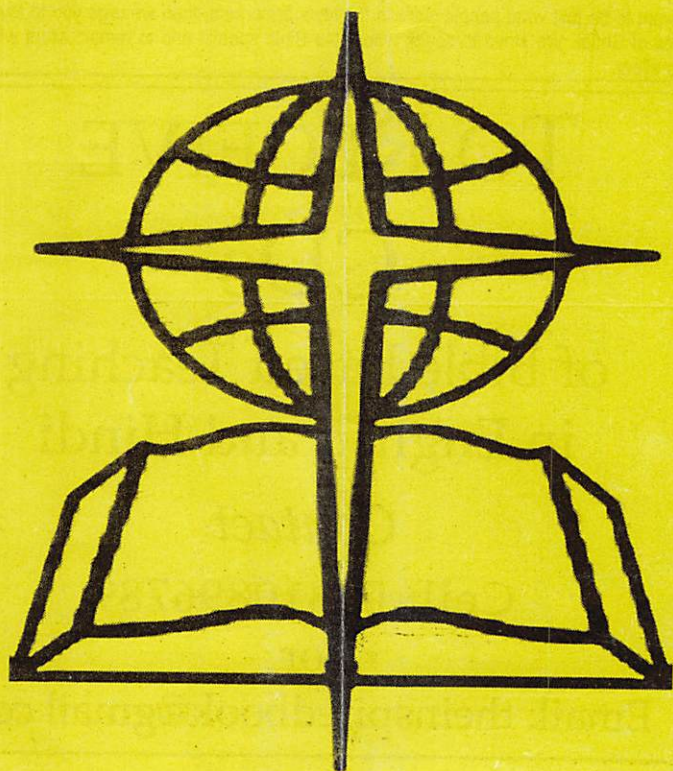


Monthly

September, 2012

Price: Rs. 2/-

THE BIBLE TEACHER



BACK TO BASICS

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). His promise was fulfilled when His church came into existence on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter commanded the multitude assembled on that day: "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:41), as a result three thousand were added to the church on that day by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). That was the beginning of Christ's church.

Of what denomination did those three thousand become members? Our contention is that they joined no denomination. Indeed, denominationalism such as we know in today's world did not even exist then. They had simply obeyed the Gospel and were added by the Lord to His church. They wore no sectarian name, adopted no denominational creed, and belonged to no ecclesiastical hierarchy. They were simply children of God, members of the church, were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Churches of Christ today everywhere plead for a return to that same church with that same simplicity. We do not claim to be a denomination. Our goal is to be that church—nothing more, nothing less—just basic New Testament Christians as people were in the first century.

We teach the same plan of salvation—faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39). We practice the same worship—teaching, giving, observing the Lord's Supper, praying, and singing praises to God. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19). We follow the same congregational organization—elders, deacons, saints (Philippians 1:1), without offices and positions unknown to the Christians in the beginning.

If you want to be just what people were in the New Testament, then we urge you to investigate churches of Christ. We strive to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.

TO RECEIVE CDs of Bible based Teaching in English and Hindi

Contact

Cell: 09810896789

or

Email: theinspiredbook@gmail.com

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 43

September 2012

No. 5

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

The Bible Claims To Be The Inspired Word Of God

THE Bible is not just another book amongst myriad of books on earth. The uniqueness of the Bible is in the important fact that it claims to be the inspired word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that it was written by the inspiration of God, and 2 Peter 1:21 says that men whom God had used in the writing of the Bible were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. The individuals whom God had chosen to write 66 books of the Bible were not the movers, but they were moved or were inspired by the Spirit of God to write the message of God for man. Therefore, they all wrote about the same thing and on the same subject and same theme in all the Bible. Men who wrote different books of the Bible, did not write down their own wisdom or their own knowledge, but whatever they wrote was only the word of God.

Therefore, when one reads the Bible, one finds that all the sixty-six books of the Bible are saying the same thing. Isn't it amazing to find that 66 books, written over a period of 1600 years, by 40 different persons, in different parts of the world, but all are saying the same thing!

Those writers of different books of the Bible were separated by time, geography, language, and culture, yet they participated in writing a book that is perfectly united in theme and in purpose. This fact itself shows, and is a convincing proof that the Bible is the product of a single and superior mind.

On the other hand, if the Bible were merely the product of 40

different human minds, we would expect it to be a disjointed compilation of contradictory ideas and themes.

In fact, the wonderful unity of all the sixty-six books of the Bible is a profound mark of its super-human origin, and is a great proof of its inspiration. This unity that exists in all the books of the Bible is so amazing and compelling that it leaves its reader no option, but to accept that the Bible is truly the book of God and was written by His inspiration.

The amazing unity of the books of the Bible, however, is not the only proof of its inspiration. But there are literally hundreds of very specific prophecies in the Bible that were spoken hundreds of years before their fulfillment, that have already come to pass.

The Bible has also been proven to be historically reliable by numerous archaeological discoveries that too have verified again and again that the Bible indeed was written by God's inspiration. Those discoveries have brought to light kingdoms, places, events, and cultures, as they existed hundreds and thousands of years ago, and the Bible speaks about them, but there have been no other account of them elsewhere. Those discoveries too have proven the fact that the Bible truly is God's inspired word as it claims to be.

**Note: I encourage you to obtain and listen to the
Audio C.D. "All About The Bible"**

**Call cell number 09810896789 or
email: theinspiredbook@gmail.com**

Putting off the Old Man of Sin

Lesson 1

SIN

J.C. CHOATE

WE ARE living in a time in which the word sin almost disappeared from our vocabulary. Now a days the drunkard is an alcoholic, the one who is hooked on drugs is a drug addict, the homosexual has simply taken an alternative lifestyle, and on and on it goes with a whole line of other acts that used to be labeled as sinful acts. But I have news for you. They are still bad and wrong, and they are listed as sins in the catalog of sins as set forth in God's word. Just because they are not called by their rightful names, and therefore acknowledged to be sins, that doesn't mean that

they are not. They can be white-washed and dressed up with nice sounding terms and names, but they are still sin in God's eyes and in the eyes of his people.

These sins are referred to in the scriptures as the works of the flesh, and some of these are said to be "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." (Galatians 5:19-21).

Paul says that those unrighteous like fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and such like, can not enter into the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10).

John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17).

The Apostle Paul said, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers. For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other things that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

Again, Paul wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

As you can see then, sin represents a lot of bad things, things that are wrong and against the law, things that are of the flesh, of the world, that are unholy and ungodly, things that hurt and destroy

physically and spiritually.

What is sin? It is simply a transgression of the law, that is, the law of God, as well as the law of man. John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know, that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:4-8). John is saying here that Christ came into this world, was without sin, and gave himself that man might be saved from sin and that the works of the devil might be destroyed.

The Apostle Paul declared, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Again, he said, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5:8, 9). In Romans 6:23, he said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Speaking of the world to come, John wrote, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death". (Revelation 21:8).

Now of all of the sins that have been listed, and all of the others sins that are in the world, do you recognize any of them? Have you seen any of these things in the world? Have you seen them around you, in your friends, family members, even in yourself? Now we have seen what these things will do for one. They will hurt you, cause you problems, and can destroy you and your family. They can kill you and send your soul to hell. Surely you can see that all of these sins are bad and wrong. You have seen what they have done for others, and maybe already you have suffered much because of these different things being in your own life.

Then what can be done about all of this? Must one go on suffering like this, and being without God and hope? Is there any way to rid one's self of sin, to be forgiven, and to have a better life? Yes, there is, but there is a price to pay. Christ died for you that

you might be saved, but for you to have salvation then you must give up all of your sins and obey Him. It is just that simple, but there is no other way to be saved. That shouldn't really be hard to do when you realize that you are simply giving up that which is bad and wrong for that which is good and right.

The Bible describes sin in one's life as being the old man of sin. It further describes the one who has obeyed God as having put on the new man of righteousness in Christ Jesus. This is simply brought about through one's faith in God, by repenting of all of one's sin, confessing Christ as the Son of God, and being baptized, or buried in water, for the remission of sins. Let's read some from Romans 6 to see how this works. Paul said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Romans 6:1-10).

In the foregoing, Paul is showing how that Christ died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and was then resurrected from it. In a sinner's obedience to the Lord, then he dies to his sins, that is, he repents of them. Then he is buried in water to wash away his sins, that is, in his obedience he comes into contact with the blood of Christ and all of his sins are forgiven. Finally, he comes up out of the water as a new creature, a new person in Christ. Christ described this as being a new birth (John 3:3-5), and Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As we turn to Colossians 3 we have Paul saying to the Christians at Colosse, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your

affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:1-17).

Now, in the words of the scriptures I think you can see then that when one puts off the old man of sin through his obedience to the Lord, then he changes his life and adds good and wholesome qualities that makes life worth living and gives him a better life to look forward to.

WHEN THE DEVIL SPEAKS, SOMEONE LISTENS

ROY BEASLEY

ADAM and Eve were in the beautiful Garden of Eden, where God caused to grow every kind of tree that was good to look

upon and good to eat. Everything was perfect. God even gave to them a law to live by. He commanded them to dress the garden and to keep it, and warned them not to partake of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, lest they should *"surely die."*

One day Satan approached Eve in the form of a serpent and said, "Yea...." "Yea" is in the King James Version. However, in the original Hebrew it is a breathing sound, such as "Umph." *"Umph, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden."* Now, this question was asked to confuse, to create doubt in the mind of Eve. "Is that really what God said? Did I understand Him correctly? Could He have meant something else?"

Well, Eve understood what God had said. She replied, *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."*

Then the Devil said, *"Ye shall not surely die."*

The first time the Devil spoke, it was for the purpose of creating doubt. The second time he spoke, he plainly contradicted what God had said.

The Devil spoke and Eve listened. She partook of the forbidden fruit and gave some to Adam, and he too did eat. Thus, they sinned, and the sentence of death was pronounced upon all of mankind.

The Devil spoke to Eve through the serpent. He spoke to Adam through Eve. He did not speak to each one personally. The Devil still speaks today, but not personally. He uses many agents, many spokesmen. Satan filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). Satan can fill our hearts to commit sin. He has no trouble communicating. He is eloquent. He is convincing. *When the Devil speaks, there are always those who listen.*

There is so much misery, heartache, and death in the world today. This shows that *when the Devil speaks, someone listens.*

There are wars and rumors of war. There are terrorist attacks on innocent people. There are dysfunctional families. *When Satan speaks, someone listens.*

There are the problems of child abuse and spousal abuse. There is the drug problem. There is religious division. There are those who sow discord among brethren. *When the Devil speaks, someone listens.*

Jesus once said to Peter, *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"* (Luke 22:31).

Satan desired to have Peter, and he desires to have you and me to *"sift as wheat."* What does that mean?

Take some flour in a container out of doors. Scatter it around on the ground. The wind will carry some of it away. Then try to gather it together again in the container. You will be able to find only a small fraction of what you originally had.

That is what the Devil will do to you if you will let him. He will put you through the mill. He will take away the goodness from your life—reputation ruined, innocence evaporated. He will sift you like wheat if you let him. And, when all that is worthwhile is gone, it will be impossible to get it back.

When the Devil speaks, don't listen.

GIANTS & GRASSHOPPERS

(A Lesson on Fear and Faith)

Texts: Numbers 13 & 14; Joshua 14

REUBEN EMPERADO

"We should go up and take possession of the land, for we certainly can do it."

WHILE the children of Israel were camping in the desert of Paran the Lord told Moses, *"Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders."* (Numbers 13:2).

Twelve men were chosen to spy the land including *Caleb* and *Hoshea* who was also called *Joshua*. These men were sent by Moses to see the nature of the people and the cities they lived in. They were to observe their fortifications and defenses and see the condition of the land.

These spies explored the land for 40 days. At the end of that time they returned with some of the fruits of the land, and also with diverse and contradictory stories to tell. All of the men were convinced of the goodness of the land, but ten of the spies were afraid of the inhabitants for they were "giants", and they further described the fortification of their cities as "reaching the skies".

They said: *"We went into the land which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is the fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We*

even saw the descendants of Anak there" (Numbers 13: 27,28).

They also said: "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. The land we explored devours those living in it..All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our eyes, and we looked the same to them" (V. 32,33).

The fear of the ten spies had reduced them in their own eyes to the size of grasshoppers. And their fear destroyed the morale of Israel, melting their hearts and paralyzing them.

While the report of the majority was negative, Joshua and Caleb believed otherwise. They trusted on the promises of God. "Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said: 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we certainly can do it'" (V. 30).

They further said: "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them" (Number 14:6-9).

Because of **unbelief** the children of Israel failed to receive the promise land. Forty years later, Caleb narrated their experience:

"You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children for ever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'" (Joshua 14:6-9)

The difference is between **faith** and **fear**; between godly and worldly perspectives. Joshua and Caleb realized that God had called them to fight and possess the land. They were to fight not with their own strength but with the strength of the Almighty God. They realized that God's strength was stronger than their enemies and greater than the obstacles.

The story is about **faith** and **fear**, **courage** and **cowardice**. A

contrast of Joshua and Caleb with the ten spies will give us a better perspective.

JOSHUA AND CALEB

- Joshua and Caleb were obedient men. They followed God wholeheartedly. They saw God's power and trusted in His ability to give the land into their hands.
- They were men of courage and deep conviction. They saw the land and the goodness thereof. They did not ignore the presence of a strong obstacle nor deny the strength of their enemies but they trusted in the power of God.
- They were men who were not influenced by the negative thinking of the crowd, the majority, nor were they influenced by fear or favor.
- They were men of true strength, both spiritually and physically. At the age of 85, when most men are retired, Caleb asked to be allowed to conquer the giants.
- Their faith in God reduced the giants of the land into grasshoppers in their own estimate. They saw that the real giant was God and the real grasshoppers were their enemies. Joshua and Caleb were not pigmies in their own eyes, because God was residing in their hearts.
- They **believed** in the promises of God, **claimed them and received them!**

THE TEN SPIES

- They were convinced of the goodness of the land but did not believe in the power of God.
- They saw the difficulties, the strength of their enemies, and the fortified cities, and their hearts melted in fear. Their fear reduced them to mere grasshoppers in their own eyes; it paralyzed and demoralized them, and as a consequence, they failed to receive the promises of God.
- They had omitted God from the total picture. The obstacles blinded their hearts and they lost sight of the great God behind them.
- From fear they jumped into presumptions. Then they tried to overcome their enemies by their own power and they were defeated.

FAITH AND FEAR

- **Faith sees and dares and triumphs** in the days of

overwhelming difficulties, while fear runs, trembles and fails in the days of overflowing opportunities.

- **Faith** acts with unwavering courage and conviction, even when others think it cannot be done.
- **Fear** paralyzes the strongest of men, while **faith** energizes the weakest of men. Caleb at the age of 85 still felt and acted as if he were no more than 40 years old, but the young men acted as if they were without strength.
- **Fear** delayed the promises of God, while **faith** waited patiently through the delays caused by faithless men.
- **Fear** canceled the promises of God. Their faithlessness had put them outside the circle of God's benefits, but **faith** was the channel through which later generations received the promises and blessings of God.

CONCLUSION

The conviction and courage of Caleb and Joshua were vindicated when, 40 years later, they entered the promised land. Out of the 600,000 men above 20 years old, only two were allowed to enter and possess the land, together with the younger generation. Their faith and courage were eventually rewarded but they had to wait patiently for 40 long years, a delay caused not by their own fault but by the fault and failure of others. When the majority of God's people lose faith in Him, even the innocent and the faithful will suffer for a time.

Today we, too, have our own "promised land" to claim, strongholds to conquer and enemies to fight. Our weapons are not swords and guns but the armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-18). The battlefield is not in a distant land but within our minds and hearts. The greatest enemies we have to conquer are still our own **fears and doubts**. How can we conquer these personal battles? The lessons from Joshua and Caleb can give us the key. We can win these battles and conquer our fears by faith and trust in the promises and words of God.

Responsible Citizenship

JOE C. MAGEE

AND when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers saying, 'Let those men go.' So the keeper of the prison reported those

words to Paul, saying, 'The magistrates have sent, to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.' But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison, and now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come and get us out' (Acts 16:35-37).

There are two opposite schools of thought concerning the Christian and his conduct as a citizen. Some believe that Christians should be totally oblivious to their civic or political surroundings. "In the world, but not of the world" is their reason for not taking part in any function of society, not even to vote. Others are much more militant. It is not uncommon for them to stage sit-ins, march in protest, or even practice civil disobedience. If, in their judgment a law is unjust, they do not hesitate to disregard such law.

Paul's action in Philippi refutes both these attitudes. While grossly mistreated, Paul staged no civil unrest, nor did he take any sort of revenge against those at fault. Upon his release from prison, he simply encouraged the brethren and departed. But let's back up and see how Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen.

Paul, acting fully within the law, was not content to let the magistrates get by with breaking the law. They not only had mistreated a Roman citizen, they had carelessly handled their responsibility as magistrates. By making a legal and proper issue of this, Paul solidly established a precedent that may have in the future prevented unjust action against the Philippian brethren. For instance, by Paul's action, the Philippian jailer, now a brother in Christ, was completely removed from direct involvement in this incident, thus saving him from any unjust reprimand.

The lesson here is—in times of civil stress, somewhere between total lethargy and emotional loss of control, there lies the wisdom of responsible citizenship. Not all governments are the same; and yet Christians can live under any form of government, and have over the centuries. We are taught to obey the laws of the land so long as they do not come in direct conflict with the laws of God. Yet we must not abuse the freedom with law-breaking practices. We possess the freedom of expression, and we should use that freedom with common sense, not with emotional abandon. None would deny that injustices are rampant in our nation, from the federal courts down to local governments. But if we, in our effort to offset these injustices, break the law ourselves, are we any better than other law-breakers? Two wrongs do not make a right. Let's think with our heads and not our emotions.

The Scriptures Must Speak To Us

HOLLIS MILLER

ONE of the silent but powerful forces at work during the early days of the Restoration Movement was the weariness of mind among believers in Christ who knew something was wrong in a divided faith that was meant to be one. Had not Jesus prayed for oneness among all His disciples (John 17:20)? Separations born of, and perpetuated by, multiple creedal systems did not set well with many searching souls.

When men who advocated abandonment of all creeds and a return to the Scriptures as the only guide for faith began to appear, their plea quickly caught the attention of dissatisfied souls. The time was ripe for renewal, and the plea for Scriptural authority to take precedence over all other voices found a receptive audience.

Any effort today to soften the demands of the Scriptures is destined for failure. Temporary victories may seem to be won, but the war itself will be lost. There cannot be final victory where the Word of the Lord does not reign supreme.

Doctrines associated with Christian faith are to be interpreted in context with the whole of God's Word. Love, sympathy, understanding, brotherhood, and all such matters are included. No doctrine of the Scriptures can be given a working definition that will not permit it to blend with the balance of biblical teaching. For example, Christian love cannot ignore evil and remain Christian love. Paul wrote: "*Love ... does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth*" (1 Corinthians 13:6). Christian love, however strong, cannot turn unbelief in another into belief. Belief must grow within the mind and heart of the one who is believing. It cannot be infused by proxy.

The eyes of Christians are to be kept focused on the Scriptures. Their gaze cannot wander onto that which may seem right at the moment, but will, with the passing of time, prove fatal.

Seed Of The Kingdom

PERRY HALL

IN Christ's great Parable of the Sower He explained that the

various types of soils represent the various conditions found in the spiritual hearts of men. Some are too hard to penetrate. Some are too shallow to produce lasting results. Others are too crowded with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world, and are suffocated by them. Then He discussed the honest and good heart that brings forth fruit with patience.

Jesus explained that *"the seed is the word of God"* (Luke 8:11). We must accept and not deny what the Bible plainly affirms. When Jesus declares that the seed is the Word of God, that is final. This parable teaches concerning Christ's kingdom. The Word of God is the seed of the kingdom to the exclusion of absolutely everything else. If we desire a crop of corn or wheat, we must have the seed of that plant. The only way to produce corn is to plant corn. God's law of reproduction is immutable. Every seed produces only after its kind.

There has never been any way to convert people except to teach them only the pure Word of God and persuade them to receive it. *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"* (Psalm 19:7). The New Testament is the seed, the law of God, for the Christian age. No human creed can produce conversion of an alien sinner to Christ. A human creed is not the seed of the kingdom. It is the seed of a human denomination that had its beginning long after the establishment of the kingdom of God. The New Testament makes Christians only and the only Christians, due to the unchanging reality that every seed produces after its own kind. It tells those who are lost what they must do to be saved. It shows examples of New Testament conversion.

May we receive with meekness the implanted Word unto the saving and purifying of our souls, being born again, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives and abides forever (James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:25).

THE ETERNAL LOOPHOLE

ANCIL JENKINS

THEN Jesus declared, *I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty"* (John 6:35).

A newspaper advertisement for an evangelistic crusade in a

major city recently used this theme: **You are born, you suffer, you die.**

FORTUNATELY THERE IS A LOOPHOLE

This theme captures so much of the frustration of so many. No amount of enjoyment, escape, and dissipation can quieten the ever-present thought, "You are going to die." The loophole is man's hope and is simple, even as easy as knowing the difference between "one" and "two." The Bible teaches:

THERE ARE TWO BIRTHS

Jesus tells us there are two ways of being born. One is physical. Flesh gives birth to flesh, John 3:6. The natural birth has come to all; we cannot deny or escape it.

Yet, Jesus told Nicodemus of another birth, *"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."... "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit"* (John 3:3,5). We are born once without choice. We are born the second time of our own accord, when we choose obedience to God and birth by baptism into His Family.

THERE ARE TWO RESURRECTIONS

Jesus also clearly taught of a coming resurrection of all men from the dead. *"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice"* (John 5:28). Just as all die (Hebrews 9:27), so all will be raised. This event also is without our choice.

Jesus taught of another resurrection. *"I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live"* (John 5:25). This is not a resurrection of dead physical bodies, but of spiritually dead souls in bodies that are yet among the living! Those **dead in sin** can choose to hear the voice of Jesus and live in Him. **This living involves a resurrection from the grave of baptism**

(Romans 6:3-4). This resurrection is one which each individual chooses for himself, so that he may be spiritually alive to God while still in this mortal body.

THERE ARE TWO DEATHS TO DIE

All will die physically. This is inevitable. Though man can lengthen life, he cannot escape dying. How sad when a soul leaves

a body. The body is prepared, put in a casket, and buried in the ground where it returns to the dust of the earth, as God forewarned Adam.

There is, however, something worse than this. There is a death to be feared far more than the death of this physical body. *"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death"* (Revelation 21:8). The eternal, conscious suffering of the souls of the wicked is called the second death, of which there will be no end, and from which there will be no rescue.

WHAT IS THE LOOPHOLE?

The loophole is to go beyond what naturally happens. We are born without choice, we die without choice, and we will be raised without choice. However, if we choose to be born again spiritually through baptism, and raised again to a new spiritual life, we will die only physically, while living eternally with God in that new heaven and earth.

Someone said, **"He who is born once will die twice. He that is born twice will die only once."**

Don't miss this loophole.

I Peter And The Grace Of God

WILLIAM WOODSON

THE life of Peter is a source of example and encouragement in the service of God. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry (John 1:40-42), with occasional failures (Matthew 26:33-35), he served with courage and resolve. His was the leading voice heard on Pentecost (Acts 2:14,37); his was the voice which won the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius to Christ (Acts 11:13,14; 10:44-48).

All the more, consequently, his inspired words in 1 Peter serve to stir our memories concerning the life of God's people today (1 Peter 5:12). One major theme of this letter is the bountiful and unfailling grace which God has provided for our spiritual well being.

Peter indicates that God supplies "all grace" and calls us to His eternal glory by means of the suffering one endures, with the resultant perfection, stability, strength, and spiritual resolve His will enjoins (1 Peter 5:10). The dimensions of this grace are defined.

for the student of God's word in four verses particularly.

- **Grace it was and is that made known the plan of salvation in Christ** (1 Peter 1:10). This plan of redemption was foretold in the prophets and culminated in the death of the Lord. The Gospel presents these great themes, the truth through the Spirit is obeyed, and one is born again by the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22,23). The echoes of Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius are plain.
- **Grace guides the people of God in responsible service** (1 Peter 4:10). As good "stewards" of this grace, God's people speak as do the oracles of God, minister in and by means of the ability God gives, and thereby glorify God through Christ in His example and instruction (1 Peter 4:11).
- **Grace assures His faithful people of proper standing with God** (1 Peter 5:12). This truth is learned by the words of faithful teachers and the written Word. Accordingly, through the strength of faith, resting on the truth learned and the power of God, one remains strong before God amidst the shifting times around us.
- **Grace will be manifested in the eternal salvation provided at the revelation of Christ at His second coming** (1 Peter 1:13). In view of this, one is to live a holy life, exhibiting the qualities of obedient children, recognizing that the holiness of God enjoins the holiness of His people (1 Peter 1:14-16).

Peter's introduction to Jesus began with the Lord complimenting him through the statement that he was to be "a stone" or rock of stability for the work of the Lord. How true this was; how valuable is his lesson of strength, faithfulness, and reliance on the grace and truth of the Christ.

Believing Is A Work

JIMMY JIVIDEN

TO claim you have faith without works is to confess that your faith is dead. The Bible affirms that "*faith, if it has no works is dead*" (James 2:17). It does a man little good to affirm his faith in Jesus Christ if he is unwilling to obey His commands. Profession without practice is a contradiction.

Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is an act of will. Each person chooses whether or not to accept the evidence and testimony of the Scriptures. Belief does not come as a miracle from God nullifying human choice. We choose to believe. This choice is prompted by the overwhelming love of God and by the reasonable evidence of the Scriptures, but it is still a personal choice—a work of the will.

The Bible shows that belief can be commanded. The Bible says, "... *this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ...*" (1 John 3:23).

The Bible shows that belief is an individual choice. The blind man that Jesus healed said, "*I believe*" when Jesus revealed Himself to be the Son of Man (John 9:36-38). The pronoun "I" is the subject and "believe" is an active verb. Language shows that belief is a willful choice. Jesus said that belief in His being the Son of God is a "work" that one *can do* (John 6:28,29).

Do not wait for some rational "proof" from a philosopher or a will shattering "miracle" from God to resolve your doubts. *Choose* to believe on the basis of what God has revealed in Scripture. It is *your* choice.

EGALITARIAN

OWEN COSGROVE

E GALITARIAN is a fancy adjective, an alteration of equalitarian, a word which describes the assertion that all people are equal. One of the great American historical documents, the Declaration of Independence, avows that "all men are created equal." The New Testament says that in Christ Jesus, there is "*neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, and neither male nor female*" (Galatians 3:28).

But these glorious statements speak of basic rights and of individual potentials. They do not declare **absolute** equality of all people. The truth is that people are very unequal, depending on the way they conduct their lives, and especially the way they react to God's will. All students are not equal in the classroom. All athletes are not equal on the playing field. All workers are not equal on the production line. And all people will not be equal at the Judgment Day.

For seventy-five years the dogmas of Marx and Engels

proposing the equality of all people and the coming dictatorship of the proletariat in a classless society utterly failed in the Soviet Union. There are great differences in the minds, morals, and manners of people.

Sometimes governments in social programs are determined to make everyone equal no matter how much they have to tax the industrious and give handouts to the indolent. But the Scriptures teach, *"If any would not work, neither should he eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Sometimes religionists are determined that everyone is going to Heaven, no matter how sinful some people might be, and even though the majority have not been washed in the blood of the Lamb. But the Bible says that God will separate the righteous and the ungodly as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32). All doctrines are not equally right; all people are not equally obedient; all ways do not lead to Heaven; and *"not everyone who says Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven..."* (Matthew 7:21).

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). An important part of spiritual maturity is being able to distinguish between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

No document pleads more for basic equality and hope than the New Testament. But it also shows a great difference between equal opportunity and unequal response. The crown of life is reserved for the faithful, and those who turn away from God will suffer the consequences. Oh what a difference there is between sin and righteousness, and between Heaven and Hell!

The Bible—Mirror For The Soul

CLEM THURMAN

TO see ourselves as we really are is the most difficult thing in the world to do. For most of us, it is hard enough to look in the mirror each morning and face that face. But to have to face our "spiritual image" is much more difficult. Most of us go through life kidding ourselves, and the Lord knows that. In the Bible He tells us, *"Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to*

save your souls. But be ye, doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:21-25).

Thus God pictures the Bible as a mirror, in which we "see" ourselves in the spiritual sense. So, as we study that word and do what it requires of us, we are changed: *"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit"* (2 Cor 3:18). The purpose of any mirror is to show us—to ourselves—so that we can see ourselves as we really are, so that we can change. That is also the purpose of God's mirror—the Bible.

IT SHOWS US WHAT WE ARE, IN GOD'S SIGHT

Quite often, when we look in the mirror, the picture is not all that pretty. The mirror reveals what we really look like, warts and all. If the face staring back at us is dirty or bewhiskered, it isn't the fault of the mirror—it did its job in revealing the condition we see. Now we must do our part, to correct ourselves so that we present a proper appearance. The same principle is true with God's mirror, the Bible.

Even with the "great heroes" of the Bible, God reveals the dirt. He tells us of Abraham's lies (Gen. 20), of Moses' impertinence and rebellion (Num. 20), of King David's adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11), of Peter's denials (Matt. 26). But we don't look into a mirror to see others. We use it to see ourselves. And most of all the Bible reveals us to us. When we read there of the sins of others, we cannot help but be more aware of our own. When we read of the temptation of Eve (Gen. 3), can't we see ourselves facing our own daily temptations? And the "soul-searching" that results is the mirror effect of God's word.

Sometimes we need comparison to be able to view something in perspective. Thus a tree that is seen at the foot of high cliff shows the enormity of the cliff's height. So let's measure ourselves as we look into God's mirror: *"But we see him, even Jesus . . ."* (Heb. 2:9). But just what do we see? The apostle Peter wrote of Him, *"For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered*

for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:21-23).

After the baptism of Jesus, He was "led away by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." But Jesus withstood every temptation without sinning (Matt. 4:1-11). We read later of Jesus, as our High Priest: "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Now, how do we look by comparison with Him? We hide behind the excuse that we can't keep all the commandments—but He did! And thus He proved that, with His help, we can, also.

The apostle Paul wrote, "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). And John stated, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). This is not an impersonal, secondhand type of "I can't help it" thing. If we will honestly look at ourselves as the Bible reveals us, we must say with King David, "I have sinned" (2 Sam. 12:13) and, "My sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51:3). When, by our study of the Bible, we see ourselves as we really are, it isn't a very pretty sight.

IT SHOWS WHAT WE CAN BE, BY GOD'S GRACE

A look in the mirror would do no good unless changes were possible. A dirty, whiskery face can be washed and shaved. And the sinner can also be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Bible declares, "Apart from the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). And John states, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). There is no "cleansing agent" which we might devise that could cleanse us. Only what God, by His grace has provided, can cleanse us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Because, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), the Bible states: "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8-9). We cannot save ourselves. And we cannot be saved by our own works and goodness. Only by the grace of God can we be saved from sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Just looking in a mirror doesn't wash a face. And just studying the Bible doesn't bring God's cleansing. Notice again what He said: *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves"* (James 1:22). Many folk today claim that Christ is their Lord, and that they are saved in Him. But He is still asking the question, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). The Bible says clearly, *"Ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth"* (1 Pet. 1:22). When we see, in the Bible, God's will for us—and do it—He saves us (James 1:25).

How are we saved by the grace of God? The Bible answers with clarity: *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood . . . Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life . . . Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 3:23-25; 5:1,8-10; 6:3-4).

We find in the Bible how much God loves us, and the proof of His love is manifest in the death of His Son for our sin. Because we love Him, and trust Him, we do what He says. And thus, by God's grace we become *"new creatures in Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:17) as we are *"buried with him in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life."* What results from the grace of God? The Bible says, *"Be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Rom. 12:2). That transformation is possible only as *"children of obedience"* (1 Pet. 1:14) continue to be *"doers of the word"* (James 1:22). As we learn, and do, we become like Him: *"Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory"* (2 Cor. 3:18). By the grace of God, we can be like Him!

IT SHOWS WHAT WE WILL BE, IN THE JUDGMENT

The Bible, as a mirror, reflects our spiritual condition. It reveals God's requirements for us, and we see in our lives whether or not we have met those conditions. If we are *"hearers only"* and are not *"doers of the word,"* then: *"There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries"* (Heb. 10:26-27). If we are not obeying what He commands, we can only expect to hear Him say in the Final Day, *"Depart, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41). And the Bible is given to us, as a mirror, so we can know our spiritual state.

But what a blessed assurance is yours, if you have trusted Christ enough to be baptized into Him (Rom. 6:3), and rely on His promise: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Then, *"in Christ,"* you are blessed with *"every spiritual blessing"* (Eph. 1:3), as you live in fellowship with God. Note the word of the Lord: *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:5-7).

But can we be sure of our spiritual condition? Let "God's mirror" provide the answer: *"And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:3-4). That is really a simple test, isn't it? And it is on this same basis that God later has John write, *"These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God"* (1 John 5:13). Just as we can know that we are lost, so we can know that we are saved. The Bible reveals which is our present condition, based on whether or not we are doing what God said.

God promises a day of judgment when *"each of us shall give account unto God"* (Rom. 14:12). And that judgment is described for us in that "mirror of the soul," the Bible. *"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10). Study the Bible for yourself. Know your spiritual state before God, see yourself as God does. And determine to be a doer of His word. Then you

can live with the assurance that in the day of Judgment, He will say, "Enter in."

Thoughts On The Sabbath

GARY C. HAMPTON

FIRST, we should note there is but one sabbath each week. It falls on the seventh day (Exodus 16:26). No one can change that fact. Despite what many say, Sunday is not the sabbath.

Second, the sabbath was bound by God upon the children of Israel at Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13,14). It had not previously been known or kept by their fathers (Deuteronomy 5:2,3). The children of Israel were to keep the sabbath as a continual sign of their covenant with God (Exodus 31:12-17).

Third, the law of the sabbath was a part of the law of Moses. It was delivered only to those who lived under that law (Romans 3:19). Jesus died to take the law of Moses out of the way because it was against man (Colossians 2:14). Like the wife whose husband has died, we are no longer bound to the law (Romans 7:1-4).

Fourth, the blessings we enjoy do not come from the law, but the Seed of Abraham, who is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:8-14). Just as Jeremiah had foretold, God made a new covenant. Instead of writing it in stone, He wrote it on hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

Fifth, the first day of the week was important to Christians in the first century. Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day (Mark 16:1-8). About three thousand souls were added to the church on Pentecost, which was always on the first day (Acts 2; Leviticus 23:15,16). The church in Troas, along with Paul and his companions, assembled to partake of the Lord's supper on the first day (Acts 20:6,7). The Corinthian brethren were to "lay by in store" on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

Christians understand the sabbath was to be faithfully kept by those living under Moses' law. However, we are not bound to keep it today. Under Christ's reign, we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, by partaking in the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week.



OUR PLEA

LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

1. That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18). That congregations of the one church of the Bible everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the Church. (1 Corinthians 1:10).
2. That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands of salvation are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His Spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.
4. That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men which contain doctrines and commandments of men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).
5. Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

Regd. No. 26921/71

Postal Regn. No.

DL(S)-17/3154/2012-2014

Licence to Post without Prepayment

No. U/SE/25/2012-2014

Posted at Lodi Road HO

Total No. of pages 24+cover

on 10-11 September 2012

Welcome to the Services of CHURCH OF CHRIST

B-350 (L.G.F.)
Chitranjan Park
Near Market #1
New Delhi-110019

SUNDAY

Bible Study	... 10.00 A.M.
Sunday School	... 10.00 A.M.
Worship	... 11.00 A.M.

English/Hindi

To:

From:

THE BIBLE TEACHER
P.O. Box 3815
New Delhi-110049