

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## Editorial

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

#### *All Scripture Is Given By Inspiration Of God*

SPEAKING OF THE BOOKS contained in the Bible the apostle Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Timothy 3:16). It is given by inspiration of God and therefore is His word, His divine revelation, which we may depend upon as infallibly true. The prophets and apostles did not speak from themselves but what they received of the Lord that they delivered unto us. (2 Peter 1:21; John 14:25, 26; 16:12,13; Hebrews 1:1,2). This is not to say that the human writers were mere robots or mechanical devices, but it means that the ultimate choice of the words they wrote down was not their own but the Holy Spirit's. The origin, truthfulness and authority of Scripture are due to God's power exercised through these specially chosen men. All Scripture given by the inspiration of God means that God gave certain men both the thoughts and the words which accurately expressed His will. Thus the Bible claims to be the authoritative word of God, which has been given as a revelation of God to mankind. It is not a book of certain religion, but it contains God's message for whole mankind.



The Bible, however, not only claims to be the inspired and authoritative word of God, but also justifies that claim in its very nature. For example, the remarkable unity of the sixty-six books of the Bible is a great proof of its supernatural origin. These sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament were written over a period of about sixteen hundred years, by forty different

men drawn from several parts of the world, who came from different backgrounds, and wrote in three different languages, yet they all wrote on the same subject or theme, without being disjointed. Their theme was Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman who was to come to crush the head of the devil who in the beginning had tempted Eve, the first woman on earth, to disobey God. (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16 and 4:4). And their one message was the redemption of sinful men by means of God's grace. (John 3:16; Titus 2:11). No explanation short of divine inspiration has ever been offered which explains this phenomenon adequately. Because of the wonderful unity of the theme and the message in all books of the Bible, this familiar old statement about the Bible is profoundly true: "The New Testament is in the old concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New revealed."

Many scientific discoveries which were made long after the original statements were written in the Bible, is another proof of the Bible's divine origin. For example, Moses, who wrote the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning, in Genesis chapter one, wrote in Genesis 1:9, "Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear; and it was so."" How did Moses know that there is one bed or one body of all waters on earth? As we know today that the oceans are all connected literally in "one place." Again, in the next verse, Genesis 1:10, he wrote, "And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas." Who told Moses that there are several seas, as we know today? He had not travelled the world. There can be no adequate explanation of this accuracy apart from understanding it, that Moses wrote by inspiration of God. Neither Moses, nor any other human of that ancient time, had any personal knowledge that could have led to such a statement.

Men did not understand the important role of blood and its circulatory system in the body until only recent time. Yet Moses, 3500 years ago, by inspiration, declared in Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." As recent as the time of George Washington, first American President, who died in 1799, as his physicians were ignorant of the important role of the blood in the body when they were treating him. They thought, bleeding a patient would rid his body of impurities or bad blood and restore his health. Because that was the prevailing belief among physicians and scientist of that time, as they had not yet learned or discovered what the Bible had been saying for many centuries, that "the life of the flesh is in the blood." His doctor did not know that he was draining away the life of George Washington into a bucket when he took his blood from his veins. He foolishly thought that most illnesses

were caused by too much blood or bad blood in the body. Now we know that this was a wrong treatment, for it weakens the body by draining away its life giving fluids. Instead of taking out blood from the body, doctors now give more blood, because now we know that “the life of the flesh is in the blood.”

In the book of Job, speaking of God, Job said, “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.” (Job 26:7), Long before men learned by scientific investigation that the earth is not resting on anything, but literally hanging over nothing, Job, who lived more than 3000 years ago had declared this scientific fact by divine revelation, as the modern astronomy teaches today. Thousands of years before Galileo, Columbus and Magellan learned that the earth is round, Isaiah, who lived in 800 B.C. wrote in his book, “It is He who sits above the circle of the earth.” (Isaiah 40:22). How did Isaiah know almost 2800 years ago that the earth is a circle or round? Men used to believe that the earth is flat, until about 600 years ago, when Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese navigator, along with several other sailors started sailing from Spain, and after three years the ships came back to the same place from where they had started. In this way he proved that the earth is round in the shape. But who told Isaiah more than two thousand years before Magellan discovered this fact? If not God, then who?

Today we know that this round earth revolves on its axis, thus giving us days and nights. But notice, speaking of His second coming, two thousand years ago, as we read in Luke 17:34-36, Jesus said, “ I tell you in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.” Note: when Christ comes it will be night on some parts of the earth; people will be in the bed, in some parts of the earth it will be morning, at the same time, and women there will be grinding; and it will be mid day in some places, men will be working in the fields. How did Jesus know about it, He had not travelled more than two hundred miles from where He lived?

The fulfilled many prophecies of the Bible is another strong proof that the Bible was written by God’s inspiration. With infinite details in the Old Testament of the Bible, the Bible thousands of years before foretold about the coming of Christ, His life on earth, His death on the cross to redeem man from the curse of sin, His resurrection, and ascension back to heaven. Genesis 3:15 says He is to be born the Seed of woman. (Galatians 4:4; 3:16). Isaiah 7:14 tells us He is to be born of a virgin. Micah 5:2 declares, that He is to be born in Bethlehem. The passages in the Bible that describes the characteristics of His life

and works on earth are too numerous even to mention. Psalm 41:9 and Zechariah 11:12-13 describe His betrayal by a friend, a disciple, even at the cost of thirty pieces of silver. Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 50:6; 53:1-12 and Zechariah 13:7 describe His sufferings on the cross and His death for the sins of the world. Psalm 22:16 and Zechariah 13:6 describe the piercing of His hands and feet. Psalm 22:18 describes the lots cast for His clothing and dividing of His garments. Psalm 16:10 and Isaiah 53:9 describe His being embalmed and entombed. Psalm 16:10 and 17:15 portrays His resurrection from the dead. Psalm 110:1 describe His ascension into heaven. The only people who do not believe that the Bible is the infallible, divinely inspired word of God are those who will not even check the overwhelming evidences which abundantly prove that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”



## CONFESSION

J.C. Choate

CONFESSION MEANS TO ACKNOWLEDGE, to make known, to declare, or to express faith in a thing. In this case, one is to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. According to the Scriptures this is to be public confession, made with one's own mouth.

Christ himself says, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32, 33). Now let us observe a few things. First, Christ said **whosoever**. It doesn't matter who he may be, if a person will confess Christ before men, he in turn will confess that one before the Father in heaven. Christ is simply saying, “you confess me and I'll confess you.” Isn't that fair enough? It would seem that it is. On the other hand, he makes it just as emphatic that whosoever denies him before men will be denied before the Father in heaven. That is, whosoever will reject him and his will on earth will be rejected at the judgment.

Paul says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). There are two things that we need to notice in this passage. To begin with, Paul says that this confession must be made with the **mouth**, and we have a scriptural example that we are going to use a little later to verify this. Secondly, the writer states that both the belief and the

confession are unto salvation, or in the direction thereof. No, one is not already saved just because he believes in the Lord and the same is true with the confession that Christ is the Son of God. But the next step does put one into Christ and that is the act of baptism. Read Romans 6:3, 4 and Galatians 3:26, 27. Let us now turn to Acts 8 to read a scriptural example of the public confession of one's faith. Philip had been directed to go and teach the eunuch the truth and the record says, "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what does hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:26-39).

In the foregoing reading it isn't very difficult to see what happened. The angel of the Lord commanded Philip to go to a place where he would find a certain man. Note though, the angel didn't go himself but sent a gospel preacher to relay the message. Philip found a religious man, an Ethiopian eunuch, a prominent man on his way back home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. No doubt he was a proselyte of Judaism. But he was reading the Scriptures, even though he didn't realize that he was reading about Christ. Philip joined him, taught him

the truth, and assisted him in his obedience to the gospel. But in order to obey the truth he had to be a believer, had to confess Christ as being the Son of God, and then he had to be baptized for the remission of his sins. Only after this was he able to go on his way rejoicing as a Christian.

The matter of confessing Christ is but another step in the direction of salvation.

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## GOD CALLS US TO BE HIS PEOPLE, HIS FAMILY

**Ron Bryant**

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS personal, but it is not individualistic. Each one who becomes a Christian becomes part of a fellowship of caring and sharing — a family of believers who belong to the Lord and to one another, and who have responsibility to one another (Acts 2:41,47; Romans 12:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:1-6,11-17).

If there is any truth set forth in the New Testament, it is that Christians need one another, even as in the physical body the eyes and the ears need the hands and the feet.

Paul wrote by inspiration, *"But now are they many members, yet but one body, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"* (1 Corinthians 12:20,21,27). In God's design every member of the body needs every other member. Likewise, in God's plan for the church and its functioning, individual Christians cannot go their own way.

Even when the figure of speech is changed and the church is spoken of as a family, the plan of God is still the same. God's plan for life in the spiritual family which was created in Christ is not one of individual self-sufficiency, but one of interde-pendency. The people of God are a family of interdependent members.

No Christian can afford to be careless about his or her place in the body of Christ, the family of God. This is basic, for it is God who adds the saved together (Acts 2:41,47). It is also vital, for it is bound up in the fact that *"Christ is the head of the body, the church"* (Colossians 1:18,24).

In this plan we see that God's appointed means of strengthening each believer, of protecting each, and stimulating growth in grace on the part of each, is in the context of a fellowship — a fellowship of mutual commitment, and mutual caring and mutual sharing.

It is in view of these great truths that we each are to consider our

purpose in the family, our participation in the fellowship — the work and worship, the ministry and outreach of the church. In view of *God's purpose*, we must not be careless about the worship, the fellowship, or the unity of God's people.

Undergirding all of this is the fact that God's eternal purpose for the church is bound up in the blood of Christ. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood! The church of Jesus is no mere social entity, of only temporary import! The church — the people of God — is a blood-bought family that God expects to function as **His family!** It is a family that is preparing for eternity.

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## ***IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES***

**Doyle Kee**

WHEN WE ARE IN THE Holy of Holies, we cannot at the same time be outside the Temple of God. When we are “in Christ” we cannot walk in the world. Either we are in the Kingdom of God or we are in the kingdom of darkness. We are either a child of God or a child of the devil. Holy Scripture does not speak of an intermediate relationship. Though the Lord does speak of one who is not far from the Kingdom, he cannot yet be declared “in” the Kingdom.

If one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not, and cannot, belong to Him (Romans 8:9). We are either among the forgiven or among those who still carry the unmanageable burden of the guilt of their sins.

This sharp distinction of only two categories of spiritual location or relationship is not popular. Tolerance is the acceptable word. To have such a black and white perception suggests a lack of love. It is considered a sectarian spirit. The “narrow” way of which Jesus spoke continues to elude many people in conception and reality. The debate of whom God will accept into the eternal holy sanctuary will continue. It is possible, though, to have peace and joy because we have personally terminated the discussion. Assurance comes from the historical fact that we have entered the presence of God through the blood of Jesus. Obedience to the gospel guarantees that we will never be separated from God's presence. Scripture declares, though, that this will not be the case for many, for “those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

We will either be “in” or “out” of the Holy of Holies. Thanks be to God that we can be “in” through the door of His Son. Let us work to point those who are “out” toward the only sanctuary in which it is possible to share the eternal presence of our Beloved.



# THE SEEDS OF EVANGELISM

Clayton Pepper

BEHOLD A SOWER WENT FORTH to sow the seeds of evangelism in the hearts of Christians so that more reapers would go forth to reap the harvest of lost souls.

The Sower told of the love of God for the lost, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

He said Christ had suffered in man’s place in order to pay the price of man’s redemption. *“But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

He quoted the charge given by Jesus to His disciples, *“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation...”* (Mark 16:15). He said these words apply to His disciples today.

He then pointed to the command of Paul, *“And the things that thou has heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (2 Timothy 2:2).

The sower reminded his listeners that all have been given talent and opportunity and that Jesus was like *“A man traveling into a far country who called together his servants and delivered unto them his goods.”* Later, he returned for a day of reckoning. The Sower concluded with the warning that Christ will surely return; a day of reckoning will come for each of us, to determine how we used our talents in the work that He left in our charge (cf. Matthew 25:14-30).

## HOW THE HEARERS RESPONDED

- ❑ Some seed fell upon hard and indifferent hearts and the devil took away the word lest they should believe and obey. **They thought it was someone else’s job, not theirs.**
- ❑ Others became antagonistic; **they said the lost were willingly ignorant.** If they wanted to hear the gospel, they would come to the church building.
- ❑ Some were prejudiced against **any change in their methods** that would reach more people.
- ❑ Some said, “You cannot reach the people here, **they will not listen.**”

In response, The Sower told of the great success that many congregations were having by **training soul winners who taught from house to house like Paul and the early Christians did.** *“And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ”* (Acts 5:42). *“How I shrank not from declaring unto*



*you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house' (Acts 20:20).*

❑ Some said, **"Where would we get the workers?"**

❑ Others said, **"We are doing all right like we are."**

The Sower concluded that they had rather let the people remain in ignorance and be lost than to put forth the effort to save them!

The Sower thought of the words of Jesus to those of His day, *"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves nor permit them that are entering to go in"* (Matthew 23:13).

### RESPONSE OF THE SECOND GROUP

The second congregation who heard the Sower said, "This is a great lesson; we should begin at once." So they did.

Their previous teaching in the church was largely void of how to reach the lost. **Their Bible class literature was primarily written to defend the faith, not to advance it.** The preacher said **he had not been taught how to reach the lost in school, except for public preaching.**

However, *in the presence of many doubters and in the absence of preparation* they began. Since they had not studied how to be effective, many mistakes were made. Some of the workers got discouraged and quit. Some criticized the work. After all, to them faithfulness to God had always been regular church attendance, good moral living, and helping meet the church budget. If many came to church gatherings that was great, if only a few came they were still content. Since this group made up the majority they began to murmur against the work.

The elders knew that what the sower had said was true, but **they felt that God had given them the right to decide whether they should or should not use all available means to reach the lost.** To them the work seemed to be *optional*. Since there were complaints, they decided to stop the program. Soul winning was no longer supported or encouraged.

The Sowers thought of all the times he had heard the denominations condemned for not respecting biblical authority. **This group had grossly disrespected the authority of God.**

The Sower thought also of the times he had heard those words from the last chapter of Revelation quoted, *"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of*

*the holy city, which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18,19).*

### RESPONSE OF THE THIRD GROUP

The Sower then visited another congregation where he sowed the seeds of evangelism. They responded enthusiastically. They studied very carefully how others had been successful. There was much motivation for several months. The preacher seemed to put a priority on bringing the lost to Christ. He and the elders were active, they led the way.

But with the passing of months, other things seemed to become more important. At last, little was said about reaching the lost. The leaders became less involved in providing the example. The preacher seldom mentioned sin or lost souls in his sermons. Workers in evangelism began to feel that evidently it was not a very important task. Making a living, business interests and material gain seemed to take precedence. Recreational activities again became the focus of group activities of the church. A great deal more was said about losing a ball game than losing a soul. Bowling, golfing, fishing, gardening and other hobbies seemed to take up the members’ extra time.

The Sower thought of how the Scriptures say that **the cares of the world, the deceitfulness** of riches **and** pleasures would choke the word out **of the** lives of many and they would bring forth no fruit (Luke 8). He thought of the Christians at Ephesus who had left their first love, and of those at Laodicea who were lukewarm and were told to repent (Revelation 2,3). Such heartbreaking thoughts of people who held God’s truth in their very hands, yet lost all!

### RESPONSE OF THE FOURTH GROUP

The Sower visited a fourth congregation and there again he sowed the seeds of evangelism. This seed fell on good and honest hearts. They were people of prayer and love for each other. They gladly received the Word. The leaders arranged for a group of key people to visit a fast-growing soul-winning church. They studied their program. They studied how they had developed an evangelistic Bible school

The preacher regularly read and studied church growth materials. He was always enthusiastic and sought to keep the congregation enthusiastic about reaching the lost. The elders and preacher realized that attitudes had changed and that they must have **an evangelistic plan for outreach** and **not depend only on programs designed to reach those who would come to the building**. They read books that would help them plan greater activities toward reaching the lost. They led the way. At least once each year they paid the expenses of key workers to attend a church growth and soul-winning workshop. Some

of the elders always accompanied the group.

The elders said that the Jerusalem church practiced daily evangelism and had daily conversions, *“Praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved”* (Acts 2:47). *“And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ”* (Acts 5:42).

They reasoned that in the past they had set goals for **attendance** and goals for **contributions**, but that they should also set goals for **conversions**. They concluded that all of our programs must have evangelistic content, and that *edification is not an end in itself*, it is **means to the end of reaching the lost**. *Benevolence is not an end*; it is a **means toward reaching the lost**.

The Sower then thought of the growth of the first church, the Jerusalem church, under the leadership of the apostles — how they taught daily and had additions daily. They longed for a renewal of the church which would have the spirit of evangelism to be like that congregation, with its first priority the reaching of the lost.

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## Do You Bring Out The Best Or The Worst In Others?

W.T. Allison

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY ago a sociology professor at John Hopkins University assigned a research project to his class. He told them to go to one of Baltimore's worst slums and study the environment of 200 boys. After they studied the habits, homes, and education of the boys, they were to predict how many of them would become criminals. The students' research predicted that of the 200 boys studied, 180 of them would wind up in jail.

Twenty-five years later the same professor assigned another class the job of locating the 200 boys to test the validity of the earlier predictions. Most of them were found. The students were amazed to learn that only 4 of the 200 had ever been in jail. The majority were solid, decent citizens.

In talking to these men, it was discovered that there was a common denominator in their lives. Each had been taught by the same school teacher. The sociology class located the teacher, now well over 70 years old, in a nursing home. When asked how she made these boys into such fine men, despite their disadvantages, she answered, “Why, all in the world I ever did was to be kind to them and love them!”

Love, when properly understood and applied, will produce changes in the life that intimidation and fear can never make. Successful human relations can be boiled down to a single sentence: You will perform better for people who expect the best from you than you will for those who expect the worst.

That's how God treats us! When we were sinners, without hope, He looked at us and thought we could do something better. He saw potential in us. We were worth something in His eyes. That's why He took the great risk. That's why He sent His Son!

As a child of God, redeemed by the blood of His Son, **do you bring out the best or the worst in others?** Love and kindness change people. Such a simple thing to do! Will you help change the world?

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## *Bystanders in Contrast*

Michael L. King

**THE OBSERVERS OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CHRIST** were divided from day one as to who He really was. Some looked upon Him as Emmanuel, which means "*God with us*," but Herod and his followers sought Him to "*destroy him*," possibly due to the threat of having his kingship threatened (Matthew 1:23; 2:13).

Peter, speaking of Jesus, emphatically stated, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*," while some of His other followers viewed Him as John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets (Matthew 16:13-16).

As Jesus began His ministry, confirming His words with miracles, "*his disciples believed on him*" (John 2:11), but the Pharisees, when they observed the works of Jesus, declared they were done "*by Beelzebub the prince of the devils*," in spite of the fact that "*all the people were amazed and said, is not this the son of David?*" Their division prompted Jesus to further proclaim that "*Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand*" (Matthew 12:22-25).

More confusion arose during the final week of Christ's existence than any other time during His earthly pilgrimage. Some said, "*Let him be crucified*," and others asked, "*Why, what evil hath he done?*" (Matthew 27:23). While He was suspended on the cross, the scribes, chief priests, and elders challenged His ability to come down from the cross, denying His being the Son of God. Yet, at a distance were numerous staunch supporters, women who had followed Him from Galilee to minister unto Him. Among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of

James the less and of Joses, and Salome (Mark 15:29-32;39-41). The women were decisive about Jesus and are often referred to as being “The last at the cross and the first at the tomb.” They surely witnessed the diversity of opinion of the two thieves. One doubtfully *“railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us,”* while the other thief said, *“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom”* (Luke 23:39-43). Finally, observers could not agree as to whether the body of Jesus had actually been resurrected or stolen (Matthew 28:7,8; 12,13).

We are now separated by almost two thousand years from these historic events surrounding the life and death of Jesus. As we observe, can you see a contrast in the onlookers which could cause division and leave those who are unbelievers confused and in a quandary? Christians must give consideration to the potential for mixed signals being given by their lives. Paul instructed the Corinthians to avoid divisions and to *“be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment”* (1 Corinthians 1:10). James reprimanded his readers for allowing their mouths to speak both *“blessing and cursing”* (James 3:10). Have we reached the time in our own personal lives when we *“ought to be teachers”* but *“have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat”* (Hebrews 5:12-14)?

The Hebrews writer insists that we need to leave *“the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us go on unto perfection (maturity).”* If we are unable to do so, then we are not any different from those who crucified Christ. Those who *“were made partakers ... and tasted the good word of God ... and fall away; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* *“Let us go on unto perfection ... and of faith toward God”* (Hebrews 6:1-6).

Are we active in bringing souls to Christ or are we repelling them by having an obstinate and divisive spirit? Which of the malefactors flanking Christ’s cross do we most closely resemble?

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## KINDNESS TO THE DEAD

Glenn Colley

AFTER WIDOWS NAOMI AND RUTH journeyed to Bethlehem and were first beginning to enjoy the benevolence of Boaz, Naomi praised his goodness with these words: *“Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead”* (Ruth 2:20).

It is easy to see what is meant by “kindness to the living,” but how was Boaz kind to the dead? The answer, of course, is that by seeing

to the needs of Naomi and Ruth, Boaz was honoring the desires and memories of their deceased husbands, Elimelech and Mahlon. When caring for their wives, he was showing kindness posthumously to them.

The thought of kindness to the dead becomes practical and even sweeter to us when we consider those Christians who will be tenderhearted to our mate, children, or parents we leave behind when we die. Our Lord spoke through the agony of the cross to ask John to care for sweet Mary after His death (John 19:26,27). Few desires are deeper or more sentimental than this. The Holy Scriptures contain many commands regarding the care of widows, for our Lord is very serious about how we treat those left behind when husband or father dies. Even before the Law of Moses, a Hebrew widow who had no children by her husband was allowed (and assumed) to marry the brother of her deceased husband, in order to be cared for and to raise up children (Genesis 38:6-11). Deuteronomy 25:5-7 commanded this union, and called it the brother's duty.

Exodus 22:22,23 shows us the Fatherly eye from Zion guarding the interests of those left behind when a husband dies. God says, *"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry."* Deuteronomy 10:17,18 says, *"For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."*

In our Lord's stinging rebuke of the wicked Jews He said, *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation"* (Matthew 23:14). While it would, of course, have been wrong to "devour" the house of anyone or to have defrauded others, Jesus specifically noted what His listeners did to the widows.

How much less does God care for the widows in our dispensation? No less. Paul teaches us to honor widows who are widows indeed, and desolate (1 Timothy 5:3-5). There were widows in the early church who, because of their poverty and need, were cared for at the expense of the Christians. This is proper and right today. We practice an impure religion if we do not care for widows and orphans. *"Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27).

Naomi, in praising the goodness of Boaz, taught us an added motivation and benefit for caring for widows: When we care for widows, we are caring for the living and the dead.

# BE STILL

Jessie Granville

ONE DAY, I WAS DRIVING down the highway with a friend. Glancing at the speedometer, I noticed that I had unknowingly accelerated to well over the speed limit. "Man, I didn't know I was going that fast! It felt like we were only going 55." He looked over to see how fast we were going and laughed. "You got velocitized!" he said, grinning.

I tried to look the word up in the dictionary, but it was not there. Yet, it is such an appropriate word for our modern age.

The world is caught up in such a whirlwind of activities. We rush here so we will have time to rush there. We fall exhausted into bed late, and rise early to get a jump on the new day so we can get more done. We aren't content to pile up phone messages on answering machines. Now we carry phones with us wherever we go to be interrupted wherever we are.

Even our children are caught up in the rush. They have school and band practice and football practice and cheerleading practice and drama and chorus and yearbook. We rush them from place to place so they can do more and more.

We have become "velocitized". We are unaware of how fast our lives have become. We just know that we have less and less time to do more and more things. We have no time to exercise. We have no time to eat right. How else do you explain the proliferation of all the fast food restaurants? We have no time to talk to our friends. We have no time to spend with our families. Even more tragic, we have no time to pray. We have no time to commune with God. We have no time.

We are exhausted. We come home and flop in front of the TV, hardly able to fix dinner. We stare at the TV in a mindless stupor, knowing that we should be doing, doing, doing; but we are so tired, we can hardly move. We know that we should be reading our Bibles and studying. But our minds are numb with fatigue.

Some strong souls manage to get up earlier in the morning to get some quiet time to pray. Others stay up later. However, most of us, I'm afraid, don't do anything. So the church has once more drifted into a time of depending on the preacher and brotherhood papers to tell us what we should believe. We hold on to old traditions, because this brother says we should. We grab on to new traditions-in-the-making because that brother says we need to change. We are once again in an age of being *"tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine"* (Ephesians 4:14 NKJV).



How do we regain our equilibrium? The world is pulling us back and forth all day long. Our brethren pull us left and right all day long. It is time for us, again, to learn to be still. *"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Psalm 46:10).

What good is it if we gain the whole world and lose our souls (Matthew 16:26)? What has all the rushing around accomplished?

If all we had was the hope of this world, our fever of activity would almost make sense. If all we had were these few years to do everything that had to be done, sure, let's get it done!

But for the Christian, the pressure is off. We are in a state of preparation. We have as much perhaps as 80 whole years to prepare for eternity with God and our Savior, Jesus. What we do every day helps or hinders that preparation.

What then is more important than taking the time to study God's word? What is more important than communing with your family and with God?

Let us take the time to stop the pull of outside forces and listen to God's word, *from* God's word. A Bible collecting dust on your coffee table is going to do you no good in Hell.

Stop expecting the world to condense all learning into a few magazine articles or sermons that can be inhaled in a few brief minutes. God's word cannot be condensed. It is rich and full. It is not a fast-food snack, but a full course meal. It needs to be savored slowly to be appreciated.

No doubt, it is a fast-paced world, and realistically, we have to keep up. But do take time for God. He is the only sanity in this insane world, the only quiet in the tumult. **Be still!**

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## THE WILL TO DISCIPLINE

Dale Grissom

PARENTS ARE MAKING A serious mistake when they fail to discipline their children. As a result, many children grow up to be very rebellious and selfish, bringing much heartache to their parents. We can read in 1 Samuel chapters 2 and 3 that Eli's children brought shame upon him because he failed to discipline them. Often, today, we see parents sacrifice to give their children everything they want, even if it is something they don't need. Parents sin against their own children when they do not teach them to be respectful, responsible, obedient, and hard working.

It seems we have forgotten what the Bible teaches about raising children, and we are following the ways of the world. I think we should take a serious look at the number of murders being committed by young

people, as well as the thefts, and the sexual promiscuity that is prevalent in the world. Many couples are living together out of wedlock, many have children born out of wedlock, and some choose abortion.

It's later than we think; we have become a society that no longer blushes at the awful sins of an undisciplined nation. Many have become so hardened by sin that they will not respond to the teaching of the Gospel of Christ.

We are living in a difficult time to raise children. Many young people are out all hours of the night and their parents have no idea where they are. The parents should have told them "no" consistently. Instead, drinking, drugs, and prostitution have become a way of life for many. It is going to take the best we have to offer to discipline and control our children. Their peers are unrestricted and are participating in all kinds of sins, making the job of Christian parents much harder.

Parents, please do your best to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) *"And ye Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Daily devotionals, prayer, and Bible study need to be a part of our lives and our children's lives. Parents, take back the control of your homes, and love your children enough to discipline them.

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## *Respect For Parents*

**Charles E. Burch**

WHEN GOD GAVE THE Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, the fifth one reads as follows: *"Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"* (Exodus 20:12). Not only did God command those under the Law of Moses to honor their parents, but also under the Law of Christ Paul wrote, *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"* (Ephesians 6:1-3).

God also set forth capital punishment for the stubborn and rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Christ referred to this when He said, *"... He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death"* (Matthew 15:4). Solomon wrote, *"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old"* (Proverbs 23:22).

God has placed a responsibility upon all to love, honor, respect, and help their parents. But the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day came up with a way to get around this command. In rebuking them, Jesus

said, *"But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition"* (Matthew 15:5,6). Instead of helping their aged parents with the means at their command, they claimed that it had been offered *to God*. Mark wrote, *"It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free"* (Mark 7:11). "Corban" means a thing solemnly set apart by a formal vow to the sacred use of the service of God, hence it could not be used by or for any other person. Their traditions had invented a secret reserve beneath this form of words, which they could use for themselves.

Jesus accused them of making *"void the word of God because of your traditions"* (Matthew 15:6).

What about today? There is probably more disrespect in our permissive society today than ever before. Yet, it is just as much a sin as it was when the law was given. We hear a lot about child abuse, and this is awful. But parent abuse doesn't make headlines very often. We can be disrespectful to our parents by our language, by what we say, how we say it, and even by the way we live.

God demands that we respect authority and teach our children that respect.

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## ***Talking Back To God***

**Harvey Porter**

There was controversy in the early church concerning the salvation of the Gentiles, the Old Law being set aside by God, and the Israelites basing their salvation on the fact that they were the seed of Abraham by birth and not by faith. Paul wrote on this great problem in the letter to the Romans. He said, *"But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, Why did you make me like this? Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"* (Romans 9:20,21).

The human family has had a long history of "talking back to God." It is not uncommon today to hear some who are not well informed concerning God's Word say, "The God I serve is a God of love and could not have made anything like hell!" They are in effect telling God that He could not condemn sinners. They have not studied the many

passages that speak of the justice of God. It is true that God is a loving and forgiving Father. It is also true that He hates sin and that His holy nature cannot abide sin; therefore, sinners cannot live in His holy presence.

Many have felt that baptism is not necessary for salvation, even though the New Testament clearly teaches that it is. Peter told those who believed in Jesus on the Day of Pentecost to, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven"* (Acts 2:38). Other translations often say, *"for the remission of sins."* Baptism *"puts us into Christ," "unites us with Christ," "baptism does also now save us," "baptized into the body (the church),"* and *"washes away our sins."* Sinful man should not tell God and Jesus, the Savior, how to save us.

It is not uncommon for man to tell God how and what he will give as worship to God. Some say that they do not have to worship at all, because God knows how they feel. Others declare, "Well, going to church never saved anybody!" The Bible says a lot about worship. Jesus specified that *"true worshipers must worship the Father in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). What a dangerous thing to make up our own way and then have the audacity to tell God that He should like it after we have rejected what He directed us to do over nineteen hundred years ago! The pot cannot tell the potter anything.

Paul closed the doctrinal section of Romans with these great words: *"Oh, the depth of the riches, the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."* Paul quoted from Isaiah 49 and Job 41. The heart of the quote is, *"Or who has been his counselor?"* God had never had nor needed a counselor.

God is filled with wisdom and knowledge. Puny man's wisdom does not even measure up to the foolishness of God (see 1 Corinthians 1:25). His judgments are unsearchable. He always makes the right decision, gives the right command. Truth is established by Him. Man can never call God into question.

Mankind's duty and response to God is to humbly obey His every wish and to walk in fellowship with Him by faith. *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."*

Please, never talk back to your Heavenly Father!

# He Came And Preached Peace

Dayton Keesee

OUR WORLD IS BREEDING GANGS, racial slurs, domestic fights, and conflicting lifestyles, all growing in the bitter pool of abused freedoms. An increasing number would rather react than relate, create conflict rather than cooperate, slander or shoot one another rather than serve one another.

With all of these problems, it is important that we strongly emphasize one of Christ's primary reasons for coming into the world: *"He came and preached peace to you"* (Ephesians 2:17). The context shows that Jesus not only preached it, He produced it! He produced it in all the areas where our generation is losing it!

In Ephesians 2:11 Paul urged his readers to remember a day when every brand of reaction and rebellion prevailed instead of peace. His punch line was that when Christ came into their hearts, all of that changed. Blessed be that day and praises be given to God when peace prevails where hurt and strife have been. We need to remember again what Christ can do.

Paul pointed to where racial (Jew and Gentile) and cultural (circumcised and uncircumcised) alienation prevailed, adding *"But now in Christ Jesus, ye that once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ"* (Ephesians 2:13). Racial and cultural differences disappear when the blood of Christ is applied!

Social differences also faded away as He *"broke down the middle wall of partition."* Why should the wall stay there since He *"made both one"* (Ephesians 2:14)? The media that gave such jubilant coverage to the wall in Germany coming down should telecast and broadcast Christ to everyone, for He can make us one internationally!

Christ removed doctrinal differences, *"having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances"* so that He could *"create in Himself of the two one new man, so making peace"* (Ephesians 2:15).

He even removed ecclesiastical differences by reconciling those differences *"in one body through the cross,"* which is in one church (Colossians 1:18). Would to God that every preacher, "pastor", and "priest" would be honest enough to surrender to Him in this matter, ending all church divisions to become *"one body"* — one church — as He built it (Ephesians 2:16; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:19-22).

Most glorious of all, He ended the human-Divine differences, *"for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father"*

(Ephesians 2:18; 1 Timothy 3:15).

Racial, cultural, social, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical peace — what a delightful and devoutly-to-be-desired concept! Christ can do it, did do it, and desires yet to do it! Let's call Him "LORD, LORD" and do what He says (Luke 6:46; John 10:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

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## ***Of Judgment and Wisdom***

**Joe C. Magee**

*"SO IT WAS, WHEN THEY CAME, that he looked at Eliab and said, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart'" (1 Samuel 16:6,7).*

Here we see a milestone in the history of God's people. Against God's knowledge of what was best for them, they had insisted that they have a king, that they might be like the nations around them. Saul, whose stature and appearance fit the peoples' idea of kingliness, had proved to be a poor choice. Now, in the choosing of David, the judgment of the people was not considered. Divine intervention was to make its impression upon Israel.

It is good that our powers of discernment are not limited to first impressions. When our knowledge of a person is enriched by time and association, we often find that those first impressions were faulty. We should recognize that life is a series of judgments; and the ongoing exercise of such tends, by the very nature of experience, to develop within us wisdom which grows with age. Yet we will never reach the depth of discernment which God knows.

God's judgment does not graduate from the lesser to the greater, from the unseen to the seen. He sees all of man from the very start. He knows his character, his ambitions, his weaknesses, and his strengths. He does, however, allow the instrumentality of man's devices to bring about His purposes. The drastic contrast between King Saul, who *looked* like a king outwardly, and David, who had the *heart* of a true and godly king, is a case in point.

This very principle of God's superior judgment is paramount in Christ's coming to earth. Who among men would have ushered in the King of kings and the Lord of lords in such fashion? Who would have chosen the Majestic Monarch from among the lowly craftsmen of Nazareth?

Surely we can see the parallel between the shepherd boy David and the Good Shepherd; and, seeing, submit to the wisdom of God.

Perhaps we can learn from this that God does not exalt men for their social station, but for their spiritual dependency. May we be reminded that the Lord's words, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*" were not the moral platitudes of mere man. They were wisdom from above.

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## WHO IS MY JUDGE?

SOMETIMES PEOPLE JUDGE AND condemn each other. Sometimes other people say, "Oh, we aren't to judge any person!" Who is right? Who is our judge?

The apostle asked: "*If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" (1 Peter 4:18).

The promise is made, "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Jesus warned: "*He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

It is important that we read the Bible and obey the words taught by Jesus. He says that they have been given to us as a guide to prepare us for living now and for passing that final examination.

No human actually has any right to judge another. But when the Scriptures are the basis for teaching, encouragement, or warning, that is God's judgment, not human judgment.

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## FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

**John R. Vaughan**

RAYMOND HULL STATED, "I have noticed, with few exceptions, men bungle their affairs." He cited a three-quarter mile long highway bridge, which collapsed and fell into the sea because someone had botched the design of a supporting pier. He noted some town planners who developed a city on the flood plain of a great river, where it is certain to be periodically inundated.

We all remember the tragic rocket explosion that took the lives of Christy McAuliffe and several others because of a faulty O-Ring.

The best and wisest among us mess up. However, when God



created man He did so flawlessly. No other machine can absorb the abuse pounded on the human body and continue to function without fail. But, if you are an adult, weighing 175 pounds, in 24 hours:

Your heart beats 103,689 times.  
Your blood travels 168,000,000 miles.  
You breathe 23,040 times.  
You inhale 438 cubic feet of air.  
You eat 3.25 pounds of food.  
You drink 2.9 pounds of liquids.  
You lose in weight 7.8 pounds of waste.  
You perspire 1.43 pints.  
You give off 2.6 degrees Fahrenheit.  
You speak 4,800 words.  
You move 750 major muscles.  
Your nails grow .00046 of an inch.  
Your hair grows .017414 of an inch.  
You exercise 7,000 brain cells.

No wonder the Psalmist exclaimed, *"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well"* (Psalm 139:14).

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## THE EARTH: MATURE FROM CREATION

**Betty Burton Choate**

THE SCRIPTURES STATE BEAUTIFULLY and clearly, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). God gave further details concerning the creation in the remaining verses of the chapter, saying that the work was divided into six days. At the end of each day, the work was pronounced as "good" — complete, perfect, ready to function as its own individual part of the whole.

On Day Three God said, *"Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear": and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.*

*"Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose*

*seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so.*

*"And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.*

*"So the evening and the morning were the third day."*

When the dry land was made to appear, it would have shown no fossils, no residue of life, because there had been none.

But when God called the dry land *earth* and commanded it to bring forth life, at that point in the creation process the earth itself was made *mature*, just as the animals and man were created mature and capable from the beginning of reproduction, just so, was the earth aged and mature in whatever aspects were required in order for it to perform as God commanded.

*Consider this:* Plants cannot grow without soil. Soil is made up of minerals and weathered rock which have been powdered to dust. But to this sterile base must be added *two* other ingredients in order for plants to grow:

- ◆ organic matter, composed of decayed plants and animals.
- ◆ living organisms which break down decaying matter, and which also take nitrogen from rocks and air to make it into substances the plants must have in order to live.

Encyclopedia Britannica reports that there are as many as *one billion such organisms in one square foot of soil!*

*Consider this:* If evolutionists are right, how did the first plant grow in sterile soil? How did enough "first plants" grow, in the first place, to die and then become the organic matter necessary for *any* plants to grow?

And those multitudes of varieties of living organisms, those tiny creatures, even down to the one-celled bacteria — those organisms in the cycle of life — when did they develop? Was it during aeons of time before the coming of the plants and animals they would help to decompose? Or did the plants and animals develop aeons before the soil organisms? Or did both populations somehow, mysteriously, develop at just the same instant (but "Evolution" requires "millions of years", remember!) in time, in just the same spot of sterile soil, and then spread from there?

Evolution doesn't answer this puzzle at all. It makes much more sense to believe, instead, that God created the soil *mature*, with all the components necessary for *"the earth [to] bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself..."* (Genesis 1:11).