threat. Jewish people today still celebrate the Feast of Purim in her honor. Her name was Esther.

Dorcas sewed clothing for the poor, Lydia kept missionaries in her home, Eunice and Lois taught Timothy, their son and grandson, and Andrew introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. Peter became the first person to tell Gentiles about Jesus. Barnabas sold a field and gave the money to help other Christians.

These people acted on their own intuition. They recognized a need and did something to help. They were average, everyday people.

In Philippians 4:13, Paul says, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" God uses ordinary, sometimes seemingly unlikely people to do His work. He used this method when introducing the Savior of the world. When people were expecting a magnificent king, God sent His Son to earth as a baby.

Indeed, how else could God show us prideful, doubting people His great power? Paul was told in 2 Corinthians 12:9, ". . . *My grace is sufficient for you: for My power is made perfect in weakness . . .*" When

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something is accomplished which is obviously beyond human capability, God's intervention is shown crystal clear to even the most skeptical.

So, new child of God, older Christian, you with little time to spare, ill or crippled: remember that no task is too small or too great for the Almighty. If God stood by Moses, Gideon, Dorcas, Peter, and countless others of the Bible, He's right here for you and me. We can go into the fields with the "*strength which God supplies,*" as cited in 1 Peter 4:11, and work for Him. Whether our personal harvest is large or small, He needs every laborer for His fields! †

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

The Beauty of Jesus In Me

My Life touched yours for a very brief space,
And what, oh, what did you see?
A hurried, a worried and anxious face,
Or the beauty of Jesus in me?

Was I steeped so deep in the ways of the world
That you couldn't detect one thing
That would set me apart and show that my heart
Belonged to the Heavenly King?

Did I carry no banner for Jesus my Lord,
Not one thing at all that could show
Whose side I am on in this glorious fight?
I am His! But you wouldn't know.

Forgive me! And if we should e'er meet again
Upon earth, oh, I pray you will see
No mark of this world, but His banner unfurled,
And the beauty of Jesus in me!

- Alice Hansche Mortenson

No Time to Treat Men Wrong

Walter E. Isenhour

There is a time to work and play,
A time to eat and sleep;
A time to study and to pray,
A time to laugh and weep;
A time for fellowship that's sweet,
A time for sacred song;
But never is there time to treat
A human being wrong.

There is a time to lift men up
And help them on life's road,
A time to drain their bitter cup
And share their heavy load;
A time to bless them with our grace
And boost them all along;
But never is there time and place
To treat our fellows wrong.

There is a time to help men seek
Our God who saves the soul;
A time to show them that the
meek
Shall reach life's highest
goal;
A time to help them turn
aside
And leave the wicked
throng;
But never did our God
provide
A time to treat men
wrong.



AN EXAMPLE PRAYER

David Pharr

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen (Matthew 6:9-13).

There is no certain form that you must follow when you pray. Private prayer is simply telling God of your feelings, your needs, your gratitude, and your desires in behalf of others. Do not be too concerned with sentence structure, or which words to use, or how you have it organized. Just talk to God. He will hear and understand.

It is necessary, of course, that public prayers be worded in such a way that the whole group can understand. Otherwise they are unable to pray with the one leading. But when you pray alone, God will always understand you.

Printed below is a model prayer that Jesus gave in Matthew 6:9-13. This is sometimes called "The Lord's Prayer," but it is not a prayer Christ Himself prayed, because it included the request for forgiveness of sins. Jesus never asked for forgiveness of His own sins, because He never sinned.

Neither is this a ritual prayer to be merely repeated by Christians. It was never so used in the New Testament church. Instead, it is only an example that Jesus gave in teaching how to pray.

When Jesus gave this example prayer, the kingdom had not yet been established. It was proper, therefore, at that time to pray "*Thy kingdom come.*" Now, however, the kingdom (church) has come, and we need not pray for its coming.

Beside each part of this model prayer is a comment on how it relates to us. Notice especially the simplicity of this prayer.

"Our Father which art in heaven." Our prayers should be addressed to God the Father.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

“Hallowed be thy name.” This means that God’s name is holy. This is an expression of reverence. We should ever be mindful of the greatness of God.

“Thy kingdom come.” Though the kingdom has now already come, this still is significant in that it shows concern for the kingdom, the church. We should pray for the progress of the church (“Thy kingdom increase”).

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Our requests should always be subject to God’s will. We should pray that His will be done, not ours. (See Luke 22:42.) This is also a prayer that God’s will (His law) will be obeyed. It is right to pray that people will obey the Gospel.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The needs we have for day-to-day life are indicated. Such a prayer shows that we know we are dependent on God. Ask for what you need.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” “Debts” is used to refer to our accountability for the sins we have committed. In the parallel text in Luke 11:4 the word “sins” is used. After being baptized into Christ for the remission of past sins, you receive forgiveness on a continuing basis by confessing your sins. (See 1 John 1:9.) This also acknowledges our duty to deal with others in the way we ask God to deal with us.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” God does not tempt us. This is not to suggest such, but it is a request for protection and strength. This acknowledges the continuing threat of temptations through worldly enticements and pressures.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.” This is a statement of praise. All prayer is to be an acknowledgement of the greatness and the goodness of God.

“Amen.” “Amen” is an expression that shows approval. It is often defined to mean “so be it.” At the end of a prayer it means that these are truly our feelings and desires.

It should be noted that this example prayer was given before anyone was taught to pray **in the name of Christ**. Read John 16:23, 24. Now our prayers must be in His name. Read Colossians 3:17.

Do not pray by merely reciting words. Instead use your own words to say what is on your mind. Talk to God with reverence, but with the same kind of frankness which you would talk to your closest earthly friends. The model prayer can be used to help you outline your own prayers. †

David Pharr is the director of East Tennessee School of Preaching, located in Knoxville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

MEN NO LONGER HAVE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Don L. Norwood

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

In about A.D. 59 the Apostle Paul wrote what we know as 1 Corinthians to the church at Corinth in Greece. He explained to them that after awhile the spiritual gifts, such as the ability to prophesy by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would fail (cease). The gift of speaking another tongue (language) that one had never learned before would cease (stop). Knowledge that was directly imparted to them by the Holy Spirit would vanish away (pass away) (1 Corinthians 13:8). He explained when this would take place: He said, “. . . *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away*” (1 Corinthians 13:10).

At the end of the first century A.D. all of the apostles of Christ had died. It is thought that John died somewhere between A.D. 96 and 98, and he was the last one of them to die. At the time of their death they had committed to writing all of the truth, the New Testament

of Jesus Christ. These writings made up the entire body of teaching which is the New Testament. Once this whole body of teaching was complete in written form (Scripture), it was “*that which is perfect*” (or complete); there was no longer any need for the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit to guide people in the Lord’s will (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The knowledge that would vanish away (1 Corinthians 13:8) was the knowledge that was in the minds of those first century persons who had received it by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Remember, the apostles were to have the Holy Spirit guide them into *all things, all the truth* (John 14:26; John 16:13). They in turn could lay their hands on others and give them the gift of direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit to preach the truth (compare Acts 6:3-7 with Acts 8:5-17). We can see from Acts 8:5-17 that Phillip could not impart this gift to anyone;

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only the apostles could do this. Once all the truth had been committed to writing, there was no longer any need for this special gift, because all the truth was now in writing and in possession of the church. The church now could teach the whole world from the written Word.

When Paul said, "*For we know in part and we prophesy in part*" (1 Corinthians 13:9), he was talking about the fact that each writer of the New Testament only knew a part of the whole. For example: if all we had was Paul's writings, we would only have part of the whole. So each writer only contributed a part of the whole body of truth. However, once all of the parts were collected together, then we have the whole (that which is perfect or complete). The knowledge that Jesus Christ has imparted to mankind is found in the New Testament Scriptures. Peter wrote, "*As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue*" (2 Peter 1:3).

Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 to the child and his ways and looking into a dim mirror were simply analogies of the fact that in the first century, the beginning of the Christian era, God used the miracles and gifts to put it

into motion. Once the whole written body of truth was finished, then all could see and perfectly understand God's will for the whole world of mankind.

Paul also said that three things would always remain: ". . . *faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love*" (1 Corinthians 13:13). †

Don L. Norwood preaches for the Lord's church in Mason, Texas, U.S.A.

Hot or Cold

Are you familiar with the following experiment? Place one hand in hot water and the other in ice water. After a few minutes place both hands in separate bowls of room temperature water. An amazing thing happens. The hand that once was in hot water now feels cold. The hand that was in cold water now feels hot. Relying on our own sense of feeling, we would think that each bowl contained water of a different temperature. However, knowledge tells us the temperature is the same.

Only knowledge can separate what we know to be right from what we think or feel is right. May we continue to study the Word of God, that through a greater knowledge of Him we can keep from being misled by the world.

Rick Eichelberger

TRUTH AND FREEDOM

Cecil May, Jr.

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

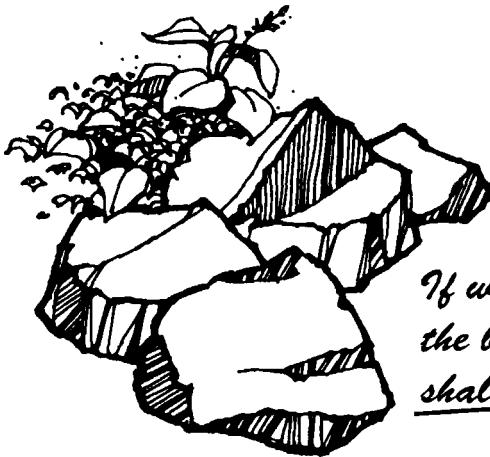
"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). This is itself a widely-recognized truth, with application to freedom in many areas of life.

It is true politically. It is almost impossible to enslave a well-informed people. A government-controlled press and strict censorship of all other informational media is one of the earliest objectives of any dictatorial power.

It is true economically. Knowledge brings liberation from bondage to low-paying jobs in unskilled occupations.

It is true spiritually. This is the application with which Jesus was concerned when He spoke these words. His hearers objected that they were no man's slave. Jesus reminded them that whoever has sinned and is not forgiven, or whoever makes a practice of sin, is the slave of sin. It is from this enslavement that the Son came to make us free indeed (John 8:34-36).

All of the above applications are true and relevant to man's condition, but none has caught the real point of this memorable saying of Jesus. All of the above discussions of the passage ignore a vital part



*If we build our lives on
the bedrock of truth, we
shall be free.*

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of the context. They start in the middle of the sentence.

As usually read, the passage is a conditional promise with one condition and one result: Condition: Know the truth; Result: Be made free. The fact that the promise perceived that way is so true and so universally applicable obscures an important fact: that is not what the passage says.

Rather, the passage is a conditioned promise with one condition and three results. What Jesus said was, “*If you abide in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31, 32).

Condition: Abide in Jesus’ Word;

Results: (1) Be His disciples, (2) Know the truth, (3) Be made free.

Jesus is not primarily reminding us of an *advantage* of knowing the truth. He is telling us *how* to know the truth, where the truth is to be found.

In a prayer to the Father for His disciples Jesus said, “*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth*” (John 17:17). The Gospel is “*the word of truth*” (Ephesians 1:13). We purify our souls by “*obeying the truth*” (1 Peter 1:22)

Abide in His Word, and you will be His disciple, you will know the truth, and you will be made free. †

Cecil May, Jr. is President of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, MS, U.S.A.



God Has a Right!

God has a right to a definite part of your time –

He has the power to take all of it!

God has a right to a definite part of your money –

He has the power to take all of it!

God has a right to be glorified through your tongue –

He has the power to take all of it!

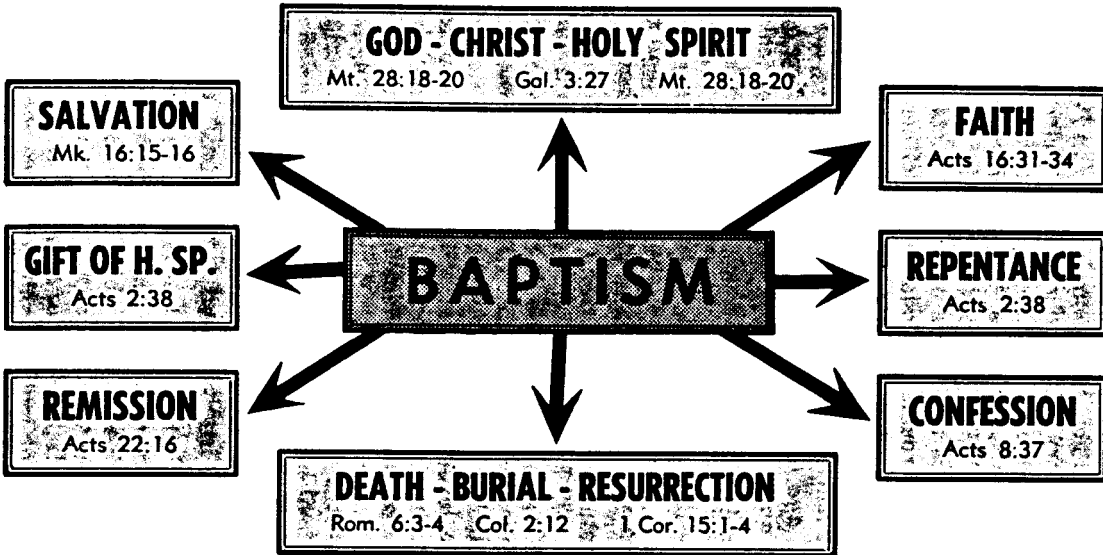
God has a right to be honored through your influence –

He has the power to take all of it!

God has a right to your life –

He has the power to take all of it!

"What God Hath Joined Together"



Dillard Thurman

Why Do We Have Multiplied Interpretations of the Bible Today?

George Akpabli

TEXT: 2 Peter 2:1-3.

INTRODUCTION: This is a good question. Let us examine the reasons why man has multiplied interpretations that have led him into heresy, which is any opinion or doctrine varying from the true exposition of the Christian faith (2 Peter 2:1).

THE REASONS:

1. **Ignorance of the correct principles of interpreting the Bible** (Matthew 22:29).
 - A. Hosea 4:6.
 - B. "You cannot teach what you do not know."
 - C. Many people attempt to teach the Word of God in ignorance of what the Bible says. They end up pronouncing false doctrines in the name of God.
2. **Reverence of great religious personalities** (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Acts 20:30).
 - A. Selfishness has led some highly respected religious men and women to assume the right of divine authority on scriptural matters.
 - B. Due either to enormous popularity or wealth, they seek to immortalize themselves by seeking a large following. To keep the membership, they teach doctrines totally strange to the Bible.
3. **Twisting of Scriptures** (2 Peter 3:16; Genesis 3:1).
 - A. Some teachers twist Scriptures to suit their preconceived ideas. This they do to their own eternal ruin.
 - B. The devil used this method to deceive Eve and her husband in

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

the garden of Eden.

4. **Failure to endure sound doctrine** (2 Timothy 4:3, 4; Isaiah 30:10, 11).
 - A. The truth at times causes pain. People want easier teaching. "Do not tell us we are in sin; call sin righteousness."
 - B. Some Bible teachers spend endless nights searching for passages they may use to support evil practices, often just to enable them to continue enjoying human favor and financial reward.
5. **Human traditions** (Mark 7:6-9; Colossians 2:8).
 - A. The question must always be, "Has the Bible authorized it?"
6. **Additions to the Word of God** (Revelation 22:18, 19; Galatians 1:6-9).
 - A. Some today pretend to receive new revelations by means of dreams, angels, etc.
 - B. Many use creed books and manuals containing false doctrine.
7. **Refusal to obey the truth** (John 8:31, 32; 7:17).
 - A. They know the truth but will not obey it (Romans 1:21-25).
 - B. They deliberately choose to pervert the way of justice.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The way the Bible is interpreted has eternal consequences (Matthew 15:13, 14).
- B. Listen to the Lord in John 12:48.

†

George Akpabli is from Ghana and is a missionary in the Republic of Benin, West Africa.

Make a tree good and its fruit will be good,
or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad,
for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

— Jesus (Matthew 12:33)

Attitudes We Need In Worship

Ken Tyler

Introduction: Our purpose should be to worship God acceptably. The attitudes we have in worship will determine the quality of our worship. What is involved in having the right kind of attitudes in worship?

I. We must prepare to worship.

A. Preparation puts us in the right frame of mind.

1. Sinful attitudes should be corrected (grudges, hatred, misconduct, etc.— Matthew 5:23, 24)
2. Pray, bring your Bible — Get ready to worship.

II. We must worship in spirit (John 4:23, 24; compare Joshua 24:14 and Ephesians 6:24).

A. Participants, not spectators!

1. Have we taken the heart out of worship (Matthew 15:7, 8)?
2. Far too many just pass the time instead of actively engaging in worship.

III. We must worship in truth (John 4:23, 24).

A. Worship is vain unless God's instructions are followed (Matthew 15:9).

1. Do we respect God's authority (John 10:35; Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18, 19; Galatians 1:8, 9; 2 John 9)?

IV. We must realize the blessedness of worship.

A. Worship is the greatest privilege on earth.

1. Someone has said that you could follow Abraham by the smoke of his altars. See Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:3, 4; 22:9.
2. We get to worship — Don't ever forget it!

V. We must be positive, not critical toward worship.

A. Support those who lead, instead of finding fault.

1. We should be building others up instead of discouraging them (1 Corinthians 14:12).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

2. When your attitude becomes positive you will find new meaning in worship.

VI. We must allow the worship service to improve our lives — My life is going to be improved today.

A. Your worship should make you more like Christ.

1. Worship restores and refreshes the soul (Psalm 23).
2. There are 10 years of Sundays in a 70 year lifetime. Think what worship can do for our lives!

Conclusion: It should be obvious that our attitudes determine whether our worship is acceptable or not. I challenge you to take an honest look at yourself and change the attitudes that are hindering your acceptable worship. †

Ken Tyler has preached many years for the church in Arab, Alabama, U. S. A.



The What And How Of Preaching

“..Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”
(I Corinthians 9:16)

☛ Preach the Word	II Timothy 4:2
☛ Preach the Truth	John 8:32
☛ Preach the Truth in Love	Ephesians 4:15
☛ Preach the Gospel	Romans 1:16
☛ Preach to the Whole World	Matthew 28:19, 20
☛ Preach Without Adding To	Revelation 22:18
☛ Preach Without Taking Away	Revelation 22:19
☛ Preach Without Self-Glory	I Corinthians 9:16

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” **(Timothy 4:2)**

What Are The Vine And The Branches?

Johnny Ramsey

Sometimes questions arise as to what Jesus meant in John 15 when He said, "*I am the vine and ye are the branches . . .*" For example, was Jesus upholding religious division?

The church which Jesus built (Matthew 16:18) and which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28) does not consist of denominations. The church of the Lord consists of people who are added to it by the Savior (Acts 2:47). Christ is "*head of the body, the church*" (Colossians 1:18). His body is not composed of 400 or more differing religious bodies on earth today. But someone says, "Don't you know that Jesus was referring to the various denominations when He talked about the vine and the branches in John 15?" No, I do not believe that Christ was referring to various denominations when He said, "*Ye are the branches.*" There are three conclusive reasons why I say this.

Firstly, Jesus made it plain that He was referring to individuals, not denominations, when He spoke these words. Jesus is talking to the disciples when He states, "*Ye are the branches.*" He further says, "*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch.*" That clearly identifies the branch as a person, not a denomination.

Secondly, John 15 does not prove that Christ was approving the present divisions in the religious world when He stated, "*I am the vine, and ye are the branches.*" None of the denominations of today even existed then! He could not have referred to the Protestant bodies, for not one of them was in existence until the year 1519 A. D.

Lastly, I am sure that Jesus was not upholding sectarianism, or denominationalism, by His use of "*the vine and the branches,*" because a vine bears only one type of fruit. If Christ had wanted to show approval of denominationalism, He would have needed another comparison, for a vine can only bear one type of fruit. The fruit of the denominations is as varied as the many varying religious orders. It would be just as logical to see a vine with grapes, bananas, apples, plums, oranges, and peaches on each of the branches as to believe that Christ was referring to the denominations when He said, "*I am the vine, and ye are the branches.*" †

Johnny Ramsey teaches Bible in the Brown Trail School of Preaching in Bedford, Texas, U. S. A.

Does "Unequally Yoked" Always Apply To Marriage?

Glenn Colley

It has long been my view that 2 Corinthians 6:14 can, but doesn't necessarily, apply to the marriage of a Christian to an unbeliever. The verse says, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*"

What is prohibited here? Does this teaching forbid a Christian from marrying an unbeliever? Would it further forbid a believer from **staying** married to an unbeliever? These are good questions.

First, examine key words. "**Unequally yoked together**" comes from one Greek word, "HETEROZUGEO." This is the only time the word occurs in the New Testament. Thayer says of this word, "Yoked with a different yoke; used in Leviticus 19:19 of the union of beasts of different kinds, e.g. an ox and an ass . . . to have fellowship with one who is not an equal."

It is important to see that what Paul is forbidding is not being yoked together with unbelievers, but rather being **unequally** yoked

together with unbelievers.

Consider then, this interpretation: Paul is teaching that while we naturally interact with unbelievers in a variety of ways, we must not give any unbeliever the authority to command us to do wrong. The Lord must **always** be our Master. The picture of being unequally yoked would be one in which the believer was yoked together with a larger, stronger unbeliever who could guide the union at will.

This interpretation makes good sense. If Paul was forbidding ALL relationships or covenants with unbelievers, not only would it be wrong to marry one, it would also be wrong to become a business partner with one, or even DO business with one!

Having said this, let's raise this question: **Can** it be a sin for a Christian to marry an unbeliever? The answer, using this verse alone, would have to be **yes**. When the believing mate gives the unbelieving mate the permission to lead him or her into unrighteousness, the believer has sinned. He or she is unequally yoked to that unbeliever.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Those of us who have been part of the church for many years have seen this scenario played over and over in the lives of Christians who married unbelievers, and then soon forsook the Lord and His church. All Christians must be married to Christ first, and our allegiance belongs to Him.

This is the situation Paul had in mind in the first Corinthian letter, chapter seven. In verse 13 he penned, *“And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”*

Is the believing wife to leave her unbelieving husband? No. Are they really married in the eyes of God, and therefore their children legitimate? Yes. Suppose the unbelieving husband bitterly resents the believing wife’s Christianity and decides he can’t live with her and her righteousness. Is she under

bondage to his wishes? Must she follow his ungodliness? The Apostle answers “No.” If he feels he must depart, let him. That believing wife must remain faithful to Christ even if it means her husband leaves. Incidentally, this situation would not free her to remarry (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

I do not consider the Christian’s decision to marry a non-Christian a wise decision. Hard days will likely follow. However, if you are married to an unbelieving mate, I want to encourage you to commit to memory 1 Peter 3:1-2: *“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation (faithful Christian lifestyle, GC), coupled with fear.”*

Hold to the unchanging hand. Seek the conversion of your unbelieving mate, and never give up. Let your mate know that following Christ is the most important goal in your life. One day you may enjoy the warm embrace of that husband or wife as he or she leaves the refreshing waters of baptism. That is my hope and prayer. †

Glenn Colley preaches in Jasper, Alabama, U. S. A. and edits *Words of Truth*.



Campus of the University of Cape Town.

South Africa

Roger E. Dickson

It is believed that around 2,000 years ago nomadic hunters and herders of the stone age Khoesan people made up the populace of South Africa. Some time before A.D. 300 migration of tribal groups from the north of Africa began to move down the east coast of Africa and into the eastern part of South Africa. By the 1400's Khoesan and various black peoples had already settled in many parts of the country. In 1488 Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope. In 1580 Cornelis de Houtman, in his search for a passage to the East, landed at Mossel Bay on the southern coast and traded with Khoekhoen people.

It was in 1652 that Jan van Riebeeck landed at Cape Town and established the first European settlement in the country. The eventual migration of these early pioneers to the northeast brought them into contact with those tribal groups which had through the centuries migrated down from the north of Africa.

In 1815 Shaka became chief of the Zulu nation. As a result of his terror over neighboring tribal groups, southern Africa experienced the forced

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

migration of many groups as bloody wars raged with the expansion of the Zulu power. In 1824 the first European traders and settlers had penetrated into Shaka's kingdom. Various confrontations resulted as settlers and Zulu warriors fought over territory. In 1828 Shaka died and his half-brother, Dingane, became king of the Zulus. When the pioneers moved into Dingane's kingdom in 1838, war raged until a final victory of the pioneers at the Battle of Blood River where a small band of farmers numbering under 1,000 fought off thousands of Zulu warriors.

In 1877 Britain annexed the South African Republic. However, tension soon developed between the settlers and the British government. This tension resulted in the first Anglo-Boer War of 1880 and 1881.

In 1886 gold was discovered in the Witwatersrand area and the city of Johannesburg was founded. However, from 1899 to 1902 the territory was again locked in a war with Britain. The war ended with Britain granting the four colonies in southern Africa the right to be the self-governing Union of South Africa (1910). In 1912 the South African Native National Congress, now known as the African National Congress (ANC), was formed. Their struggle for voting rights and power ended on April 27, 1994 with the first all-race election of the country.

It was during these early years of the twentieth century that members of the church of Christ from England, and possibly New Zealand, landed in Cape Town where the church was first established. One of the early



Top of gold mine shaft, with Johannesburg at night in the background.

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Christians, T. W. Hartle, recalls that the church was meeting at 84 Short-market Street in Cape Town when he was about eight years old, around 1919 or 1920. There were about 300 members of that congregation. From this time on, the Cape Town church was blessed with the presence and visits of great missionaries as the George Scotts, Shorts, Merritts and Lawyers. Today, the Lord's church throughout the country numbers more than 400 congregations, scattered over a territory twice the size of Texas.

Major ongoing programs of the church include World Bible School follow-up, preacher and leadership training through the International School of Biblical Studies (P. O. Box 1919, Bellville, Cape Town), South African Bible College (P. O. Box 688, Benoni 1500), and the Cape School of Preaching (Anthony Rd., Silvertown 7764), Cape Town.

Politically, culturally and economically, South Africa has started the move through a tremendous metamorphosis. The changing of the government by the first democratically elected leadership of all population groups symbolizes the new direction. Though there is great apprehension on the part of many, there is also positive prospect for the future as the country is now set on a course to which there are no charts. In this rapidly changing socio-economic environment, great opportunities present themselves for the church. Refocusing of minds on eternal concepts, instead of on the struggles of the past, can now be done. A glorious opportunity has arisen for the name of Jesus to be proclaimed throughout the land.



Cape Town Center

SERVANTHOOD DISCIPLESHIP

Roger E. Dickson

When one studies Mark 10:35-45 he must keep in mind that the disciples still retain the understanding that a physical restoration of Israel is yet in the future, and that there was rivalry among them concerning who was the greatest. Like people today, there was a desire to rule over their fellow man.

In verses 35-37 James and John approach Jesus. "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." The disciples here behave as we sometimes do, seeking just any desire we would want. "Grant us that we may sit..." The type of leadership James and John are asking consists of sitting on judgment seats and commanding others to do the work. We are sure that Jesus' concept of leadership He is about to reveal will certainly surprise them. James and John are seeking positions, or "offices", of authority in command. In the supposed physical kingdom to come they are wanting to be major leaders beside Jesus, who will be the king.

In verses 38-40 Jesus responds to carnal requests. Keep in mind that Jesus answers them with the spiritual kingdom in mind, though they are thinking in terms of a physical kingdom. "Can you...?" Jesus is asking them to bear the burden of leadership, and if they have the mental strength to carry out in their lives what they are requesting. "Can you drink the cup...?" In the culture of that time, at a banquet a cup of drink was placed before the guests and they were expected to accept this portion and allotment to them. Jesus is asking if James and John are able to accept that portion of leadership responsibility which will be dealt to them in answer to their request.

"Can you...be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with...?" Here the word "baptism" is used with the definition "overwhelm". Jesus is asking them if they are able to be overwhelmed with the tremendous responsibility that comes with leadership. Even in a physical king-

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dom the military generals must accept tremendous responsibility in sending men to death in physical warfare. James and John respond with this concept in mind. They know the responsibility for which they are asking in a physical kingdom.

They answer, "We can..." They felt that they had the inner courage and strength it would take to be prominent leaders in a physical kingdom, with the tremendous responsibility and the burden of directing men. Here we see the desire to lead, though their understanding of **how** and **what** they would lead is incorrect.

"You will..." Jesus does not correct the misconceptions concerning the kingdom for He knows that they will need the same strength to lead in the spiritual kingdom that it takes to lead a physical kingdom. The tremendous burden of leadership which faces generals and kings in the physical world would soon rest on the shoulders of the apostles.

But, "...is not mine to give..." Such positions were not given by Jesus, but by the Father, the original giver of all authority. Though Jesus had the authority to bestow upon them a kingdom, the original authority came from the Father. "For whom it is prepared..." Though Jesus' response to them may seem confusing, it is not when

considered in the context of the time the Father had set forth for the establishment of the kingdom-reign of Jesus. The positions of authority were prepared and reserved for the apostles, but the time would be determined by the Father. *James and John were asking the wrong person at the wrong time and for the wrong thing.*

In verse 41, when the other disciples heard that James and John had privately requested positions with Jesus, they were greatly displeased and manifested their own misunderstanding of the nature of the coming kingdom. In the text we picture the disciples off in a group quarreling with James and John over their presumption to approach Jesus for special positions.

In a physical kingdom, authority is invested in the leaders by either their own self-appointed power to rule or the constitutional authority of the people. Regardless of the source of authority, the rulers hand down dictates to the subjects, and it is the responsibility of the people to submit. "Yet it shall not be so among you." Jesus explains that the authoritarian leadership of the world will not be so among the disciples. He says that the great ones "shall be your servant."

The "servant" is the Greek word *diakonos*, the ones in the house whose duties were to care for

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the family. So it would be in the kingdom. The needs of the people would be upon the shoulders of the leaders, who, in like manner as servants, would respond to those needs with service.

This "position" of leadership is different from that which the disciples had conceived in their minds. Instead of being "on top of the situation", they were to bear the burden of the needs of the group. Leaders in the church would not be seen to be *rulers* over the people, but would be *servicing* the needs of the people.

By way of illustration, Jesus uses the language of the culture of that day. "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all." The Greek word here is *doulos*, a word for slave, who has no rights of command and no rights to determine how, when or what to do. Slaves serve in response to the needs of the people, whatever the nature of the service, and whether or not they feel like serving.

Jesus came to serve, leaving us an example that we should follow. Any who would lead His church must give themselves to service, as Jesus served in leading the disciples while here on earth. As a leader, He gave Himself as a ransom for His sheep. "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

In the context of our atonement, the word ransom is used in the metaphorical sense that Jesus gave himself for our salvation. In the context of our study it is used in reference to leadership, indicating that great leaders must give their time, energies, and talents as a ransom for the people. Those who would be leaders must be willing to sacrifice even their very lives for the church, just as Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for us. †

Roger E. Dickson serves as Director of the International School of Biblical Studies in Cape Town, South Africa



THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA CLOSELY PARALLELS THAT OF THE UNITED STATES. BOTH WERE SETTLED BY EUROPEAN MIGRANTS IN THE 1800'S, COURAGEOUS PEOPLE WHO FACED PERILS FROM NATURE AS WELL AS FROM INDIGENOUS TRIBAL GROUPS.

TODAY'S ECONOMIES IN BOTH COUNTRIES OFFER MODERN CITIES, WELL-DEVELOPED HIGHWAY (FREEWAY) SYSTEMS, SHOPPING MALLS, COMFORTABLE HOUSING, AND ALL COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

THE LORD'S CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA IS MATURE, CONSISTING OF MORE THAN 400 CONGREGATIONS. MANY HAVE ELDERS, AND DEACONS, AND OWN THEIR BUILDINGS. †

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Brian van der Spuy

Sadly, we live in a world where negatives seem to have gained and kept our attention. Both on radio and television our news programs would probably better be called "Bad News" because very little of what is good is ever reflected or reported.

Even in the religious world we sometimes tend to emphasize the negative and become victims of our viewpoints. Jeremiah declared "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Jeremiah 10:23). The writer of the great letter to the Hebrews admonished that "*looking unto Jesus*" would enable us to gain steadfastness (Hebrews 12:1,2).

We speak of motivating people, but it may be that this is a misnomer. People do not have to be motivated. Watch lethargic, dozing church members grab their books and car keys when the final amen is said after the assembly. Observe their energy while they are watching their favorite sports team. Listen to them animatedly discuss their political preference or favorite hobby. They do not need to be motivated. All people are motivated. What we need to do is redirect that motivation. Somehow we need to get people involved in spending their energies in spiritual channels. If we could approach our spiritual lives with the same drive and fervor that we have for making money or pursuing sport, polishing a new car or building on to the house, our effectiveness would increase a hundredfold.

It is equally erroneous to say if people are not motivated from within, they cannot be motivated from without. Observation, experience and logic deny this. History abounds with examples of men motivating others. In 1940 Britain was about to be invaded by a far superior German force. Europe had fallen. The United States was far away and totally unprepared for war, while Britain itself simply did not have the equipment to repel the invaders. But then an obscure 65 year old politician who had experienced many failures in his career was elected prime minister, and made his famous speech saying:

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The battle of France is over. I expect that the battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. The white fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us on this island, or lose the war.... Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will say, "This was their finest hour."

The point is that we can be challenged from without to redirect the energies we do possess. There are so many vacuums in the world, and especially in the church, waiting to be filled by someone we could label a "motivator".

The church is a body, a group, and therefore its success demands that every member (Ephesians 4:16) seek to motivate others by finding and defining goals that are wholesome for one another. Manipulation seeks to exalt itself; motivation seeks to exalt the group. A successful group possesses a chemistry that is hard to define, but is born in the drive towards a common goal that we view as critically important. Once the ball starts rolling, it is hard to stop. While sitting dormant, it is hard to get moving.

Notice how easily a few disgruntled members of any group can rapidly create a disastrous negative energy field within that group. And remember how vital to peace of growth it is to defuse such elements.

The point is to make an appeal to every church member.

The church of Jesus Christ is filled with capable, energetic, motivated people. People who have been successful in business; people who have been successful in their jobs; people who have studied with great success; people who have excelled in sport, business and other endeavors. To those people we appeal, "Please use your talents and abilities to motivate one another, to redirect energies, to focus on essentials, to create a spirit of optimism and success in the church." †

Brian van der Spuy preaches and works in Welkom, South Africa.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

The International School of Biblical Studies is a correspondence school which offers serious Bible students an opportunity to advance their knowledge of the Scriptures in their own home, providing guided biblical studies to preachers and church leaders who desire a greater understanding of the word of God. Because of the need to provide biblical education for those who are unable to attend a resident school of Bible training, the International School of Biblical Studies was established to send through the post advanced courses to students in every nation. Programmed courses are self-study materials which are written in a manner that will guide students through a personalized study of the Bible.

It is our purpose to build up the body of Christ and perfect the saints by offering to those who love God's will an opportunity to study the Bible, and thereby, grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Courses are posted to students. The student studies through each lesson, following all instructions and completing all questions in the text. At the conclusion of each course is a Final Test which the student completes and returns to the School to be graded.

It is necessary for a student to be disciplined and self-motivated in order to complete the program. If you feel that this challenge is for you, we encourage you to apply for enrollment. Prospective students must write a personal letter to the school, requesting admission, and explaining the reasons for wanting to be a part of the school. Letters that are accompanied with a written recommendation from a fellow preacher or church leader will receive greater consideration. All correspondence must be sent to the following address:

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

P. O. Box 1919

Bellville 7535

Cape Town, South Africa

Tuition costs to enter and complete the courses vary from place to place. We ask southern African countries to please contribute to help subsidize the expenses of the school. A special scholarship fund has been established to pay the total tuition cost of most students. The student's only expenses will be his or her postage costs of mailing final tests and forms to the school. †

The Book of John

Bread of Life

Light of the **World**

Door of the **Sheep**

Good Shepherd

Resurrection and the **Life**

Way, Truth and the **Life**

True Vine

The Word Was God

from page 47

Verse Search - 4 (from page 77)

1. Yes
2. He was weary and hungry.
3. Living; whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst again.
4. Worship; Father; Spirit; truth.
5. Christ; I who speak to you am He.
6. All things that I ever did.
7. To do the will of Him who sent Him.
8. White
9. Yes; with them.



Lydia

10. Now we believe; that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.
11. Nobleman; heal; son.
12. The same hour in which Jesus had said he would be well.
13. Believed; household.
14. Sickness; disease.

**Who
Am
I?**

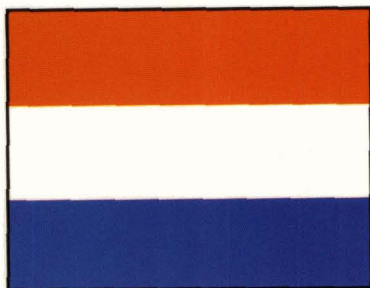
(from
page 59)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



Republic of South Africa

May 31, 1961



Government: REPUBLIC
President: NELSON MANDELA
Deputy: FREDERIK W. de KLERK

Secular Facts:

Location: The Southern section of Africa.

Land Mass: 472,359 square miles

Population: 41,688,000

Cities of 1,000,000 or more:

Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein,
Durban, Johannesburg

Ethnic Groups:

Black.....	70%
White.....	16%
Colored.....	8%
Asian.....	3%

Languages:

Afrikaans
English.....(Both are official)
Nguni
Sotho Languages

Literacy:

Whites, 99%; Asians, 69%;
Coloureds, 62%; Africans, 50%.

Religion:

Mainly believers in Christ; Hindu and
Moslem minorities; Tribal religions.

Economy:

A well-developed industrial nation, and
rich in minerals (largest producer of
gold); 25% labor force in agriculture.

The Church:

Congregations: 400 churches scattered
throughout the country.

History: Early in the 1900's missionar-
ies of the Lord's church entered South
Africa. H.W. Machan began the work in
Cape Town, and the church quickly grew
to about 300. Among the large concen-
tration of Coloured people in Cape Town,
approximately 2,500 are Christians now.

Other early workers included John
Sheriff and George Scott.

Eldred Echols, considered by many to
be the "father" of the church's mission
work among the Whites of South Africa,
labored there from 1945 until 1980. He
chronicled his experiences in a book
entitled **Wings of the Morning**.

In 1952 the John Hardins began their
work at Grasmere and Noordgesig, con-
centrating largely on the Coloured and
Black populations. Bessie Hardin wrote
of their work in **Give Me This Mountain**.

Others who have worked in South
Africa include Al Horne (African Bible
College), John Reese, Tex Williams,
Leonard Gray, Guy Caskey, Joe
McKissick, and Roger Dickson
(International School of Biblical Studies).

Many dedicated and effective local
men have also evangelized South Africa.