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EDITORIAL

The Antitype

The antitype is that which corresponds to the type; that which is prefigured by the type. Speaking about baptism, the apostle Peter, at 1 Peter 3:21, said, "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter said this in the context of the water of the flood which destroyed sinners of the world but saved Noah and his family. Of course, there wasn't anything miraculous in the water itself that had saved Noah and his family, but God did use water to save them. (Genesis chapters 6, 7 & 8).

Likewise, the apostle taught, there is now an antitype or the true likeness which now saves us, and that is baptism. This is in perfect harmony with what Christ had taught while he was returning back to the Father in heaven after completing His mission on earth for the salvation of man. He had commanded the disciples to: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16). Notice: believers, not little babies, were to be baptized to be saved. Have you been baptized after you had believed that Christ is the Son of God, and that He had died on the cross for your sins? if not, you need to do that. Because that can make the difference of heaven and hell. Because if baptism now saves us and one must be baptized as a believer to be saved, then it follows that those who will not be baptized

as believers will be lost.

What we are seeing is very important. It was very important to Ananias. Because when he met Saul (Paul) the very first time, he told Saul, "and now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Likewise, when Philip went into Samaria and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people there, we read, at Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized." And a little later, when Philip met eunuch on the way to Gaza and preached Jesus to him. Eunuch immediately said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

The Bible teaches that in Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:14). And the same Bible also tells us how one gets into Christ. It says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27). It is through baptism that one gets into Christ to be saved from sins. According to Romans 6:1-4, we read: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Notice, again, one walks in the newness of life achieved in Christ after one is baptized, and that one is buried with Christ through baptism.

Baptism, the Greek word for immersion, is also the antitype of the gospel of Christ, which Christ had commanded to be preached to every creature in all the world. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 we read: "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 against the third day according to the Scriptures." Baptism symbolises the death of the old man of sin and his burial and the resurrection of the new man in Christ. Through baptism one is buried in water, after one has believed in Christ that the son of God has died for my sins, and has repented of all sins, and then coming out of the water one is born again, born of water and the Spirit, without which Christ taught no one can enter the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:3-5).

It is, however, interesting to note how different translators of the Bible in various languages have translated the word baptism, and have thus left the impression with the reader that the baptism is just a religious ceremony, a rite, or a ritual, rather than a specific act of obedience for salvation from sin, as we have already noticed from the Scriptures. While most English translators have translated the Greek word baptizo as baptism and even immersion, most rightly, and also the translators of Hindi, Urdu and Telugu Bible have rendered it as "Baptisma." On the other hand, Malayalam Bible translators have translated baptizo as "Snanam" or bath; Tamil translators have used the word "gnana-snanam" or bath of wisdom; and kannada translators have called it "diksha-snana" or a bath of blessing.

Many people misunderstand the Scriptural and the real meaning of baptism and its importance because they have never been taught that it is essential for salvation. But from the beginning it was not so. If you will carefully read the book of Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament of the Bible, which provides the history of the establishment of the church of Christ and Christianity, you will clearly see that all who were saved in Christ Jesus were at the same time added by the Lord Himself to His church, which is the body of the washed and justified and sanctified people, when they had heard the gospel of Jesus and had believed in Him as the Son of God, and had repented of their sins and had been baptised (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of their sins. Please check the following passages in your Bible: Acts 2:37, 38, 41 & 47; Acts 8:35-39; Acts 16:11-15 & 25-34; Acts 22:1-16. The Lord has not changed His will even today.

Sin In The Camp

J.C. CHOATE

In Joshua 6 we have the story of how Joshua and the children of Israel, following God's directions, were able to take the city of Jericho. God had instructed them to keep the gold and silver and vessels of brass and iron for the treasury of the Lord and that all else should be destroyed. (Joshua 6:19, 24). Then in Joshua 7 we have Israel going up against the small city of Ai, requiring only two or three thousand to accomplish the task. As it turned out, however, the Israelites were defeated even though they were assured of an easy victory. When word was brought to Joshua, he went before the Lord to mourn the defeat

and to question why such a tragedy had come upon them. Then the Lord informed him that Israel had sinned, that there was sin in the camp. By taking the problem to the people and having them to gather, tribe by tribe, family by family, household by household, and calling them man by man to enquire who was guilty, the truth eventually came out that Achan had taken the accursed thing. When questioned, Achan confessed, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in the tent, and the silver under it. and they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with them, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, until this day." (Joshua 7:21-26).

Now that punishment might sound harsh by our standards, but we must understand what the situation was at that time. The Lord helped his people to overcome the city of Jericho, but he strictly commanded them not to take anything for themselves. Achan disobeyed God, though, and took a garment and some of the gold and silver and hid them in his tent. Because of his sin, the Israelites were defeated when they went up against the city of Ai. That meant that hundreds were killed because of Achan's sin. Life for life. Was it unfair for Achan and his family to die for those whose deaths he had caused? This action shows the responsibility a man has for his family. Because of Achan's sin, his whole family had to suffer the consequences. This severe penalty served as an example for the rest of the people, to remind them that if they did likewise in the future they would meet with the same punishment. No doubt this made a great impression on the entire nation.

We are living in a different time and under a different law. We who have become believers in Jesus Christ—the one who died on the cross for us—realize that it was through our obedience to him we have been cleansed by his blood and added to his church. As God's people—his

spiritual kingdom, the church of Christ—the Lord requires us to remain pure and godly, individually. Paul says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Titus 2:11-15).

Then concerning the church of our Lord, Paul says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:23-27). Christ said concerning how things will be at the time of his coming, "The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Mathew 13:41-43).

In other words, Christ has a people—those who make us his church—and he is preparing them for heaven. Those who will not hear him and obey his teaching so that they might remain free from sin, will eventually be taken out of the kingdom or church to be cast into hell, but the faithful will be taken to heaven. This will take place at the final judgment when the sentencing will be made. (John 12:48; Matthew 25:46).

Even though a local congregation of God's people is supposed to represent him, worshipping him each first day of the week, promoting good moral living, and faithfulness to the Lord in all things, what happens if one breaks God's law and sins? If it is a personal or private sin, one should repent and ask the Father to forgive him. If it is a sin that another knows about then he should go to that person, confess his sin, and ask him and God to forgive him of his wrongdoing. If the sin, however, is generally known, then he should go before the church, confess his faults, and ask God and the church to forgive him. But what if he goes on in his sin and refuses to correct it? The church should then

take actions to encourage him to repent and return, but if he still refuses to do so his brethren must withdraw fellowship from him and have no further contact with him until he is willing to repent and obey God. (Matthew 18:15-17). But what if the church overlooks this person's sin? What if it is ignored and tolerated and no action is taken against it? Then the church also shares in the guilt of sin. They have done their brother or sister wrong in not insisting that he repent, and they have disobeyed God because they failed to do what the Lord has asked them to do in this case. And of further consequence: a precedent has been set for allowing sinful behaviour to go uncorrected in the church. This will encourage sin in others, as they follow the wrong example.

Brethren who take no stand against sin can reason that all people sin and make mistakes, and all kinds of excuses can be made for tolerating it. But sin is sin, and when there is sin in the camp it must be dealt with or it will destroy. When God's people refuse to oppose sin, they risk the Lord's displeasure, and his refusal to be with them and to bless them. They are also risking losing their own family members to similar actions. Finally, they will be rejected in the end by the Lord for condoning and tolerating sin in their midst. (1 Corinthians 5).

Even if we manage to hide sin in our lives and in the lives of others which is seldom ever possible—still God knows and it is to God that we must answer to in the end. "Be sure your sin will find you out. . . ." (Numbers 32:23). God desires that sin be removed from our lives and from the church on his terms, if we are to be acceptable to him. If we will do our part to stand for the truth, and to deal with the sinful as God has asked that we do, then in most cases we can encourage those who are guilty to repent and to come back to God. In so doing, we keep ourselves pure from sin, and we keep the church pure and in position to go forward to accomplish the work God has given it to do. The Lord's way is the best way. It is the only way for those who want to be saved and to go to heaven.

Especially for Women

In Hospitality

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." (Hebrews 13:2).

Throughout history, hospitality has been counted a quality of honor and selflessness.

One day three men were passing by Abraham's tent. He ran to meet them and begged them to turn aside and rest under the shade of his tree. He then urged Sarah to hurry and prepare bread for them. He himself ran to the herd and selected a tender calf which he gave to be dressed and cooked. Taking butter and milk, he set the meal before his visitors and stood by them under the tree while they ate. (Genesis 18).

Hospitality. On that momentous day Abraham was host to the Lord (Genesis 18:13) and to two angels (19:1), in the appearance of men. The Hebrew writer in the New Testament urged Christians to have the same hospitable heart which Abraham and Sarah showed on that day so long ago.

One day the prophet of God, Elisha,

"went to Shunem, where there was a notable [great] woman, and she constrained him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, that he turned in there to eat some food.

"And she said to her husband, 'Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. Please let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lamp shade; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.'" (2 Kings 4:8-10).

The work was done and whenever Elisha and his servant, Gehazi, passed that way they turned aside to rest in the upper room.

Elisha's life as a prophet was not easy. The Shunammite lady had noticed that his physical needs were not being supplied. She probably knew, too, that at times his very life was in danger from the Baal priests in the land and from political enemies of Israel, such as is recorded in 2 Kings 6:1-23 where the king of Syria planned to kill Elisha.

But the kind heart of the Shunammite lady was moved to ease Elisha's hardship. We see her hospitality in preparing food for him to eat when he passed that way, and then in going to all the expense to make a room and to furnish it for him.

This Shunammite lady was not only godly and hospitable, but by inspiration of God the writer of the book of Kings called her 'notable' or 'great'. What a tribute those words were! They describe a person with qualities we should develop in our own lives as women in God's family today.

What else do we learn about the Shunammite lady? That she was modest. When Elisha sent for her, to ask what he could do in return for her great kindness, she did not presume to enter into the privacy of his

room. 2 Kings 4:15 says, "When he called her, she stood in the doorway." What modesty and wisdom we see in her character!

We also see great trust in God and in Elisha's power as the man of God. True to Elisha's prophecy, she had a son. (2 Kings 4:17) But in the process of time he suddenly became sick and died. What did the Shunammite woman do: Was she wailing and mourning over her tragedy? No. Even when her husband asked why she was making an unexpected trip to see the man of God, she simply answered him, "It is well." (2 Kings 4:23) She was a woman of great faith.

Among Christian women today, the power of a godly life can influence all of those around us. If others see the qualities of greatness, hospitality, selflessness, modesty, and faith, they will be drawn to God's way.

The Blessed Life

T. PIERCE BROWN

Although David was a man of many troubles, he was a man of great faith, and a man after God's own heart. In Psalm 31 we can catch some glimpses of the life of faith that should characterise every child of God and give him a life that is blessed.

First, there is in verse one the expressing of confident faith. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." When Solomon said in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths," he was not just giving a good scripture for preachers to quote. He was expressing a fundamental principle prerequisite for a blessed life. It involves confidence in all that the Lord has said, not only for us to do, but for what he will do. We not only have power to become sons of God through faith in him (John 1:11-12), but we have power to become blessed, happy, useful and productive sons of God. Both the basis and results of this confidence are found in verses 2 & 3. The psalmist says, "Be thou my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress." That expression may appear strange until you think through its implications. How can he say, "Be thou my rock, for thou art my rock?" A rock and a fortress suggest stability, unchanging nature, and a place of defence against enemies and protection against all elements.

Why should one ask God to be what he already is? That

awareness can be of much of comfort and value to us. We need God to be to us personally what he is of himself. That is, he is King of kings and Lord of lords. Is he your King and Lord? Are you in His kingdom, submitting to his authority in all things? Or are you one who thinks you do not need authority for what you do as long as you can say, "He did not say not to." He is the Saviour of the world. Is he your saviour? He will not be your saviour unless you accept him as Lord. It is significant that Peter in his wonderful sermon in Acts 2 first presented the fact that "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) before he told them how to accept Him as Saviour (Acts 2:38). When we sing, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" we need to realize that he did not just die for the world, he died for me.

In verse 5, he says, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." These words Jesus used at his death, but they were his attitude throughout life. We need to realize that as we live, so shall we die. If we live in the atmosphere of the Word, loving, living, breathing, obeying the Word, we shall die that way. If we commit our spirits to God day by day, we will have no trouble committing them on that final day. It may be significant that none of the gospel records describe Jesus as dying, but as "giving up the ghost." He was the one who deliberately committed his spirit to God. We can do this day by day, and it should be total commitment insofar as we can make it so.

This blessed life was not only a life of confidence and commitment, but a life of joy and gladness. Verses 7 & 8 say, "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room." We need to be aware of these four things which David discovered: 1. That all God's people have a day of adversity in some areas. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers testing" (James 1:2). 2. Whatever these may be, there is One who knows what they are, how long we can bear them, and how to make them work for our good. 3. His consideration of our troubles should give us occasion to rejoice in his mercy and praise him. Failure to do this not only demonstrates ingratitude and hardness of heart, it increases it. It causes us to fail to reach others for two reasons. First, we simply do not try, for we do not feel grateful and happy with what we have. Second, they see our ingratitude and lack of joy, and are not pulled toward Christ by what they see. 4. David said, "Thou hast set my feet in a very large room." There are those who think of following Jesus primarily in terms of what we give up and of what restrictions are placed upon us. No doubt the Prodigal Son felt that way before he felt

home. We get far more than we give up. Jesus said, "If the Son of Man makes you free, then are ye free indeed" (John 8:36). He set our feet in a very large room. Freedom in Christ is one of the most wonderful things we have. It is not freedom from authority, but freedom under authority. We are free to accept and teach any truth, not bound by any creed or manual, written or unwritten. All emotions that are proper to express, we have the right to express. any activity that is good to do, we have freedom to do.

There are those who seem to think we oppose the use of instrumental music in worship because we think instrumental music is obnoxious to God. This is not so, I do not oppose peanut butter on the Lord's table because I think God does not like peanut butter, but simply because Jesus did not authorize it. I have the right to play an instrument of music or eat peanut butter or do anything else that is good or right to do. But I have no right to substitute it for what God ordained. Surely anyone who wants to can see that I have the right to sprinkle water on my head, if I think it would help to keep either of my hairs in place, but I have no right to substitute it for baptism. Remember, "he hath set my feet in a very large room," and although I can go anywhere I choose in the room, I need to stay in the room until he authorizes me to be elsewhere. Many who are connected with the church today are teaching a kind of freedom in Christ that would amount to licence to practice whatever one chooses.

The blessed life portrayed by the psalmist involves confession. Verses 9-12 starts with "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble" and ends with "I am like a broken vessel." There are two kinds of confessions each of us need to make, and at least one that every man will make. First, we need to confess the truth about Jesus. If we confess it joyfully as the Ethiopian did to Philip in Acts 8:37 then he will confess us. Whether we confess in joyous obedience in this life, or in sorrow and shame, we shall all confess. As Paul says in Romans 14:11, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess."

However, the confession in Psalm 31 is more like the confession James speaks of when he says, "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). This is not just a confession that one might make to a "senior prayer partner" (whatever that might be), but is of value between Christian brothers and sisters. There are two great values in such a confession. First, it is much easier to help a person who conference that he need help. If I Present myself to you as one who lacks faults, I will not only have a hard time overcoming any of them; it will be impossible to enlist your aid in doing

so. The second great value of confessing your faults is that it gives us a release from fear and bondage we would have if we tried to hide them. If I am afraid to let you know that I have a fault, not only am I under tension for fear that you will find out, I am subject to "blackmail" of various sorts, for if you do find out you may hold over my head the threat of revealing it to others. If I have already revealed it to others, I am no longer in bondage to those things.

Then the blessed life is one of petition (vs. 15-16). adoration (v. 19) and praise (v. 21). When we realize as the psalmist that "my times are in thine hand" it will create within us a sense of the nearness of God, give us an assurance of the concern of God, give us strength to endure temptation, help us to overcome fears and worries, encourage us to more consecrated and devoted service, gladden us with hope for the future and allow us to make the petition with assurance and faith.

When a man lives this blessed life, the natural consequence is that he will give others the exhortation of verses 23 and 24, "O love the Lord, all ye His saints—be of good courage." The heart that is full of adoration and praise for the goodness of God will eagerly long for others to love, trust, serve and obey him. Then he "cannot but speak the things he has seen and heard" (Acts 4:20), Are you living this blessed life?

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Today Resolve That . . .

I will be so strong that nothing can disturb my peace of mind.

I will think only the best, work only the best, and expect only the best.

I will wear a cheerful countenance and will meet others with a sincere smile of appreciation.

I will be too big for worry and whining over my lot, but will enthusiastically work to improve it.

I will be too noble for anger, and too strong for fear, and too happy to let trouble ruin my personality and sadden my friends.

I will live in the faith that the Lord is on my side as long as I love Him, do His will, and remain true to the best He has put in me.

I will be a Christian, a real one, true to the core and sincere in all I do and say.

I will seek to be nearer to heaven today!!

"They Made Light Of It"

DAVID WADE

In the parable of the wedding feast Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a King who arranged a marriage feast for his son. His servants went out to urge those invited to "come to the wedding" (Matthew 22:4). The expected response was not evident. "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them" (Matthew 22:5,6). Obviously, he was portraying God's people, the Jews, as they rejected Jesus and refused to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "But they made light of it and went their ways," that is, they paid no attention to it, and did not regard the invitation of any value. The Jews had a long standing tradition of weighing God's laws and determining the importance of each commandment. The scribe of Mark 12:18 acknowledged "the first commandment of all" was to "love the Lord your God. . ." They considered this as the heaviest, most important law. They considered the lightest law to be, "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days" (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).

Furthermore, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for making God's laws heavy for others while making them light on themselves. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men" (Matthew 23:2-5).

If we are not careful, we can fall into the same rut of mishandling God's word as did the scribes and Pharisees. We must recognize that all of God's word is heavy. We must rightly divide it, and we must never disregard it, any of it! What applies to others, equally applies to us. We should be willing and prepared to live by the same admonitions and commandments that apply to everyone else.

Remember The Little Red Hen?

EDSEL BURLESON

Do you remember the Little Red Hen? This childhood story is easily recalled because of its human interest. The unknown author had the barnyard animals act like human beings. The Little Red Hen had found a grain of wheat and decided to plant it to grow more wheat. She successively asked the dog, the cat, the pig, and the cow, "Who will help me plant my wheat?" All said, "Not I." Invitations to assist in the Cultivation, harvesting, grinding into flour, and baking into bread were given and as quickly turned down on one excuse or another. Finally, when the bread was done and odors of the baked bread reached the nostrils of her companions, she said, "Who will help me eat my bread?" All responded enthusiastically, "I will." But the Little Red Hen said, "You did not help me plant my wheat, you did not help me harvest my wheat, you did not help me grind my wheat, you did not help me bake my bread, so now you shall not help me eat my bread. I will eat it myself." And she did. Too many folk want to share in the rewards but are unwilling to help do the work. Not until one is willing to share in the responsibilities of being a member of the Lord's church can he expect satisfaction and enjoyment in being a Christian.

Babcock once wrote: "Christianity is not a voice in the wilderness, but a life in the world. It is not an idea in the air, but feet on the ground, going God's way. It is not an exotic to be kept under glass, but a hardy plant to bear fruit twelve months in all kinds of weather. Fidelity to duty is its root and branch. Nothing we can say to the Lord, no calling him by great and dear names, can take the place of the plain doing of his will. We may cry out about the beauty of eating bread with him in his kingdom, but it is wasted breath and a ruthless hope, unless we plow and plant in his kingdom here and now. To remember him at his table and to forget him at ours is to have invested in bad securities. There is no substitute for plain, everyday goodness."

A cowboy explained his idea of Christian living by saying, "Now I'm working for Jim here. If I'd sit around telling what a good fellow Jim is, and sing songs for him, and get up in the night to serenade him and not doin' much else, I'd be doin' just what a lot of Christians do — but I wouldn't be minding Jim here and I'd get fired mighty quick.

"But when I buckle on my chaps and hustle among the hills, and see that Jim's herd is alright, not suffering from lack of water or feed or branded by cattle thieves, then I'm proving my love for him and I'm

serving him as he wants to be served."

Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in Vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). He told the Christians in Galatia, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9.)

Using The Bible To Prove The Bible ?

BRAD T. BROMLING

Is it proper to employ the Bible to prove its own inspiration ? Yes, and no — it depends on how the Bible is being used. One who says merely, "The Bible claims it is inspired, and that is good enough for me!" is not likely to persuade others to share his position. If his whole case rests solely upon the Bible's own claims, he is selling the Bible short. Besides this, there are other issues which must be addressed before one may logically examine those claims, namely: (1) Does God exist ?; (2) Has He communicated to mankind ?

The evidence supporting God's existence surrounds us. Romans 1:19, 20 tell us: "... what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." When each man stands before the Throne of judgment, he will not be able to plead: "but, I just did not know!" That excuse has been removed. For even the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament (expanse) shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). If man will but open his eyes, and use his God-given ability to reason, he will conclude with the writer of Hebrews: "every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (3:4). Truly, it is only "the fool [who] has said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1)!

Understanding that God does exist, we ask the question: "Could He communicate to mankind ?" Reason answers for us. Of course, the God who created the vast universe, and us as intelligent creatures capable to communication, has the power to reveal Himself. **Would** God communicate to mankind ? The answer to this question may depend upon many factors. However, if God is benevolent and has information

that mankind needs, it is reasonable to conclude that He would reveal himself. If He is malevolent, we wonder that He could create at all, and especially create man with all of his capacities to enjoy pleasure and beauty. Man's capacity for moral judgment implies that God has a moral standard to reveal. Man is nothing if not an inquisitive creature. As he looks to the heavens and accepts their testimony of God's existence, man is driven to know of His character. Further, questions of origins, purpose, direction, and responsibility to both fellow man and Creator are apparently universal. The Creator has the answers which man seeks, then logically, He would reveal that information.

How would He do so? The answer may not seem readily apparent, but one is available. God could convey His message to men either individually or collectively. That is, He could speak to each man as an individual or He could address all of mankind through a single means. Has God spoken to each individual? It is apparent that He has not. If He did, why do men grope for answers? Why, if God has communicated to man individually, does not each man share the same understanding of basic issues (such as "from where did I come?," "why am I here?," "to where am I going?"). If God's message has been revealed to man through a single vehicle, then it stands to reason that all who accept the message in the same way will have the same answers, while everyone else would be confused. If the message in the same way will have the same answers, while everyone else would be confused. If the message is universal (i.e., it is for all men indefinitely) then we could expect it to be issued in a permanent form, which could be approached objectively. The testimony of history is that the most likely mode which meets that criterion is none other than written communication. Writing has been with man from almost the creation. Written documents may be copied and translated perpetually; when carefully preserved, their messages remain timeless.

At this point, it is proper to examine the Bible to see if it qualifies as communication from God to man. This is just as appropriate as asking a man to explain himself, or give testimony as to his own identity. We may reasonably expect a book of divine origin to meet obvious criterion. While there are many things that we might expect to a divine volume, for the sake of illustration we will mention only two of them.

First, we would expect a divine volume to claim to be inspired. The Bible is filled with such claims. In the Old Testament along there are over 3,800 claims that the Scriptures are ultimately from God (e.g., "Thus saith the Lord"). Jesus attributed to God what was written in Exodus (Matthew 22:31). Peter called Paul's writings "scripture" — a

word reserved for inspired writings (II Peter 3:16). Finally, one cannot even mention the Greek word rendered "inspiration" (*theopneustos* — literally, "God breathed") without mentioning God (II Timothy 3:16). Not all books that claim inspiration are from God; but it stands to reason that any book from God would make such a claim.

Second, we would expect a book from God to be absolutely harmonious; and free of errors. The Bible was written through the course of 1,600 years of human history, by more than 40 men from differing cultural, geographical, and educational backgrounds. These men worked independently, and many of them never met another biblical writer. They did not even all use the same language! Some wrote in Hebrew, others in Greek, and still others in Aramaic. Their books were, for the most part, sixty-six independent compositions. Amazingly, when these books were collected into one volume, a perfect harmony of theme and teaching emerged. In the unfolding of that theme, the Bible makes no mistakes. Try as they might, critics have been unable to find even one example of a factual error in the Bible! All of the factors listed above which would normally work against the unity and accuracy of a merely human production had no ill effect upon the Bible. This perfect harmony and flawlessness is an effect requiring a supernatural Cause!

The Bible goes beyond just fulfilling our expectations, it actually contains information which required supernatural guidance to be recorded. This information comes in the form of scientific foreknowledge and fulfilled prophecy.

When all of these data are examined, belief in the Bible's inspiration is shown to be not only reasonable, but capable of defense. Hence, when approached logically, the Bible may be employed as a witness to its own inspiration.

"Do not Lose Heart"

CECIL MAY, JR.

Both Jesus and Paul, when encouraging us to keep on, use an expression that is variously translated, "faint not," "do not lose heart" (Luke 18:1; II Corinthians 4:1, 16; Galatians 6:9; Ephesian 3:13; II Thessalonians 3:13).

Do not quit praying. Jesus told a parable designed to teach us "to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). It illustrates the power of persistence in petition, even when the person petitioned has no regard either for the petitioner or for justice. It is easy to grow discouraged in prayer. We often pray and feel unheard. But whether God hears our prayers is determined not by our feelings but by his promises. We are not promised that we will get exactly what we ask for; we are promised a hearing and a blessing when we ask. Keep praying, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit preaching. Paul was speaking of his preaching when he said, "we do not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:16). Because his preaching brings to others the same mercy he has received, he does "not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:1). Preaching is often a discouraging task. The preacher preaches, but problems remain. He answers questions, but those who asked them seem not to hear. Often he sees little result. But God's word is still powerful. It brings life from death. It can draw the sinner to God, open his heart, and save his soul. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2). God's word will accomplish its purpose. Keep preaching, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit good works. "Do not lose heart in doing good" (Galatians 6:8; II Thessalonians 3:13). We are saved to do good works. It is easier to sit at home and watch television. It is easier to pass by on the other side, than to get messy and dirty helping the unfortunate, bleeding stranger. It is easier to say, "The government ought to do something about that," than to give the hungry our food or the cold stranger the coat off our back. Besides, one's good is often evil spoken of. The good we do is as often misused as appreciated. But God remembers, and God's reward is sure. Every cup of cold water given in his name redounds to the glory of God and the credit of the giver. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord, if we do not quit. Do good, and do not lose heart.

Satan's Provocation To Sin

DEAN FUGETT

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number

Israel. . . Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? . . . And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel" (Numbers 21:1-7).

Satan knows well that he cannot directly and personally oppose God and win. Therefore, he uses his best tool for offending God — MAN. In the above account David's sin of numbering Israel to have the confidence of his security in himself rather than God was a Point of deviation from the will of God. The consequences of this sin were devastating and tragic, destroying seventy thousand men of Israel (Numbers 21:14). What appeared to David as a necessary actions to assess his strength proved to be more devastating to his army of men than had the wars he had been successful in waging.

I wonder when men of God will stop allowing themselves to be a tool of Satan to provoke God. When will we ever be able to keep pride and vanity in control — if ever! Whenever we begin to be the catalyst for unauthorized change, rather than allowing God to be the full force behind the "increase," we are setting up God's people for sad defeat. Paul was careful to remind the Corinthians that Paul planted, Apollos watered, BUT IT WAS GOD THAT GAVE THE INCREASE. We, all of us, want to see growth, numerically as well as spiritually, but we must learn to DO JUST WHAT GOD HAS AUTHORIZED, and leave the growth to him. Doing what God has authorized may not always produce growth, but doing what God has not authorized to produce growth is to incur God's vengeance for rebellion!

Ignorance of the God we serve due to ignorance of the nature of God as presented in the Old Testament revelation of himself to man, continues to be the source of man's failure to submit to the righteousness of God. We all know of the Jew's rejection of the Christ in his personal ministry and under the Gospel. Paul speaks of this in Romans 10:1-3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." When we refuse to abide within God's guidelines for government, work, plan of salvation, worship, etc., we are NOT SUBMITTING OURSELVES TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

We continue to plead with people in the pulpit and in the pew, elders in the leadership, men and women who are experimenting with innovations without authority to reconsider the path in which they are setting their feet and the terrible consequences it can mean to the eternal welfare of our children and grandchildren, and the masses of the future, READ YOUR BIBLE; STUDY IT CAREFULLY! OBEY IT!

Keys To Greatness As A Preacher

JACKIE M. STEARSMAN

There is within each of us a self which longs for success or the recognition by others of our worth. We want to be a winning team; we want compensation for our labour and toil; we desire our talents be appreciated. This is especially true of preachers. It is a factor which all of us must keep in proper perspective lest we betray our trust and expose to all our failures.

GUARDED AMBITIONS

It is vital that we keep in check our longing aspirations. Desiring to preach is commendable, spending too much energy on the pursuit of greatness may lead to failure. The Apostles James and John, with their mother desired greatness and were cautioned by the Master lest this ambition become a defect in their character (Mark 10:35 ff; Matthew 20:20ff). This defect in character is evident in the Pharisees who permitted the plaudits of men to sway their actions rather than genuine character and service (Matthew 23:1-12; 6:1-18; 5:20). Let us consider the Apostle Paul and reflect upon those Biblical characteristics which he possessed that enables us to consider him as a great and successful preacher. The following expressions set the mind upon an attitude which was deep seated in the Apostle: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). "And count all things but loss. . . that I may win Christ. . ." (Philippians 3:8). "For to me to live is Christ. . ." (Philippians 1:21).

MATURITY

"But when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Paul recognized the necessity of growth and development. He could not have used the above illustration if that were not the case. Few things are more distasteful than an immature preacher — a baby in the pulpit. The baby must have its way. The baby has not appreciation for the needs of the family — only selfishness motivates and derives its ambition. When decisions are made with the "baby" in mind the congregations will be undeveloped and lack spiritual strength. Some preachers need to grow up before their greatness can be genuine.

MORALITY

"I conferred not with flesh and blood . . ." (Galatians 1:16). The duties and responsibilities of preaching at times become burdensome. Undue attention to the burden may cause one to become weary in well doing. Preachers who are forever wearing a martyr's brow because of their labour of love will not be the proper motivator for sacrificial living demanded in Christ. Paul only discussed his trial and tribulations when he was forced to do so, and placed it on the level of foolishness lest any misunderstand his motives (II Corinthians 11:1ff). If you want me to be motivated to serve, show me the scars of battle but do not depress me with how poorly the brethren or the world have treated you. Great preaching places the cause beyond a given battle or the scars one may receive in the conflict (Galatians 6:17).

CONTENTMENT

"I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. . ." (Philippians 4:12). The key to living a life of contentment while preaching is given in the next verse. Paul received his sufficiency from Christ who provided for him. Becoming detached from the role of teaching the truth due to circumstances has caused some to fail to be great preachers. The preacher who understands and lives with Christ as his Master need not fear abundance, and neither will he fret when being abased. Some preachers will never be great by God's standard because they have sold out to the world. Abundance has blinded the eyes of some and some have sold out because of hardship. Let us never forget that God intends to try this building and this includes preachers (I Corinthians 3:12ff). Preachers, can it be said to you, you can not turn my feet from His way by hunger, and neither can you quench my zeal for Him by hardship? Surely we see that this is a key to greatness in the life of Paul.

"I AM. . ."

Informed students of the life of Paul will recognize this expression and immediately attach it with those three great concepts — *"I am a debtor," "I am ready," "I am not ashamed."* (Romans 1:14-16). Paul understood fully the obligation the deposit of truth placed upon him. It was not for his race or nation alone but for all men everywhere. He had no excuse for not meeting his debt — he stood ready to discharge his every obligation. The courage essential to greatness is reflected in his not being ashamed of that gospel truth. No preacher will be great by Paul's measurement until he has fully mastered self. Is not "I" the

greatest hindrance to excellence ?

SACRIFICE

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. . ." (Romans 9:3). Such expressions as this causes no little problem to those who seek to explain what Paul had in mind. It is disturbing to the indifferent. This is upsetting to anyone who feels that sacrifice is not required in carrying the truth to those who have no love for the truth. Perhaps no passage conveys how much Christ's will had become the driving force in Paul's life than this verse. Greatness demands expenditure. Paul's life was that of a living sacrifice. We cannot expect the rewards of his greatness unless we are willing to pay the price.

COURAGE

"I withstood him to the face. . ." (Galatians 2:11). The religious world is in the confused state it is in today because those who have the truth will not confront the opposition. This is a major problem in the church. Paul confronted Peter because Peter was lost, and because Peter and those with him were leading others into sin. On the lips of "would-be-great-preachers" of today there is no greater sin than to face the opposition and point out the wrong. The Creed of many is that if a person has been baptized then it is evil to point out any sin in his life, unless it be the "sin" of calling attention to sin.

UNRECOGNIZED

It must be understood that greatness is rarely recognized immediately. Paul had to defend his right as an Apostle of the Lord to those of his day. The greatness of the Christ was not recognized by his own age. The greatness of the prophets was recognised after their death (Matthew 23:29-32). Some think they are great, but they are not (Revelation 3:1-6; 3:14-22).

CONCLUSION

Greatness is within the reach of all who desire it. If we preach truth the truth in love to those within our sphere of influence we are great preachers in God's sight. More than any other single factor preachers need to focus on service. It is the key to greatness. Was this not a contributing factor to Paul's worth? His great service was made possible

because of his maturity, his own mortality disciplined, his contentment, his willingness to meet his every duty, being unashamed of the gospel truth, his sacrifice for the cause to which he was committed, and his willingness to confront even a fellow apostle if the apostle was not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.

When we are prone to desire greatness as a preacher may we ever recall the cost. Let it be remembered that the evaluation of our position before the Great I Am will not be by man's estimate (II Corinthians 10:12, 18). Let it also be known that true greatness may never be recognized in this life. We may rest assured that it will not go unnoticed, for the works of the faithful will follow them into the eternal state (Revelation 14:3). There, once and for all, the issue of greatness will be determined (II Timothy 4:6-8).

Sin Tracks

TIM RICE

A friend recently told me an interesting story. Years ago, people kept their yards free of grass. Their yards consisted of sand, usually under lovely shade trees in the front yard. They kept the front yard swept free of debris, removing the leaves that fell or the grass that sprouted. Sometimes, when the family would be gone for a day, they would return to find they had had visitors. How would they know? They would see tracks in the sand — footprints, horse tracks, or wagon tracks. It was of course beyond question visitors had come because their tracks proved it.

When the devil visits a person, he also leaves tracks. Sin will leave an imprint on the life it touches. A scar may remain for years because of one single sin. David made the statement in Psalm 51:3: "My sin is ever before me." One is inclined to believe that David never outlived the memory of this sin with Bathsheba against his Lord. Sin left its track. A follower of God who looks back on his past life can clearly identify periods where sin entered and left a mark. Even a newborn Christian can identify sin tracks in his life.

In Revelation 3, John wrote a rebuke from the Lord to Sardis. A statement in Revelation 3:4 casts light on our discussion. Jesus said, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white." The word defiled means "to pollute, befoul, stain." If one's garment has been befouled, it

is smelly. If it is stained, it looks ugly. This is a graphic description of the lingering effects of sin in people's lives.

In the twentieth century setting, we have all seen sin tracks in the lives of those around us. I was shocked to hear lately of an old friend who died of AIDS contacted by his practicing homosexuality. Although I realize some innocent people contract AIDS, in this case sin left its track. All young people need to realize the danger in violating God's restrictions on sexual activity. When a virgin and a male virgin marry, they cannot give each other sexually transmitted diseases. Sinning by drinking alcohol leaves a track. There is not a recovering alcoholic alive who does not with sorrow think on his past alcoholism, with its tracks of ruin, and tell others the wisdom in never taking their first drink. The sins of pornography, dancing, and revealing clothing, are both wrong in themselves and sometimes lead to other sins such as fornication or rape. Beware of these, lest Satan leave his tracks in your life by them.

If you find the tracks of sin in your life, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

"To Be Content"

JIMMIE N. DOSS

The Apostle Paul stated in Philippians 4:11 "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." How many of us today can actually say that we are content with our lives as they are? We continually want more and more material things in our lives but we seem to put our spiritual lives on hold. "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3 NKJV).

I continually pray to be a better Christian and a good example for others. Paul is an inspiration to me. His attitude throughout the scriptures is amazing to me. He suffers hardships and still praises the Lord and keeps on going.

When we are feeling down and get discouraged about things being bad for us, let us remember what Christ and the Apostles went through. Philippians 4:13 says "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." If we will turn to God and the scriptures we will receive comfort and help for our troubles. I Peter 5:7 tells us to "cast all your cares upon

Him, for He cares for you." WE read that if we will pray and ask God for the things that we need, we will receive. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). Sometimes we ask for foolish things and get upset and don't understand why we haven't received what we ask for. If we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness we will receive what we need to sustain our lives (Matthew 6:33). We are taught not to worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things (Matthew 6:34).

Contentment is a state of mind I am seeking. "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). I get troubled with problems and feel sorry for myself and then I'll hear of someone that really has hardships and realize how thankful I should be. My children are healthy. We have a place to live and food to eat, whereas some people don't. I thank God everyday for my family and friends and I pray that I will be a good Christian example for them to follow.

We all need to read and study the Bible more and apply it to our lives everyday. We can find the comfort and help we need for many things if we will look to the Bible. If we remain faithful and try to live a good Christian life when we have hardships, the Lord will bless us. Matthew 11:28-30 is one of my favorite scriptures. "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

Let us strive to be more like Christ and the Apostles and live for our reward in heaven.