

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

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

Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 10

May 1979

No. 1

EDITORIAL



An Unwanted Child

There is not anything in a home more tragic than that of having an unwanted child, unless it might be where there is more than one that is unwanted. And yet here in India, and in much of Asia, there are many such homes. It is rooted in the age old custom of a newly married couple wanting a son. To them that means that God has smiled on their union. They have an heir to carry on the family name. More important, they have someone who will grow up to be strong and who will be able to work around the house, can help make the living, and can take care of them in their old age. If a son is a blessing, then two or more sons will prove to be even a greater blessing. They will bring prestige to the family name dowries in marriage, and security for the future.

While such a couple may long for a male to bless their home, to have a female would be disastrous. She is not wanted because she represents just the opposite of what a male can mean to them. She is looked upon as an expression of God's disfavour and they may feel that they are being punished for some sin that they have committed. She is considered to be a total liability, being weak, someone who must stay in the background and shielded from the World. She cannot work and earn as a male can. Then when it

comes time for marriage, a dowry must be given and accepted for her wedding to be performed. And on and on the list goes.

Isn't it sad that anyone would feel either way about their children? How frustrated all must feel. This would be especially true of the female where she comes to know that she was not really wanted. She feels rejected and inferior and will probably become a misfit in life. And yet she will no doubt go on to marry and with her husband long for a male to be born into their home. And so the chain goes on unbroken.

When you stop to think about it, God has not arranged for marriages to produce males only. What if he had? Then it wouldn't have been long until the human race would have died out. Even when God made man he saw that it was not good for man to be alone and so he made a help meet for him. (Genesis 2:18). Then he commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth. (Genesis 1:28). Ever since that time there have been a fairly equal number of males and females born into this world.

Christian parents are taught to love their children. This would include both males and females. The Apostle Paul said, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4). In speaking of the qualifications for being an elder in the church, and this should apply to every Christian man, Paul says that he must be "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," (1 Timothy 3:4). Speaking of women, he says among other things, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (1 Timothy 2:15). Continuing with the duties and responsibilities of women, it is pointed out that the older women should "...teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Titus 2:4,5). As you can see from the foregoing, no distinction is made between male and female. Actually, each child, regardless of sex, is a blessing from God. Each child is a precious treasure made in the image of God. He or she did not ask to be born into this world. Once

they are here then they deserve parents who want them, will love them, care for their needs and give them the spiritual training and guidance they must have to sustain them in the future. If this pattern is followed then they will not prove to be a disappointment to their parents but will rather bring honour to them. Surely the parents in this case will receive far more than they give.

How do you feel about your children? Do you love them equally whether boys or girls? You should, and I hope you do. You could hardly be a Christian if you did not. If you are not a Christian, I hope you will realize that this is just another example of where Christianity is superior to all other religions. It emphasizes the importance of each human being regardless of sex. To have a girl is as much of a blessing of God as having a boy. God does not personally decide the sex of your child but that is left up to the law of nature. The blessing comes in having a child, male or female. When we accept that without reservation then we will be much better prepared to rear our children and they will feel much more needed, loved, and a part of the family.

It is true that both male and female have their respective roles in life when it comes to the home, work, and spiritual matters. At the same time it should be pointed out that both roles are equally important. One depends on the other. Each needs to help the other. Let us therefore respect each other and in marriage when children come let us love each one and make each other feel wanted. Only on this basis can we have a Christian home.

We as Christians, and all people as far as that is concerned, need to get away from these old ideas of child preference, paying dowries and other things that would bind us and hurt our children. In the first place, these things are not in harmony with the teaching of Christ, and in the next place, they are merely old selfish customs and traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation which are completely out of step with our present World. Thank God for boys and girls and for the men and women they grow up to be.



**associate
editorial**

Nine Great Lessons

From the Story of a Leper

This account is almost three thousand years old, but the lessons that we learn from it are as fresh for us as today. First, let us read the account as given in the fifth chapter of the book of 2 Kings in the Bible: "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naamans wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria ! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy ? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes ? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and

stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, my father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him, and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant."

The lessons that we learn from this account are:

1. The little maid, even though she was a captive, wanted to share her knowledge with others. She knew of the man of God and she was willing to tell her master about him. How often we as Christians fail to see this obligation for others in our lives! While people all around us are perishing with the leprosy of sin, we are not willing to share our knowledge of Christ, the one who can heal and save them. Are we doing what we can? The little maid did, she told Naaman that there was a man of God. So must we tell others about Christ.

2. Naaman, after getting the news that he could be healed, went immediately, he did not delay. There are people who continue to listen about Christ, the Saviour, but are never willing to come to him. They keep on delaying, thinking they would do so at some other convenient time. This is called procrastination which is responsible for millions of souls to be lost for eternity. Naaman realized the fact that delay could cause his disease to spread all over his body, resulting in killing him. So we must

realize that if we keep on delaying we thus allow sin to spread resulting in perishing our souls.

3. But Naaman went to the wrong person. Instead of going to the man of God he went to the king. There are millions of people who realize the fact that they are in sin and that they need salvation. But majority of them are going to wrong sources. Christ is the one who died and gave himself for our salvation. No one else ever shed a drop of his blood for man's salvation, but Christ. The Bible says Christ became sin for us and he suffered the death on the cross for our sins. (2 Corinthians 5: 21). Therefore, for salvation we must come to him only, for there is no other way. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6).

4. Elisha himself did not come out to tell Naaman what he should do to be cleansed, but in stead he sent his messenger to tell him what he should do. So does Christ. He is not here upon the earth to tell us what we should do to be saved, but he guided his disciples, into all the truth, and through them, what they wrote in His New Testament, he speaks to us today telling us what we must do to be saved from our sins.

5. What Naaman was told to do to be cleansed of his leprosy sounded foolish to him. He did not want to believe in the command that he should go to Jordan and wash in it seven times to be cleansed because it was against his reasoning. I have heard many people telling me that I believe in a watery-salvation when I tell them of the command of Christ, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16: 16). They reason, saying, what is there in the water of baptism which would save man. But Naaman was not cleansed of his leprosy until he went down to Jordan and dipped himself seven times in its water according to the command of the man of God, and be assured, until we go down into the water of baptism, according to the command of Christ, where we are buried with him by baptism into death (Romans 6: 4), our sins are not forgiven. (Acts 22: 16). Because Christ said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved..."

6. Naaman wanted to be healed in his own way. It seems he had predetermined the way he wanted to be cured, so he said, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." Many people do the same today when they are told what they must do to be saved, because they have already made up their mind about what the Lord would have them do to be saved, therefore when they are told that they must obey the Lord's command of baptism for salvation, they, like Naaman, get upset, and in some cases angry. In most cases, people think that they need to believe and pray for salvation. But this is not what the Bible says. Man must believe in Christ, must repent of his sins, must confess Christ the Son of God, and must be baptized to be saved, according to the Bible. (Acts 2 : 37, 38; 8 : 35-39).

7. Naaman said, Abana and Pharpar, rivers, of Damascus, were better than river Jordan and all the waters of Israel, and that if he should wash in Jordan seven times for cleansing than he would prefer a river of Damascus. His reasoning was that one river is as good as another. This is how many think about the church today, when they are told how important the church of Christ is, and that one must be in the Lord's church if he is saved. (Acts 2 : 47). They reason, by saying, one church is as good as another, and if it is necessary for one to be a member of the church for salvation then they are already a member of a church, and it doesn't make any difference what church one belongs to. But as in Naaman's case it made all the difference. No doubt, Abana and Pharpar might have been good looking, clean and convenient rivers than Jordan, but he was told to wash in Jordan, and in Jordan only, therefore no other river would substitute Jordan. Likewise Christ built only one church (Matthew 16 : 18; Ephesians 4 : 4), and he adds all the saved to the one church (Acts 2 : 47), and we are all baptized into one body, which is the church of Christ, (1 Corinthians 12 : 13; 27; Ephesians 1 : 22, 23), therefore we must be in His church if we expect to be saved. Just like one river was not as good as another, so one church is not as good as another. Salvation is in the church of Christ because the saved are added to the church, and no doubt, to the Lord's church.

8. Naaman repented and went down to Jordan and dipped himself seven times in its water according to the saying of the man of God. No doubt, he needed to be humbled to do so. So must we need to humble ourselves and repent from our own ways and submit ourselves to Christ to do according to His Word.

9. And finally, when he was cleansed of his leprosy, he returned to the man of God to show his gratefulness. When we believe in Christ and do what he has commanded us to do to be saved, then he expect from us that we should continue to worship him and tell about him to others to admit how grateful we are for him. (Matthew 28 : 18-20; Acts 2 : 42). Like Naaman, we should then be able to say, "Now I know that there is no Saviour in all the earth, but Christ, who died and gave himself to save me."

It is my prayer that the Lord may help you to learn these lessons as you apply these truth to your life.

Man Is Responsible

Jim Laws

The Biblical doctrine of man, sin, and salvation is stated clearly and precisely in the Bible. The Bible is not ambiguous about this part of Christianity. The Biblical doctrine concerning man, his condition while on this earth, and his ultimate destiny is crucial to the Christian religion. Paul, in relating the story of his Damascus journey to King Agrippa (Acts 26), referred to the heavenly voice of the Lord. Paul was told that he would be made a minister and a witness both of the things which he had seen and in the things which the Lord would reveal to him. The purpose of Paul's mission is stated in verse 18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Here the importance of realizing the nature of mankind, his condition out of Christ, and his ultimate destiny is shown to be essential. Paul

was being sent to "open men's eyes" and in turn change them from the way of darkness or sin to that of light and salvation.

The Bible deals with the subject of man on a high and lofty plane. In the Bible, man is considered the crowning touch of God's creation and the high point of the creation story. The Bible teaches that man is a created being (Gen. 1 : 26-27). He has been created from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2: 7). He has been created in the image of God (Gen. 1 : 26-27). Man has been created male and female from the very beginning (1 Tim. 2 : 13). Here it is seen that God created man a material being, but at the same time, he was created in the image of God. The Bible declares that the soul of man will spend eternity either in eternal bliss (heaven) or eternal destruction (hell). (Matt. 25 : 31-46).

Seeing that the truth concerning man, sin, and salvation are of such great importance to Christianity, it is obvious that the forces of evil are going to try and pervert it. Because of its importance and its simplicity, complicate arguments are used in an attempt to change and confuse the Biblical truth of this subject.

An effort to deny the simple truth about man can be seen in the teachings of Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong and the World Wide Church of God. This organization has spent enormous amounts of money in an effort to promote teaching which is foreign to the Bible. In an effort to achieve this they publish a magazine entitled, *The Plain Truth* which has a circulation of 3,200,000 readers (Armstrong's Autobiography p. 460). The teaching arm of this organization is Ambassador College which contains three branches, one at Pasadena, California, a second at Big Sandy, Texas, and a third at London, England.

Concerning the Biblical doctrine of man Armstrong tries to use certain Hebrew and Greek words from the Bible in an effort to substantiate their claims that man does not have an immortal or eternal soul but that at the time of death man ceases to exist (Ambassador College Correspondence course, "What Is Death," p. 9).

This series of articles will set forth the Biblical teaching concerning man, his condition and his ultimate destiny and in turn will

prove the teachings of Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong to be anti-scriptural.

The Bible shows that man has a rational nature. Because he has rational ability, he is held morally responsible for what he does. Paul, while speaking to the Athenians said, "That we should seek God, in the hope that we might feel after Him and find Him. Yet He is not far from each one of us." (Acts 17 : 26-27). The use of one's rational ability is here suggested in the effort of man seeking and finding God. The gospel of John tells the reader that, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8 : 31-32). The writer of this passage indicates that the reader is able to obtain truth through his rational ability. Paul in the Roman letter makes it clear that, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them." (Rom. 1 : 18-19) The Bible has shown that man is a being created by God and created not only with the capacity to reason but also with the responsibility to come to the conclusions which are warranted by adequate evidence (John 20 : 31; Acts 2 : 36). The Old Testament teaches that God would curse the children of Israel if they failed to keep His commandments, and God would bless them if they would keep His commandments (Deut. 11 : 27-28). Here the Bible shows that the children of Israel had a choice to make. The New Testament is consistent in its approach to man's moral responsibility. John 7 : 17 shows that there is a portion of free will that a man has, and also that man will be held accountable for the decision that he makes. Scripture tells us that God made us with the capacity for ethical discrimination and thereby holds us morally responsible.

The true Biblical picture of man is that of a sinner (Rom. 3 : 23; 1 John 3 : 4). Because of man's ability to choose between good and evil all men at some time or another have failed to make the correct choice. This does not say that man is totally depraved in the sense of such a complete corruption of human nature that no man can do that which is right. The doctrine of total depravity is nowhere stated in the Bible. Paul emphatically states the uni-

versal sinfulness of mankind (Rom. 3 : 9-20, 23; Gal. 3 : 22). But this does not affirm the universal inheritance of sin. The statement that all men are sinners, however, is a statement which testifies to the inheritance of the consequences of Adam's sin. christianity teaches that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6 : 23) and that only Christ is without sin (II Cor. 5 : 21; Heb. 4 : 15; 7 : 26).

It is clear from the Bible that man is responsible and will spend eternity in one of two places. The penitent believer who has obeyed the gospel plan of salvation will receive the gift of eternal life and the unrepentant sinner the wages of sin which is eternal death.

By This Shall All Men Know

A. H. Emery, Jr.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13 : 35). According to the words of my Lord, the proof of my discipleship is my love toward brethren. Since my brethren are to be like-minded, this passage is one that affords great comfort. But alas ! Each day as I go through my mail, there is a bulletin from here, a letter from there, a paper from somewhere, totally dedicated to belittling brethren, criticizing congregations, and rebuking elderships. Are these written by those of other religions ? No ! Perhaps by the very forces of darkness ? No ! Then certainly by those who make no claim to Christianity. But as one looks carefully, he notes that these are the products of the minds and works of those who claim to be Christians.

We preach to the world of simple, New Testament Christianity. We plead with the lost to come follow Christ. We insist that we are striving for a return to the simple, pure gospel of the New Testament. Yet we insist on character assassination and bitter attack upon those who are likeminded. It is surely no great wonder that the religious world turns from us, rather than embracing the

principles we advocate. It would seem that the doctrine of **UNITY** is one we no longer care to preach and teach.

We tell others that we know false teachers by "their fruits" and we know those in sin by "their fruits" but where do we stand in the light of the text cited? If love for one another is truly that by which men shall recognize us as disciples of our Lord, what is true of us is we love not?

In the process of all this bitterness, the cry for **AUTONOMY** comes time and time again. Well, where do my **BRETHREN** (?) who insist on **AUTONOMY** (?) get their **AUTHORITY** (?) to violate the autonomy of a congregation by sending literature (if it is that) to us who are not of "their congregation"? Why am I subjected to a barrage of attack that does not involve me? If **AUTONOMY** is the **BIG ISSUE** some try to make it, why is it violated in order to spread gossip and strife?

How we need to truly return to the Word of God, the Christ of the New Testament, and the principles upon which the faith is established. How we need to be mindful of the need to promote **LOVE** instead of **DISSENSION**.

The world around us is looking for Christ, we offer strife. The religious world is confused on interpretation of scripture; we are torn asunder by interpretation of one another. How long will we persist in these practices, ignoring the words of our Lord: "**BY THIS shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.**"

To "Get" Or To "Give"

Dennis Doughty

The Lord's work needs money to function. This we all know; but, do we realize that the Lord is also interested in **HOW** the money is gotten? The Lord states in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not

grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver." In this verse the Lord lays down his will for obtaining money. He wants EVERY MAN to GIVE from HIS HEART. God wants man to LOVE to give. The GIVING is more important than the GIFT. The MOTIVE is more important than the MONEY. God knows that giving is good for the soul. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20 : 35). Why ? Because giving is one of the most noble acts in which a man can engage in his service to the Almighty !

WHEN TO GIVE ?

Now that we recognize the importance of the act of giving, let us notice the question of WHEN. When does God want us to give ? The Lord commands, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (I Corinthians 16 : 2). We are to give as God has prospered, or given unto us, upon the first day of the week.

GETTING THE MONEY

We have now seen the need to give as prospered upon the first day of the week. We are to return to the Lord's work, according to the love in our hearts, a part of what God has given unto us. In light of these thoughts, let us ask ourselves, "Are we to GET money for the church, or are we to GIVE money to the church ?" We frequently notice advertisements of where a church is having a BINGO PARTY or a RUMMAGE SALE or a CAKE WALK or a CAR WASH or an AUCTION or whatever. What is the purpose of such enterprizes ?

I have heard people say it is to, "Get money for the church." Once again we ask "Are we to GET money for the church or are we to GIVE money to the church ?" It seems so obvious that when such "Gimmicks" are used that people are trying to make up for their own lack of giving. As we have seen, God wants man to give from his own heart and from his own pocket. This is the only way God tells man to give of his means. Also such enterprizes are used to advertize the giving of the church. Yet Christ said, "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a

trumpet, before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men...But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret" (Matthew 6 : 2-4). When a church has to advertize how it plans on getting its money it fails to follow the teachings of Christ.

There is another thought to consider, Where does the money which is raised by rummage sales and bingo parties etc. come from? It comes largely from people that do not love the Lord enough to attend services and they give freely of their money, but who are willing to have their car washed or want to pick up a cheap pair of pants or whatever. Does God want money that comes from such sources? We think not ! To take such money, which has not been given out of love for His cause, is questionable God wants money given to His work to be given out of love for Him and for His cause.

What about you ? Do you GET money for God or do you GIVE money to God?

"No Room"

Pervie Nichols

Although the exact date of his birth is unknown, the greatest and most precious gift of all ages was presented to the world more than nineteen hundred years ago when God sent His "only begotten Son" to be born of the virgin Mary. When the time arrived for God's Son to be delivered, "...she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Lk. 2:7). How discouraging and disappointing it must have been to both Mary and Joseph to be turned away from the comforts of the inn on the very eve of the birth of the child Jesus! Christ came to make room for others, but found no room for himself. Although the prophets had foretold his arrival, no preparation was made to receive him. From his birth to this day the masses have made no room for Jesus in their affairs of life.

Jewish Nation Guilty

The Jewish prophets had declared His coming for centuries. (Isa. 9:6-9.) He was to be a descendant of David, of the tribe of Judah, born a Jew. But when he came "his own" people received him not. (Jno. 1:10-14.) Herod tried to kill him. (Matt. 2:16-21.) The Herodians, Pharisees, Saducees and Scribes combined their efforts to oppose him. "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (Jno. 6:66.) The very people he came to save cried "Away with this man...Crucify him, crucify him." (Lk. 23:18-21.) After his death they tried to prevent his resurrection. (Matt. 27:62-66.) Nor did their hatred cease here; they tried to destroy the church of Christ, persecuting its members, even unto death.

Hence, the nation of Israel had no room for the promised Messiah, the "Prince of Peace." To them he was but a "stone of stumbling, "a rock of offence." Likewise Jews today are guilty of rejecting Christ. They have no room for him and his New Testament in their religion. Christ is simply crowded out of their worship and practice.

Denominations Guilty

The denominations have no room for Christ. Their human names in religion leave no room for His matchless name. (Acts 4:12; 11:26; 26:28; Jas. 2:7.) They prefer their human names to the divine name of Christ in spite of the fact that His is the only name in and through which one can glorify God. (1 Pet. 4:14-16—R.V.) Their use of human creeds leave no room for the Will and Testament of the Lord. Their "mourner's bench" system, "decision card" and "prayer room" have crowded out Jesus' command to be baptized for the remission of sins. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.) There is no room for Christ in their unscriptural work and worship, such as missionary societies, church suppers, and the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. The Lord's plan for work and worship is found in the New Testament, but there is no scriptural authority for such activities. Jesus finds no room among those who thus go beyond His teaching. (2 Jno. 9.)

Members and Congregations Also Guilty

Some members of the Lord's church, and even whole congregations, have no room for Jesus. There was no room for Him in the church in Laodicea. (Rev. 3:13-20.) He was on the outside knocking for admittance. A lack of zeal, indifference, and lukewarmness had crowded Him out. Like that church, some today have shut Christ out of their hearts and affections. There is no room in their lives for church attendance, (but plenty of room for the worldly things which they want to do.) Some of those who do assemble contribute very little of their money. They have no purpose in their giving. But there can be no scriptural giving without purpose. (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:7.) Although Christ would have it otherwise, there is no room for Him and His kingdom in the affections of many members of His church.

There is no room for Jesus in many homes. The husband is wrapped up in commercial affairs, while the wife is wound up in society. Clubs, movies and parties occupy her time. If there are children, they are often left in the care of the maid. Many young people are so active in school affairs, the socials, ball games, etc., that they have no time for Christ and His church. In such homes there is no room for prayer nor Bible reading and meditation, thorns of pleasure and riches have crowded out the teachings of Christ. (Lk. 8:14.) But to crowd out His word is to shut out the Lord Himself. (Jno. 12:48.)

Since all are to be judged by the word of Christ (Jno. 12:48, we must either make room in our affairs for Him and His word, or else stand condemned at the judgement. Dear reader, be not deceived; there will be no room in heaven for those who have no room for Jesus in their hearts and lives while here!

Earnestly Contending For The Faith

Sheby G. Floyd

Jude, the author of the epistle of Jude in the New Testament, was a brother of James and a servant of Jesus Christ.

While Jude was earnestly and diligently endeavoring to write unto his brethren, concerning the salvation that was common to all, an emergency arose within the church requiring him to change his afore mentioned purpose and exhort them to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The salvation which he had contemplated writing about was common because its conditions and blessings are the same for everyone, regardless of station in life. (Gal. 3:26-28.)

Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature in the whole world, and he promised salvation to all upon the conditions of faith, repentance, confession and baptism. Since this is true, then we are children of God after a common faith. (Titus 1:4.) While this was a wonderful theme to contemplate and to explain to the brethren, an emergency required Jude to alter his original purpose and to exhort the brethren that they should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3.)

The reason this was necessary was because certain ungodly men had crept into the church unawares. They had perverted the gospel of Christ by turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and thereby denied the truth of God. (Jude 4.) God's grace taught men to deny ungodliness and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:11-12.) They denied this basic teaching of the gospel, and were encouraging the members of the church to live fleshly and sensual lives. They were encouraging rebellion against authority and they encouraged evil speaking and railing. Therefore, Jude, emphasized that all who commit such ungodly deeds will be judged by the Lord, and will be adequately punished at the last great day (Jude 5-7, 14-15.)

Because of these conditions in the church, it was necessary for those who did not indorse such to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. The phrase "the faith" is equivalent to the gospel. (Acts 6:7.) Faith, can either be used of the state of believing or the object of that belief. Therefore, they were to contend for that body of truth that had been once delivered to them as a trust. (I Tim. 6:20.) They were stewards over the truth of God. (I Cor. 4:1-2.) It was a custody that had

been committed to their keeping. Therefore, to be faithful unto God, they had to contend for it.

The faith had been once delivered verbally, orally by earthen vessels, holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (II Pet. 1:21.) The faith that was delivered by these men did not originate with man, but they were taught by God. Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11-12.) The faith that was once delivered was verbally inspired. (I Cor. 2:10-13.) This faith that was from God and verbally inspired was once delivered, which means that it was complete and never needing to be repeated. It had been delivered once for all to those who were God's children the saints. Therefore, it was a trust committed to their keeping.

They were obligated to be faithful to God, to guard it, to defend it with their sacred honour and their lives. Therefore, Jude says, "to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This is a battlecry for the members of the church to cross swords with anyone who would deviate or go beyond the doctrine of Christ. (II Jno. 9-11.) It is a call for arms, it is a summons to stand up and to quit ourselves like men, and to stand for the truth of God. (I Cor. 16:13.)

The gospel cannot be preached without contention. In the battle for the minds of men, there will be many adversaries. This will require the children of God to stand fast in one spirit, to be single minded and to ~~strive together~~ for the faith of the gospel. (Phil. 1:27.) The word contend was used literally to describe an athletic contest between antagonists, but it is used in Jude figuratively to express the extreme effort necessary on the part of the children of God to resist the devil and false teachers. (I Cor. 9:24-27.) We are to contend with moral persuasion and not carnal weapons. (Eph. 6:10-17.)

The apostle Paul was a militant contender for the faith once delivered. In writing to the Thessalonians he reminded them of the severe trial and hardships in which the gospel had been

presented to them; "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." (1 Thess. 2:2.) This is a reference to the time when Paul and Silas visited Philippi, and were shamefully brought before the rulers of that city; their clothes were torn, they were beaten with many stripes and cast into the inner prison. (Acts 16:19-24.) It is also a reference to the time when Paul left Philippi and entered the city of Thessalonica. After Paul had reasoned with the people for three sabbaths out of the scriptures, many believed, but some of the Jews which didn't believe were filled with envy; they gathered up the base, the lewd, the rebel rousers and stired an uproar in the city, and troubled the people and the rulers of the city, and brought much suffering upon the brethren and the apostle Paul. These same persons later came to Berea and stired up the people there. (Acts 17:5, 13.)

Thus, we can see that Paul had to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Let us be set for the defense of the gospel. (Phil. 1: 17).

Divine Providence and Prayer

Ray Peters

Providence, as with the Holy Spirit, is a much misunderstood subject. All Christians believe in providence: David Lipscomb well stated, "The Bible draws no distinction between special and general providence, as the terms are generally understood. God is always present in His laws. What is done through these laws, God does". (Question and Answers by Lipscomb and Sewell, p. 518). In the study of providence, as with any Bible subject, let us be carefull, lest we go beyond what the Bible teaches or we twist the Word of God to our liking. Extremes are to be avoided: Ultra-right or Ultra-left. Be as broad and narrow as the Bible allows.

DEFINITION OF PROVIDENCE

The word "provide" from Latin (providere) means 'etymologically', "to oversee". The corresponding Greek word, 'pronoia', means "fore-thought".

According to International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 2476, Vol, 4; the word 'providence' means: "The doctrine of Divine providence, therefore had reference to that preservation, care and government which God exercises over all things He has created, in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created".

Some other definitions of providence are : 'the foreseeing and guardianship of God over His creatures...a "manifestation of His divine care or direction' (American College Dictionary). "The divine intervention in the affairs of men within the confines of natural law" (Winston Atkinson) Anchor Magazine, p. 23).

The word 'providence' as used in the Bible doesn't primarily have reference to God's care and over-sight of His creation. It is found twice in the New Testament; Acts 24:2 and the same root word in Romans 13:14. The use of the word 'provide' in the Old Testament sustains God's watch and care; (Gen. 22:8; Psa. 78:20; Psa. 37:25, 28: In the New Testament: Matt. 6:33; Rom. 8:28. McGarvey and Pendleton on Rom. 8:28. "All things evidently refers to all that class of events which threaten to result in sin. The phrase evidently is not to be pressed, for it can hardly include sin or any other thing which injures the soul. The apostle himself, in verses 35-39 fully describes what he means by "all things". Because God may bring good out of such experiences, does it mean that God sent them.

FALSE VIEWS OF PROVIDENCE

The Atheistic or materialistic view affirms that there is no God, that the material universe is eternal, and that from material atoms, eternally endowed with certain properties, there have come, by a process of evolution, all existing forms of vegetable, animal and rational life. As materialism denies the existence of a

personal creator, it of course denies any and every doctrine of Divine providence.

Pantheism stands at the other extreme of atheism, teaching that God is everything and that everything is God. The created universe is His 'living garment'; God is the soul of the world, the universe is His existence in form. But God is an infinite it, not a personal being who can express His existence in terms of self-consciousness—I, Thou, He. Providence, according to pantheism, is simply the evolution of impersonal deity, differing from materialism only in the name which it gives to the infinite substance from which all things flow.

Deism teaches that there is a God, and that He created the world, but created things do not need His presence and the exercise of His power in order to continue in existence and fulfil their functions. The material world is placed under immutable law; while man, the rational and moral free agent, is left to do as he wills. God sustains, according to deism, very much the same relation to the universe that the clock-maker does to his timepiece. Having made his clock and wound it up, he does not interfere with it; and the longer it can run without the maker's intervention, the greater the evidence of wisdom and skill on the part of the maker. God, according to deism has never wrought a miracle nor made a supernatural revelation to man. The only religion that is possible to man is natural religion; he may reason from nature up to nature's God. The only value of prayer is its subjective influence: it help us to answer our own prayers, to become and be what we are praying to be. If the Divine Being is a prayer-hearing God, He is at least not a prayer-answering God. The law of nature constitute God's general providence; but there is no other personal or special providence than this. God, the deists affirm, is too great, too distant, too transcendent a Being to concern Himself with the creaturely existence (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 281).

At the other end of the spectrum is the erroneous teaching of Pentecostalism. They sustain that the Holy Spirit works in the lives today in supernatural ways and providentially guides them in a special way, affirming that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is

still received today and that He dwells personally and bodily in them. Providence, according to Pentecostalism, works inward to outward to provide for them in a special way.

Pentecostalism's view in regard to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and providence is false. The Spirit only works through the word of God in convicting and converting the sinner and in edifying the Christian (Heb. 4:12; Acts 20:32). The word of God provides us all with all we need to live the Christian life (II Tim. 3:16,17). Their position on providence is shown to be wrong when the proper teaching from the Bible is observed.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF PROVIDENCE

Extremes are bad. We have seen the extreme from Deism to Pentecostalism! The truth is always right in the middle.

The Bible doesn't make the distinction between special and general providence, but yet a lot is written and spoken in regard to these two. Some make the distinction saying that special providence is for the child of God and general for the alien. In the age of miracles there is no doubt that God in a special way manifested His watch and care. Yet these were confirmatory and temporary. That God over-ruled in the life of Esther, Daniel, Joseph, etc., cannot be denied. There is a DIVINE INTERPRETER (The Bible) to certify the providence in these cases. We have no divine interpreter, and therefore, we cannot relate our experiences as the leadings of God. There may have been things in our lives that appear to be providential, but I cannot preach such as I have no divine interpreter. I would be preaching self (II Cor. 4:5).

Because God has not seen fit to turn back the curtain as He did back then doesn't mean He doesn't provide for us today, but we can't see and we don't know when it is or when it isn't the providence of God.

We must not interpret the providence of God in such a way that we decide that our decisions are inspired and that one can learn the will of God by just reading our lives. When we have

this attitude, we become Arrogant and we also feel that those who oppose us are automatically opposing God.

Does God work providentially today in our lives? How? The fact that God works today providentially is easily sustained but the "how" is not as easily explained. Man has to accept many things by faith (II Cor. 5:7). God has promised to the faithful child of God His watch and care (Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 3:20; II Cor. 9:8). This is not promised to the alien sinner, even though, "He sends rain on the just and unjust" (Matt. 45) but this is their reward, (Psa. 37:28). God works today through His natural laws, overshadowing or overruling. This does not have to be in a miraculous way. This world is not "governed by God; by the laws of nature," as deism teaches but it is governed by God according to the laws of Nature". In other words, the laws don't dictate or run God, but God works his natural laws. One extreme is not to have God working (Jno. 5:17) and the other would be in the miraculous. The truth is He works through and according to His laws in a non-miraculous way. The reason we cannot know when it is the providence of God for sure or How he works is that we do not have Divine interpretation.

PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

The command to pray is abundantly clear: (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; I Tim. 2:8; I Thess. 5:17; Jas. 5:16). Prayer must be according to God's will. (I Jno. 5:14), and it must be asked in faith (Jas. 1:6).

The answer to prayer is not miraculous, the example of Hanna's prayer for a son in I Sam. 1:10-20, tells that she prayed and then rose up and did all that was in her power to assure the birth of a child. It is said the "Lord remembered her". What did the Lord do? There was no miracle because she was still at the age of child bearing. This illustrates the power of prayer. Explain it? We can't. This is where we have to leave it.

The eldest servant of Abraham travels to get Issac a wife (Gen. 24). He prayed that the Lord would make his trip prosperous (Gen. 24:12-14) because he was "in the way" the Lord prospered him (Gen. 24:27). Where is the evidence of the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit or the miraculous? The reason we know for a certainty

that God did this is we have the Bible as a divine interpretation on it. We can't say for a certainty today, because we have no divine interpretation. We may think that it was God's providence, but we have no right to get up and testify because the only evidence we have that it was special providence is our own experience.

God in answering prayer, works through **impressed law** and not his **expressed law**. The danger of Deism is that it makes God stop working (Jno. 5:17). It is a mistake to think that the Word of God is His only will. God will not and cannot change His **expressed will**, the word of God (Heb. 9: 15-17). God does not work contrary to His **Impressed will**, but rather through it to accomplish His will in our lives. It is through prayer that we ask God to work through His **Impressed Law** (natural law) to bless, whether it be materially or spiritually. (A happening that God may use to bless us spiritually).

PROVIDENCE AND PERSECUTION

The scriptures teach that Christians will suffer persecution (I Pet. 4:16). Persecution doesn't mean that the Lord doesn't love us (Heb. 12:5-9). It is not joyous at the moment (Heb. 12:11).

Persecution can produce self-examination, and reformation of life, wherein there is a necessity for such reformation. It may be the occasion when God's people demonstrate their power of faith and love. Tragedy or persecution does not mean it is of God, but God may or can use this event to bring about good in our lives.

CONCLUSION

Even though the word 'providence' is not found in the Bible, the Scriptures are replete with the teachings; That God cares for His own. One of the great spiritual blessing that a Christian has is the assurance that God will take care of him. The writer in Proverbs put it best "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy way acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6). A final word of warning: Let us believe in providence, but let us keep our feet on the ground.

Who Needs Baptism?

H.R. Bob Hurd

We are faced with a religious practice which is a most controversial subject. The Bible is, of course, a controversial Book, it being under constant attack from the very first. The Bible is the mind of God revealed to human beings of which we are all one. What is this troublesome matter? We refer to BAPTISM—its necessity and essentiality to all mankind.

I. IS BAPTISM—MANMADE OR DIVINE IN ORIGIN?

A. To hear some of the scholarly men talk over the radio and from the pulpits across the many lands, you would soon assume that we need not even worry about this subject.

1. According to these men, this is something which belongs to the ancients, and not "relevant" to us of the "modern world".

2. Some try to teach that this is a "church ordinance", started by men to show one's acceptance of Christ, and to prove that they are willing to obey any command the Lord desires once they are saved.

B. Where did Baptism originate? Who commanded it?

1. Of course we know that John the baptizer Commanded baptism for repentance. Even the Lord submitted to this act, not because he had sin, he didn't, but to fulfill all righteousness. Matt. 3:15.

2. Jesus, before he ascended to God gave the Great Commission to his disciples—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be condemned"; Mark 16:15, 16; also in Matt. 28:18-20 we read about the same command. Thus we are to conclude then that Jesus commanded this act, not man. Will we fight against God? Many do, don't they!!!

II. WHAT ELEMENT IS USED IN BIBLE BAPTISM?

A. We turn to the Bible again for our answer.

a. Mark 1:9-11 we see Jesus was baptized in the Jordan and that he went "down into" the water for he "came up out of the water".

b. Acts 8:36, the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, "See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

c. Thus we must conclude that Bible baptism is in water, much water.

III. WHO IS SUBJECT FOR BAPTISM?

A. Many have been "christened" as infants and call this baptism.

1. Is this possible? Can a small baby hear and understand the gospel of Christ?

2. Does an infant have sin? This some try to tell us is so, but this doctrine is not true! We are accountable for our sins and we need to be cleansed from those sins. Infants are pure, SINLESS. Infants are not in need of salvation, they are safe... nowhere in all of God's word is there a plan for babies to be saved.

B. Who then are subjects?

1. In light of the Bible we find that those who are subject for Bible baptism are:

- a. those who are taught
- b. those who understand
- c. those who have repented of sin
- d. those who have confessed Christ
- e. therefore we must conclude that no infant or person born in a moronish or imbecile state are subject to this command.

IV. WHAT IS THE PROPER WAY TO BAPTIZE?

A. Baptism is usually left to the will of the person...you may be sprinkled, poured or immersed...the choice is yours . . . or is it?

1. The word baptism is from the Greek word 'baptizo'; this word when used in this way in the New Testament means to immerse or submerge under water, none other use is valid!

2. The terms sprinkling and pouring for baptism are NOT FOUND in the Bible for baptism.

3. Remember, Jesus went "down into the water," if sprinkling were all that was necessary, why get all wet? The same holds true about pouring, doesn't it?

a. Paul likens baptism to a burial in Romans 6:3,4. When you bury something, do you just sprinkle sand on it? Would you pour sand over it? No! You would dig a hole and bury it: and so it is with Bible baptism: it is a burial in water.

V. IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION?

A. Here is the big question.

1. Here we find man crying NO, NO, Never!!

2. Articles and books have been written about this one subject.

3. Men of "wisdom" denounce it as stupid absurd foolish.

B. What saves us from sin?

1. Matt. 26:28...For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the REMISSION OF SINS.

a. What washes away our sins... the blood of Jesus.

2. Revelation 1:5b, "Unto him that loved us, and washes us from our sins in his own blood."

3. Both these Scriptures tell us WHAT SAVES US.

C. WHEN ARE WE SAVED FROM OUR SINS?

1. Acts 2:38 tells us when: Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2. Acts 22:16 Paul was told what to do to get rid of his sins as we read here, "And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized, AND WASH AWAY THY SINS, calling on the name of the Lord."

a. In both of these accounts we read of WHEN THEIR SINS WERE REMITTED...when they were baptized.

D. Is there plain speech which tells us baptism saves us? YES!!!

1. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:27 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

a. We know we must be in Christ, here we find out "how".

2. Peter tells us: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also NOW SAVE US (Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

a. Peter says baptism SAVES US...there can be no gooconscience without this baptism into Christ.
VI.AWHAT ABOUT YOU?

A. Do you need it?...You best believe it.

1. Those who teach against Christ and God—these call the Holy Spirit a liar, say the Bible is in error. Think about it—**GOD MADE A MISTAKE!!! Absurd!**

2. Any religious group who does not teach Bible baptism as part of God's plan of salvation **CANNOT BE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST!!!**

3. Will you believe the Bible? God? Christ? Come out from among them and obey the truth of God. Become just a Christian, and be added to the church Christ built. You will find joy, peace, and the promise of everlasting life.

Nothing Ahead of Jehovah

Maxie B. Boren

In giving Israel the law, Jehovah said, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me." Exodus 20 : 3 You can be assured the Almighty One said what He meant to say, and that He meant precisely what He said!

This is perfectly clear to members of the Lord's church when observing people worshipping images. We can see "idolatry" so plainly among many religions. It is equally evident in Catholicism, with all its images and statues, beads and relics. And we wonder—"isn't it sad and pitiful that so many people are so steeped in superstition and darkness?"

But it seems to escape our awareness that another form of idolatry is among ourselves in things not quite so apparent. For example, the apostle Paul defined "covetousness" as being idolatry in Colossians 3 : 6. And yet, while we would not tolerate a professed Christian having some sort of "image" to which he bows and prays, we seem to think nothing at all of allowing covetous individuals the full fellowship of the church!

To pursue the matter further—many professed Christians put almost everything you can imagine BEFORE JEHOVAH with scarcely a word being said about it. Many forsake the assembly

See next page

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !

Radio Sri Lanka Broadcasts

ENGLISH—*The Voice of Truth*—Speakers : Reggie Gnana-sundaram and J.C. Choate.

All correspondence should be sent to *The Voice of Truth*,
Post Box 3815, New Delhi 110049.

Sundays—10 : 15 to 10 : 30 P.M.

Tuesdays—9 : 30 to 9 : 45 A.M.

HINDI—*Satya Susamachar*—Speaker : Sunny David.

All correspondence should be sent to *Satya-Susamachar*, Post
Box 3815, New Delhi 110049.

Tuesdays—9 : 00 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Thursdays—9 : 00 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Fridays—9 : 00 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Saturdays—9 : 45 to 10 : 00 P.M.

TELUGU—*The Voice of Truth*—Speaker : Joshua Gootam

All correspondence should be sent to *The Voice of Truth*,
Post Box 80, Kakinada 533001.

Sundays —2 : 30 to 2:45 P.M.

Mondays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Tuesdays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Wednesdays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Thursdays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Fridays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

TAMIL—*The Way of Truth*—Speaker : P. R. Swamy.

All correspondence should be sent to *The Way of Truth*,
Post Box 3301, Bangalore 560033.

Tuesdays—5 : 30 to 5 : 45 P.M.

Thursdays—6 : 45 to 7 : 00 P.M.

Fridays—6 : 45 to 7 : 00 P.M.

MALAYALAM—*The Voice of Truth*—Speaker : John Chandy.

All Correspondence should be sent to *Church of Christ*,
Thevally, Quilon—1 Kerala.

Tuesdays—3 : 45 to 4 : 00 P.M.

Fridays— 3 : 45 to 4 : 00 P.M.

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO LISTEN

Bible Correspondence Courses and Christian Literature
are available in these different languages from the addresses
listed. Also, the radio sermons are available in book form.

of the saints time and again without the slightest rebuke or exhortation ! Yet the Bible teaches Christians not to forsake the assembly. Read **Hebrews 10 : 25**. And why do some forsake the assembly ? For such "reasons" as these——

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) Television——— | (6) Company game——— |
| (2) Sporting events——— | (7) Fishing, hunting, golfing——— |
| (3) Weekend campouts——— | (8) Boating and skiing——— |
| (4) Reading the paper——— | (9) Just "lounging around"——— |
| (5) Sleep——— | (10) Etc., etc., etc., etc.——— |

Brethren, such things as just listed above become "other gods" to us whenever we allow them to **COME BEFORE JEHOVAH !** Though we wouldn't dare bow ourselves down in front of a graven image, we seem totally nonchalant about putting these trivial things **AHEAD OF OUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE ALMIGHTY GOD OF THIS UNIVERSE !**

We must realize that **WHATEVER** we allow to come before the **TRUE AND LIVING GOD** is to us "a god" and that is idolatry ! All idolaters shall be **WITHOUT** the heavenly city (**Revelation 22 : 15**) and will be cast into "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." **Revelation 21 : 8**. You better believe it, because it is true !

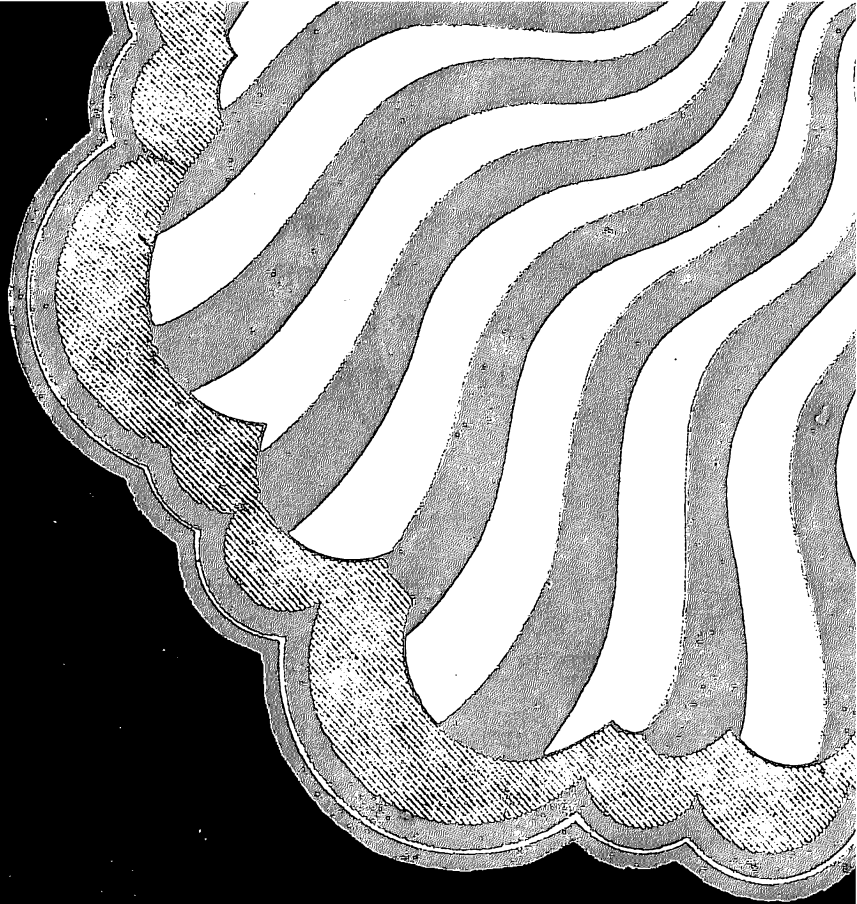
TO:

From ,

The Bible Teacher

Post Box No. 3815
New Delhi-110049

THE BIBLE TEACHER



Preacher Available

**Preacher is available in Delhi to
conduct Bible study/services on
Sundays in English or Hindi in the
afternoons. If you are a family or a
group of people interested in God's
Word, this is your opportunity !**

Write to :

**Sunny David, Minister
Church of Christ
Box 3815
New Delhi-110049.**