

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815,
New Delhi-110049

Pleading For The Restoration Of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 17

October 1986

No. 6



Good And Bad Hearts

When thinking of good and bad hearts, we most always have the physical heart in mind and certainly the older we get the more concerned we become about that part of our bodies. The scriptures also have a lot to say about the heart, and different types of hearts, but the heart of the scripture is not the physical blood pump but rather the mind or the thinking processes of man. Sometimes we think of this part of a person as being his mental heart.

There are good and bad hearts that have nothing to do with a person's spiritual condition, but we rate them good or bad on the basis of their attitudes and how they approach various matters. For example, we refer to a person as having a good heart when he is kind and nice, has an open mind, is honest and sincere, and wants to do the right thing. There are others who have bad hearts in the sense that they have an ugly disposition, are unreasonable in

their dealings with their fellowman and always seem to have a negative spirit.

We might well ask ourselves what kind of heart we have. To help us with this, let us notice some of the hearts mentioned in the scriptures :

1. **Pure Hearts.** Christ said, "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God." (Matthew 5 : 8). Peter wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently : Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1 : 22,23). I think we can see in these statements that the heart is made pure or forgiven for its misdeeds through obedience to the Lord, and by keeping a pure heart one prepares himself to see God or to live one day with God.
2. **A Hard Heart.**—This is a heart that is difficult to reach. Such a person is one who is stubborn, one who will not listen, one who is without consideration, or willing to extend mercy. Christ spoke of many of those living under the law of Moses as having hard hearts, that is, they were determined to have their way. A hard heart today might be that one who is unwilling to change his way because he feels that he must remain loyal to his family members and their religion even though he might not be able to read about it in God's word. It is very dangerous, for example, to continue to do a thing over a period of time because one hardens his heart to it, or his heart become calloused and it is very difficult to change in that case. The Hebrew writer exhorted, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3 : 13).
3. **Hearts of Unbelief.** The inspired writer said, "take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Hebrews 3 : 12). Unbelief leads to destruction. Christ said, "He that

believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16). On the other hand, Paul says that faith cometh by hearing the word of God (Romans 10 : 17) and with a heart one believes unto righteousness. (Romans 10 : 10). Philip told the man from Ethiopia that if he believed with all of his heart that he could obey the Lord in baptism. (Acts 8 : 37). He then confessed Christ and Philip baptized him.

4. **Impenitent Hearts.** Paul said, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Romans 2 : 5). Christ reminds us, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders Thefts, covetousness, wickedness deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye blasphemy, Pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7 : 21-23). That is why the Lord has commanded man to repent or perish. (Luke 13 : 3). Those who do so are in position to proceed with their obedience to the Lord that they might have the remission of their sins. (Acts 2 : 38). Those who refuse to repent will be lost.
5. **One Heart.** Those who obey God become one heart, that is, they are brought together through obeying the same commands and now they are one in the sense that they agree, they are united in Christ and his church, they are willing to share with each other. (Acts 4 : 32). This is called oneness and unity throughout the scriptures. (John 17; 1 Corinthians 1 : 10).
6. **Blind Hearts.** Paul wrote the Ephesians that they should not walk as the Gentiles, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart : Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Ephesians 4 : 18, 19). Akin to that is having a deceived heart. James says, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but

deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1 : 26).

7. Obedient Hearts. The Lord wants us to obey him from the heart, (Romans 6 : 17, 18). He wants us to love him with all of our hearts. (Matthew 22 : 36, 37). Then Paul said, "doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." (Ephesians 6 : 6-8).

But this is just the beginning. There are many other hearts described in the scripture. Regardless of what they are called, keep in mind that they are the ones that think, prompts one to act, to obey or disobey, to worship or not to worship, and to serve or not to serve. They accept, reject, are good or bad, filled with evil or with good, and so on. The kind of heart that one has will determine whether he will be saved or lost.

What kind of heart do you have ? Is it an open heart, a considerate heart, one that can be reached, touched, and moved ? Is it a sincere heart, a compassionate heart, a loving heart ? Remember that you can determine the kind of heart that you are going to have. If it is an unbelieving heart, through the word of God being received into it, it can be changed to a believing, obedient heart. If it is a bad heart, it can become a good heart, that is, as you submit yourself to the will of the Lord and as you become like Christ in all that you do and say. What greater compliment could be paid to you than for those around you to say that you have a good heart, that you are a faithful follower of Christ.



**associate
editorial**

What is the Gospel ?

(1)

The Word "Gospel" appears at least over ninetyfive times in

the New Testament. This word has come from the Anglo-Saxon "godspel", which means good tidings or good news. In the New Testament it is the Christ's message, and not the books which were written to spread that message. The first four books of the New Testament were written by four different men and their books are identified by their names. All of these men, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote of the same gospel in their books. They didn't write four different gospels, since there is but only one gospel. Some have mistakenly referred to these accounts of the gospel as "gospels" or "four gospels." While it wouldn't be wrong to call them four accounts of the gospel, but it certainly is not right to refer to them as "gospels". Because that would make more than one gospel.

Christ, after His death, burial and resurrection, commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16 : 15). Paul, the Apostle, who wrote fourteen epistles in the New Testament confessed that he was not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ, and he added that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. (Romans 1 : 16). To Timothy he wrote and said that life and immortality has come to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1 : 10). One must obey the gospel to be saved when Christ returns on the day of judgment, because the Bible says, those who would not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 1 : 8). So the gospel of Christ is very important and essential for salvation. We cannot escape from it. We must either obey it or reject it.

What is the gospel? In his epistle to Christians at Corinth, Paul said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Here they were reminded that Christ's death, burial and resurrection was the gospel. The good news is: that Christ, the Son of God, died in our stead by the

grace and mercy of loving God. "For when we were still without strength," the Bible says, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8). Not only Christ tasted death on the cross for everyone, (Hebrews 2:9), but after His death He also rose again to give us the assurance and hope that we too one day will be made alive through our own resurrection. In verses 20-22 of 1st Corinthians 15th chapter, Paul thus reasoned: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man (Adam) came death, by Man (Christ) also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive." We also remember what Christ has said about the resurrection of the dead, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28,29). Also, Paul wrote the Christians, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The gospel of Christ, therefore, is the gospel of the death and resurrection. Christ paid the price for our sins through His atoning and propitiatory death on the cross. This is Good News. If we have believed and obeyed the gospel, then we know that even in death we will remain the blessed people of the Lord, (Revelation 14:13), and that we will be raised at His coming to meet the Lord and to

live with Him for evermore.

(to be Continued)

What Shall I Render to the Lord?

Ben F. Vick

The sweet Psalmist of Israel asked, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psa. 116:12). He did not ask, "What shall others render?" but, "What shall I render?" Oftentimes we are prone to be too concerned over what the other fellow is doing or not doing, and not enough thought and action are given to what one's own obligations are. After all, none of us shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to answer for another. So, this question is personal.

The inquiry made by David was based on his being a recipient of the Lord's blessings. David knew from whom all blessings flow. James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (Jas. 1:17). In another place the Psalmist said, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." (Psa. 68:19). Just as the hog never looks up to see the tree from which the acorns fall, so many never look up with grateful hearts to the Bountiful Giver of all.

Each of us, as David did, should ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The Lord has blessed all of us in many ways. If we are reading this, the Lord has blessed us with life through another year, and we embark on a new year with new hopes and dreams. If the Lord has given one good health, he is greatly blessed; but, even more, if one is in Christ, he is blessed because of the spiritual benefits. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:..." (Eph. 1:3). Thus, what do we owe the Lord?

Shall I render unto the Lord nothing? Too many, like the Dead Sea, are always receiving but never giving. Jesus said, "It

is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). To his apostles Jesus said, "... freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:8). Again, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Lk. 12:48). King David lived under an inferior system than we today; yet, when Araunah offered feely the use of his oxen and threshing floor, the king said unto Araunah, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price : neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." (II Sam. 24:24).

Shall I render unto the Lord the leftovers? In the days of Malachi, the prophet, Israel offered to the Lord the leftovers. "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 1:7-8). Instead of giving their best to the Lord, they gave the leftovers.

A wife, after she had placed the meal of leftovers on the table, complained, "I just hate to plan meals." The husband, looking at the leftovers, retorted, "You planned this?" Perhaps that is the way the Lord looks upon the giving of many in the church. They plan to give the Lord the leftovers. They have no intention of taking the Lord's rightful portion from the top. Paul wrote, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:2). The Bible teaches that we should purpose, or plan, our giving and not give haphazardly. (II Cor. 9:7). But the Lord's portion should come first. (Matt. 6:33). Let us render unto the Lord our very best.

What shall I render to the Lord? Why not render some of our free time to the building up of the body of Christ? many have more money and more free time than ever before, but many who claim to be Christians can find neither money nor time to invest in the Lord's church. When was the last time you visited, called or wrote a note to a wayward member? "Brethren, if a man

be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. 6:1). When was the last time you visited one such person? (Matt. 25:31-46). When was the last time you invited someone to Bible classes or services?

What shall I render to the Lord? Why not use our abilities for the spread of the gospel? Reckoning day is coming, and each of us will give an account for the use or non-use of our talents. (Matt. 25:14-30). Many men will use their talents for the growth of a business, but cannot seem to do the same when it comes to the Lord's business. Many women will use their talents in caring for their children and husbands, but cannot make use of the same to teach a children's Bible class or do some good for another.

What shall I render to the Lord? We should give regularly to the Lord. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," (I Cor. 16:2). The original language means upon the first day of every week. The fact that the Lord has prospered us perhaps by a holiday bonus or an increase in regular salary ought to encourage us to give back a portion to him. Those in Malachi's day had robbed God. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offering. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." We also can be guilty of robbing God by failing to give as the New Testament teaches. Perhaps none of us would commit armed robbery of a store or bank, but many may be guilty of robbing God by withholding that which rightfully belongs to him.

Is The Holy Spirit For Me?

Dan McVey

There are many questions that are before us each day regard-

ing the Christian faith. One of the most important questions is the Holy Spirit and His work in the world. We can see many different ideas about the Holy Spirit in different churches, but what does the Bible say?

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is God, just like the Father and the Son. Please consider these verses-II Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:18-20; Genesis 1:2. We must remember that the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead or Deity just as much as the Father and Jesus Christ. If you read Acts 5:3-4, you will see the Holy Spirit is called God. The mind of man can never fully understand the deep things of God, but the Bible tells us the Holy Spirit is God.

But what does the Holy Spirit do? Is He for me? Let us consider three different points :

1. In John 14:16. Jesus explained the purpose of the Holy Spirit, who would come into the world after Jesus departed. Please read these verses : John 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15. From these verses, we know the Holy Spirit has several responsibilities :

- (a) He is our Comforter, a very special help. (John 14:16).
- (b) He is a teacher (John 14:26).
- (c) He testifies of Christ (John 15:26).
- (d) He convinces the world of God's righteousness, sin and judgment (John 16:7-11).
- (e) He is the guide to all truth (John 16: 13).
- (f) He is to glorify Christ (John 16:14).

After Jesus departed the world and went back to heaven (Acts 1:4-9), the Holy Spirit was to come and guide the Apostles and the early church by revealing all of God's truth to them (John 16: 13) and causing them to remember what Jesus had taught them (John 14:26). This same Holy Spirit guided the prophets and writers in the Old Testament (II Peter 1:21). Therefore, the New Testament was also given by God's revelation and inspiration

through the Holy Spirit. Please read II Timothy 3:16-17 and I Corinthians 2:13. The Bible is one of the works of the Holy Spirit, that we can know God's truth and what he wants us to do. All we know about Jesus and God's truth is in the Bible; therefore, by giving us the Bible, the Holy Spirit has done what Jesus said He would do.

2. One of the Old Testament prophets named Joel had prophesied of a great day to come when God would send His Holy Spirit into the world (Joel 2:28-32). When Jesus was going back to the Father, He told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem for God's promise to be fulfilled (Acts 1:4:5). In Acts chapter 2, we read of God's sending the Holy Spirit with signs of power and glory (2:1-4). When Peter and the other apostles explained to the people what was happening, they told the people it was what Joel had prophesied (2:16-21). God had sent the Holy Spirit into the world-the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many years later, when Peter witnessed God's accepting the Gentiles as Christians as well as Jews. He referred back to Acts chapter 2 as "the beginning" and understood that God meant this outpouring for all people who would come to Him (Acts 10:1-18). As Peter and the brethren preached in Acts chapter 2 about the Gospel of Jesus, they told the people that if they would repent and baptized, God would also give them the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-39).

Therefore, we all can have personal fellowship with God by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Please read Romans 8:9; II Timothy 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; Acts 5:32. God gives to the Christian the gift of the Holy Spirit. How do we get this gift? Galatians 3:1-5 says this gift comes by the "hearing of faith"-the word of God. John 7:37-39 says faith in Christ brings the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us it is by baptism that God puts the Holy Spirit within us. All of these scriptures teach the same thing when we come to Christ in faith and accept Him in baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit and become part of God's Kingdom doing His will in the world (Acts 2:47).

3. What does the Holy Spirit do for the Christian?

(a) He brings sanctification (I Peter 1:1-2). This means the

Holy Spirit helps us to be like God-pure and holy.

- (b) The Holy Spirit encourages us to live a holy life by dwelling in us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We are the temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, we cannot defile our body.**
- (c) The Holy Spirit strengthens us to fight the spiritual warfare Romans 8:13; Philippians 2:12-13).**
- (d) The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26-27).**
- (e) The Holy Spirit is given to us by God as assurance that He had saved us and will continue to help us. Read: Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:12; 5:5.**

The Holy Spirit is God in us-God in the Christian, doing so many wonderful things for us. We do not fully know how the Holy Spirit does all this and more because the Bible does not tell us, but we know the Holy Spirit is with us and in us to God's glory.

How do I know the Holy Spirit is in me? Do I have a strange feeling? Can I only feel His presence? No. The Bible tells us how we can know the Holy Spirit is within the Christian. Please consider these points :

- (a) We know the Holy Spirit dwells in us because of our faith in Christ and what He told us. Galatians 3:2, 3, 5; 3:14; John 7:37-39; I Corinthians 12:3.**
- (b) We know we have the Spirit if we have been immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. Acts 2:38; I Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:5-6.**
- (c) Through our knowledge and understanding of God's love, we can know the Holy Spirit's presence. Romans 5:5.**
- (d) If we obey God, we can know of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Acts 5:32.**
- (e) Because of the struggle against sin and the desire to be holy, we know of the Holy Spirit's help. Romans 8:13-14; II Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 8:5-9,**

- (f) If we have the fruits of the Spirit in our lives, we know the Spirit is with us. Galatians 5:22-23.

My friends, let us not think that the Holy Spirit is just some strange feeling or emotion. Let the Bible be your guide and you can see the great blessing God wants to give you through the Holy Spirit.

Let us close our brief study with two questions :

1. What does it mean to be "filled with the Holy Spirit"?

This phrase is found often in the Bible; sometimes it means a miraculous presence of the Spirit; sometimes it does not mean that. Please read carefully these passages-Exodus 31:3; 35:31; Luke 1:41,67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; Ephesians 5:18. Especially notice Luke 1:17 in comparison to John 10:41. John the Baptist was full of the Holy Spirit from its birth (Luke 1:17), but he never performed any miracles (John 10:41). Therefore, to be filled with the Spirit, does not always mean a miraculous event. To be filled with the Spirit is to be under God's control (Romans 8:5), to trust in God rather than ourselves. Ephesians 5:18-21 teaches if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be filled praise, thanksgiving and humility.

2. What about miracles like tongue speaking, healing, etc.?

Obviously, what people call miracles today are not what we read about in the Bible. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the message of the Gospel-show that the word was from God. Please read II Corinthians 12:8-10; Mark 16:15-18; Hebrews 2:3-4; John 20:30-31. The apostles played the major part in the performance of miracles-Acts 2:42-43; 4:33; 5:12; 6:5-6; 8:5ff. From Acts 8:14-18 we know the apostles had to lay hands on someone before that person could perform any miracle. Since there are more apostles, there can be no more miracles as in the days of the New Testament. I Corinthians 13:8-10 and Ephesians 4:8-15 tell us that the time of miracles was only until the church reached a stage of maturity. Please read these passages. Since God has

finished revealing His word-the Bible (II Peter 1:3; Jude 3), there is no more need for confirmation by miracles.

Our faith must not rest upon what we see (II Corinthians 5:7), for we walk by faith. If we spend our time looking for signs and wonders, we can be deceived by Satan (Matthew 24:24; II Thessalonians 2:9-12). Jesus discouraged the seeking of signs (Mark 8:11-12). We are to seek God's truth which is in His word.

Does this mean if there are no more miracles that the Holy Spirit is no longer working in the world? Not at all. The Holy Spirit is very active and working and you can be a part of His work. There is no need to fear the evil powers of darkness, God's power is with us through the Holy Spirit. You can be just a Christian and follow God's way. We began this short study by asking-Is the Holy Spirit for me? Yes. Yes. The Holy Spirit is for all who will accept God's way. We hope you will come to Christ in faith. Please let us help you in your study.

Was There A Universal Flood ?

DARRYL LEWIS

Until about one hundred years ago the historical fact of the Universal flood as recorded in Genesis 6:5-8:19 was almost universally accepted, not only by Bible believers, but also by men of science. When Charles Darwin began to teach his theory of evolution, he used the theory of uniformitarianism to support his views. The catastrophe of the universal flood did not fit this system henceforth, it was rejected for geological, biological, and historical reasons. Many textbooks used in public schools were written by these men who ignore the flood altogether, or pass it off as a myth. When our faith on the subject is questioned, what answers can we give that will teach and persuade men that the Genesis flood is a historical fact ?

The important aspect of the question of the flood is whether it was universal. There have been many terribly destructive floods

through the earth's history, but was there one which covered the globe and, with the exception of one family, brought judgment on sinful man ?

In this article I would like to inform you about ancient historical literature apart from the Bible which indicates the evidence of the universal flood.

Even outside the Bible stories of the most catastrophic event in history abound. Flood stories have been discovered among nearly all nations and tribes. Total of the number of stories known run as high as 270.

Although these traditions have been modified through the ages and some have taken on fantastic elements, most of them have certain basic elements in common 88 per cent of them single out a favoured individual or family; 70 per cent to survival due to a boat; 66 per cent see the flood coming as a result of human wickedness; 67 per cent speak of animals saved along with human beings 57 per cent record that the survivors end up on a mountain and 66 per cent indicate that the hero or favored one received warning of the coming catastrophe.

In past years a collection of mythologies of all races has been published by the Archaeological Institute of America. This collection includes the flood traditions of many peoples.

In Germany, Dr. Johannes Riem compiled the results of his findings in his book *Die Sintflut in Sage und Wissenschaft*. Dr. Riem makes the following statement in the introduction : "Among all traditions there is none as general, so widespread on earth, and so apt to show what may develop from the same material according to the varying spiritual character of a people as the flood tradition. Lengthy and thorough discussions with Dr. Kunike have convinced me of the evident correctness of his position that the fact of the Deluge is granted at the basis of all myths, particularly nature myths, there is a real fact, but that during a subsequent period the material was given its present mythical character and form."

Flood traditions are most common in Asia, islands south

of Asia, and North America. Babylonian, Assyrian, and Sumerian flood traditions are numerous. A few have been found in Africa. It is interesting to note the similarities of these traditions to one another and to the Genesis narrative.

Hugh Miller, the famous Scottish geologist of the last century, enumerated a great number of flood tradition and expressed the following opinion concerning them in *The Testimony of the Rocks* : "There is one special tradition which seems to be more deeply impressed and more widely spread than any of the others. The destruction of well-nigh the whole human race, in an early age of the world's history, by a great deluge, appears to have so impressed the minds of the few survivors, and seems to have been handed down to their children, in consequence, with such terror-struck impressiveness that their remote descendants of the present day have not even yet forgotten it. It appears in almost every mythology, and lives in the most distant countries, among the barbarous tribes. . . ."

The Athapascan Indian tribe on the west coast of America said this, "The waters of the oceans came together. There was no land. the waters joined completely everywhere. Human beings and animals alike had been washed away." The Algonquin Indians in the northeast said, "The rushing waters spread out over the mountains and destroyed all living things."

In Peru, the ancient Indians reported that many years before there weren't any Incas, all the people were drowned. by a great flood, save six persons, the progenitors of existing races. They believed a single family was preserved in a boat with animals. A crow was sent out from the boat returning with a green branch.

Natives of Alaska say that an Indian Chief was warned in a dream about the flood. He saved himself and his family and all the animals on a raft. Hawaiians say that long after the time of Kumuhonua, the first man, the earth became wicked and careless in worship of the gods. One righteous man, Nu-u, and his family were saved ; he was shown a rainbow.

The traditions in India and China tell of the carrying away of the old world by a flood and the re-populating of the earth by eight people who had been miraculously preserved, Manu, a righteous man was warned of the flood. After the flood he got drunk and lay naked in his tent. Charma, his son, saw him. when Manu came to his senses, he cursed his son saying, "You shall be a servant of servants."

Another Chinese tradition tells about Fah-he, who escaped from a flood which destroyed the human race with the exception of himself his wife, his three sons, and his three daughters.

The Roman flood tradition has been preserved by the well-known Latin poet Ovid in his work called *Metamorphoses*." The poem describes the creation of man, the state of innocence of original man and his perfection and happiness, the fall of man the cause of sin, and the flood. Ovid lived at the time of Caesar Augustus. All of these records are interesting because they are widespread by time and space. Some were probably written before Moses wrote Genesis.

Of all the flood stories, with the exception of the Genesis narrative, the most remarkable one is found in the Babylonian account. It was brought with thousands of other clay tablets from the ancient library of Assurbanipal in Ninevah to British Museum where it was discovered by George Smith, in 1872 The flood story is part of the great "Epic of Gilgamesh."

According to the story, the flood was brought on because the earth was full of wickedness. Dimensions and details of a ship are given. All kinds of animals were taken on the ship. The flood lasted seven days. A raven, a dove, and a swallow were sent out from the ship. A thanksgiving offering was made and favorably received by the gods. The great jewels of Ishtar are likened to a rainbow. There was a covenant guaranteeing that no flood would ever come upon earth again to destroy it.

The story ends with a blessing being pronounced upon the hero and his wife. This flood story was found in the ruins of the library of Assurbanipal who reigned in Ninevah from 668-626 B.C., but

the original story was probably written centuries before Moses wrote Genesis. The two narratives, having been written independently of one another, bear striking similarities which is remarkable evidence that the flood story was a historical event.

Sir J. William Dawson, L.L.D., the famous Canadian geologist, in *The Historical Deluge in Relation to Scientific Discovery*, wrote: "Further, we know that the Deluge of Noah is not a mere myth or fancy of primitive man or solely a doctrine of the Hebrew Scriptures. The record of the catastrophe is preserved in some of the oldest historical documents of several distinct races of man, and is indirectly corroborated by the whole tenor of the early history of most of the civilized races.

If there was not such world catastrophe of which all the flood traditions bear witness, how can they be accounted for? Nature myths have their origin in historical facts, we must seriously consider the conclusion that these flood traditions are an indisputable proof that the cataclysm described in Genesis is one of the greatest facts of all history. The flood is impressed upon the memory of the entire human race.

Human Reproduction : Proof That God Exists

BARRY BENNETT

A few months ago I was privileged to witness the birth of my son. As I reflect on that great happening I cannot help but think about the implications this one thing has on the existence of God.

When God said, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. . . ." (Genesis 1 : 28.) He had made in man a way of reproducing himself. Still, many take for granted the very complex procedures that take place in order to reproduce human life. When we examine production of life it must compel us to stand in awe of our majestic Creator. Surely, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Of the millions of male sperm that are released only one will unite with the female egg. Each sperm is equipped with its own "chemical knife" that slices through the coating of the egg. When one sperm gains entry to the egg, the egg's surface quickly changes to block the entry of other sperm. Within seconds, electrical shifts resembling a nerve impulse apparently act as a preliminary barrier. Then, thousands of small sacs just beneath the egg's surface discharge enzymes. One alters receptor sites on the egg, detaching sperm already bound to the surface and preventing others from binding. The other enzyme allows the outer surface to separate from deeper layers, creating an impassable barrier.

Once the sperm has entered the egg, preparation for uniting the genetic material continues. The egg halves its chromosomes to twenty-three. When the sperm reaches the deepest interior of the egg it unites its twenty-three chromosomes with those of the egg. On the chromosome strands of the fertilized egg are coils of deoxyribonucleic acid. (DNA), Arranged into units called genes. Encoded on genes is the blueprint for human traits, from eye colour to the shape of feet.

Within hours of conception this single cell begins to grow and develop. In three days the cell contains more than a thousand different proteins.

In order to stay alive and grow the fertilized egg must find its way to the uterus. The fertilized egg, now called a zygote, is pushed along by a current stirred by the fluttering of fine hairs in the lining of the Fallopian tube. Muscular contractions of the tube also aid the zygote on its journey.

By now the fertilized egg has grown into a strand of cells, each with its own function in the process of reproduction. A day or two after reaching the uterus the strand of cells joins itself to mother's uterine wall which has already been prepared to receive them by certain enzymes. This process takes about a week to complete. The baby and its life-line will grow from the same fertilized egg.

The baby will continue to be linked to its mother by the placenta, its life-line, until birth. Though it is temporary, the

placenta is a remarkable organ. It brings oxygen and takes away carbon monoxide from the baby's bloodstream. It also nourishes the baby providing water, minerals, proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, and fats. It also acts as a kidney, removing waste from the baby's metabolism. The placenta helps the mother too. It functions as the mother's hormone factory during pregnancy.

For protection, the baby is kept in an amniotic bag filled with fluid. This maintains a constant temperature and also cushions the baby against possible injury. The bag and the fluid provide the baby with free and easy movement and allow room to grow.

By the middle of the third week, the baby is one-eighth of an inch long. As the fourth week begins the heart begins to pump blood. Because the baby's lungs remain collapsed until they draw their first breath at birth, the baby's heart must pump blood laden with oxygen from its mother's lungs. By the fourth week arms and legs appear as buds. After eight weeks the baby can move its body and its head. In another six weeks the baby will be able to move his limbs. Early in the fourth month the baby can swallow, and ears, eyelids, eyelashes, eyebrows, toenails, and teeth develop. The baby is now about six and a half inches long and weighs about four ounces.

By the fifth month the baby is dozing to sleep and waking and rolling into his favorite position.

During the sixth, seventh, and eighth months, the baby grows at a tremendous rate. At the end of this time he is about eighteen inches long and weighs about five pounds. The average nine month baby is about, nineteen to twenty-one inches long and weighs about seven and a half pounds. But, remember what started this process? Every human being grows from just two tiny cells, a male sperm and a female egg. On the average, the weight is multiplied some six hundred times.

It would take a book as thick as the average novel to tell in detail all the processes of human reproduction. But by looking at these few astounding facts we can be certain of our Creator's existence. No one would try to say that a car just happened. A car

must have a creator. We did not just happen, we had a Creator.

"For thou hast possessed my reins : thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139 : 13-14).

The Time To Obey God Is When One Learns The Will Of God

EDSEL BURLESON

"We fully intended to get back into the Lord's work as soon as we retire and do not have so many things competing for our time." "I know I should obey the gospel but there are several things I want to do first." How often that which should have top priority is moved way down the list. When Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; (Matthew 6 : 33), he was telling us that nothing is of greater importance.

It is so easy to put off obeying the instructions of Jesus when one refuses to allow himself to consider the urgency of so doing. "I will some time," or "I intended to some day," or "Don't worry about me There is plenty of time."

Someone told the story of a girl named Mary, whose aunt had urged her to become a Christian, but the girl delayed making her decision, saying, "I will when I am older".

There came a day when mother was ill, and Mary ordered some beautiful flowers for her. When she returned home, she went to her mother's room, but the flowers were not there.

"Didn't the florist send the flowers I ordered?" she asked her aunt. "Yes," she replied. "They are down in the kitchen. As soon as they begin to be withered and dry. I will bring them up to your mother's room."

Mary was shocked, and her eyes flashed as she said, "I want my mother to have these flowers while they are fresh and

beautiful, I love her too much to give her what is wilted and faded."

"Oh!" exclaimed her aunt. "You told me that you intended to give your life to Jesus when it was wilted and faded, and so I supposed you would feel that way about this gift to your mother."

To which Mary replied, "You are right, I have not been fair to Jesus. I will give him the best of my life now while I am young and strong and able to serve him. I will give myself today and always."

Solomon insisted, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." (Ecclesiastes 12 : 1.) Paul urged the young preacher Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy 4 : 12.) Both are saying that the time to do the will of God is as soon as one learns the will of God.

Who Are These People?

World wide we have some 20,000 congregations and 2½ to 3 million individual members.

There are small congregations, consisting of just a few members, and large ones made up of several thousand members. We meet for worship in all kinds, shapes and sizes of buildings, but these buildings should not be confused with the church itself. The church is people—a "called out" people—while these buildings are only a practical means of providing a place to worship and teach.

The greatest concentration of numerical strength in churches of Christ is in the southern United States where there is a congregation in practically every town, no matter how large or small.

While members and churches are not so numerous in other places, there are churches of Christ in every state in the United States and in at least 109 other countries.

What We Are Trying To Do

We are a people of restoration spirit—wanting to restore in our time the original New Testament church.

Dr. Hans Kung, a well-known European theologian, published a book a few years ago entitled *The Church*. Dr. Kung lamented the fact that the established church has lost its way, has become burdened down with tradition, has failed to be what Christ intended it to be. The only remedy, according to Dr. Kung, is to go back to the Scriptures to see what the church was in its beginning and then to recover in the twentieth century the essence of the original church. This is what churches of Christ are seeking to do.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, men of different denominations, studying independently of each other in various parts of the world, began to ask :

—Why not go back beyond denominationalism to the simplicity and purity of the first-century church?

—Why not take the Bible alone and once again continue “steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42)?

—Why not plant the same seed (the Word of God, Luke 8:11) that the first-century Christians planted and be Christians only, as they were?

They were pleading with everyone to throw off denominationalism, to throw away human creeds and to follow only the Bible. They taught that nothing should be required of people as acts of faith except that which is evident in the Scriptures. They emphasized that going back to the Bible does not mean the establishment of another denomination but rather a return to the original church.

We who are members of the churches of Christ are enthusiastic about this approach. With the Bible as our only guide, we seek to find what that original church was like and restore it exactly. We do not propose this arrogantly, but humbly. We are

saying that we do not have the right to ask for men's allegiance to a human organization but only the right to call upon men to follow God's blue-print.

For this reason, we are not interested in the man-made creeds but simply in the New Testament pattern. We do not conceive of ourselves as being a denomination, nor as Catholic, Protestant or Jewish, but simply as members of the church which Jesus established and for which He died.

Who's In Charge?

We recognize our own personal shortcomings and weaknesses and this is all the more reason for wanting to carefully follow the all-sufficient and perfect plan God has for the church.

Since God has given "all authority" to Christ (Matthew 28:18) and since He serves as God's spokesman today (Hebrews 1:1,2), it is our conviction that only Christ has the authority to say what the church is and what we should teach. And since only the New Testament sets forth Christ's instructions to His disciples, it alone must serve as the basis for all religious teaching and practice.

We believe that unity among those wanting to follow Christ is possible only through a return to the Bible. Compromise cannot bring about unity and surely no person or group of persons has the right to draw up a set of rules by which everyone must abide. But it is altogether proper to say, "Let's unite by just following the Bible." That is fair. That is safe. That is right.

So churches of Christ plead for religious unity based upon the Bible. We believe that to subscribe to any creed other than the New Testament, to refuse to obey any New Testament command or to follow any practice not sustained by the New Testament is to add to or take away from the teachings of God. And both additions and subtractions are condemned in the Bible (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18,19).

How Are We Organized?

Churches of Christ have none of the trappings of modern-day organizational bureaucracy. There are no governing boards—

neither district, regional, national nor international—no earthly headquarters and no universal organization.

Each congregation is autonomous or “self-ruled” and is independent of every other congregation. The only tie which binds the many congregations together is a common allegiance to Christ and the Bible.

There are no conventions, annual meetings or official publications. Congregations do cooperate in supporting children’s homes, homes for the elderly, mission work and such things. However, participation is strictly voluntary on the part of each congregation and no person or group issues policies or makes decisions for the congregations.

Each congregation is governed locally by a plurality of elders selected from among the members. These are men who meet the specific qualifications for this office given in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

How Do We Worship?

Worship in churches of Christ centers in five items and we believe the first-century pattern is important. Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

To worship God according to truth is to worship Him according to His Word because His Word is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, we must not include any item not found in His Word.

The five items of worship mentioned in the New Testament as having been observed by the first-century church are: singing, praying, preaching, giving, and eating the Lord’s Supper.

If you know the practices of Churches of Christ you are probably aware that in two of these items our practice is different from that of most religious groups. So permit me to focus on those two and state our reasons for what we do.

What Kind of Music

One different practice concerns singing. One of the things people most frequently notice about the churches of Christ is that

we sing without the use of mechanical instruments of music—a *cappella* singing is the only music used in our worship.

Simply stated, here is the reason: We are seeking to follow only the New Testament and worship according to the instructions of the Bible. If we used the mechanical instrument we would have to do so without New Testament authority.

There are only eight verses in the New Testament dealing with the subject of music in worship. They are Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; and James 5:13. The mechanical instrument of music is conspicuously absent in these passages.

Historically, the first appearance of instrumental music in church worship was not until the sixth century A.D. and there was no general practicing of it until after the eighth century. Instrumental music was strongly opposed by such religious leaders as John Calvin, John Wesley and Charles Spurgeon because of its absence in the New Testament.

What About the Lord's Supper?

The second item of worship where you may have noticed a difference regards the Lord's Supper. This is a memorial which was inaugurated by Jesus on the night of His betrayal (Matthew 26:26-28). It is observed by Christians in memory of the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25). The unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine or grape juice symbolize the body and blood of Jesus. (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Churches of Christ are different from many in that we observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of *every* week. Once again, our reason centers in our determination to follow the pattern of the first-century church. Of them we read, "And upon the first day of the week . . . the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7).

They met on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper. Some have objected that the text does not specify the first day of *every* week. This is true—just as the command to observe the Sabbath did not specify *every* Sabbath. The command

was simply, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). The Jews understood that to mean *every* Sabbath. It seems to us that by the same reasoning "the first day of the week" means the first day of *every* week.

Requirements for Membership

Perhaps you are wondering, "How does one become a member of the church of Christ? What are the terms of membership?"

Churches of Christ do not speak of membership in terms of some formula which must be followed for approved acceptance in the church. The New Testament affirms that when a person became a Christian in the first century, he automatically was a member of the church.

The same is true of churches of Christ today. There is no separate set of rules or ceremonies which one must follow to be inducted into the church. When a person becomes a Christian, he, at the same time, becomes a member of the church. No further steps are needed to qualify for church membership.

On the first day of the church's existence those who repented and were baptized were saved (Acts 2:38) and from that day forward all those who were saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). According to the latter verse, it was God who did the adding. Therefore, in seeking to follow that pattern, we neither vote people into the church nor force them through a required series of studies. We have no right to demand anything beyond their obedient submission to the Saviour.

Who Are These People?

We are just people but we are people with a commitment. We are determined to be the people of God. We have no ambition to be anything more and we cannot be content to be anything less.

We'll be happy to correspond with you or to have someone visit with you. We believe that the joy and salvation we have found in Christ are too precious to be kept to ourselves.

Was He A Christian ?

(Selected)

Once upon a time there was a man who called himself a Christian. But he was indeed an unusual Christian.

On MONDAY while he was at work, something went wrong. He forgot about God and cursed and swore, taking the Lord's name in vain.

On TUESDAY while making a business transaction, he misrepresented an article and took undue advantage of the other fellow.

On WEDNESDAY he heard something evil about his brother, so he told this to another, making it sound even worse than what he had heard.

On THURSDAY he went to a friend's house for a little game. Naturally there was a social drink or two and he lost a couple of dollars. "A very cheap night's entertainment," he said.

On FRIDAY he became angry at everyone with whom he was working. They all wanted the same thing he wanted. They were all wrong.

On SATURDAY his grocer made a mistake and did not charge him for a pound of butter. That was the grocer's fault.

On SUNDAY, he went to church but his mind was not on the worship.

Was he truly a Christian ?

