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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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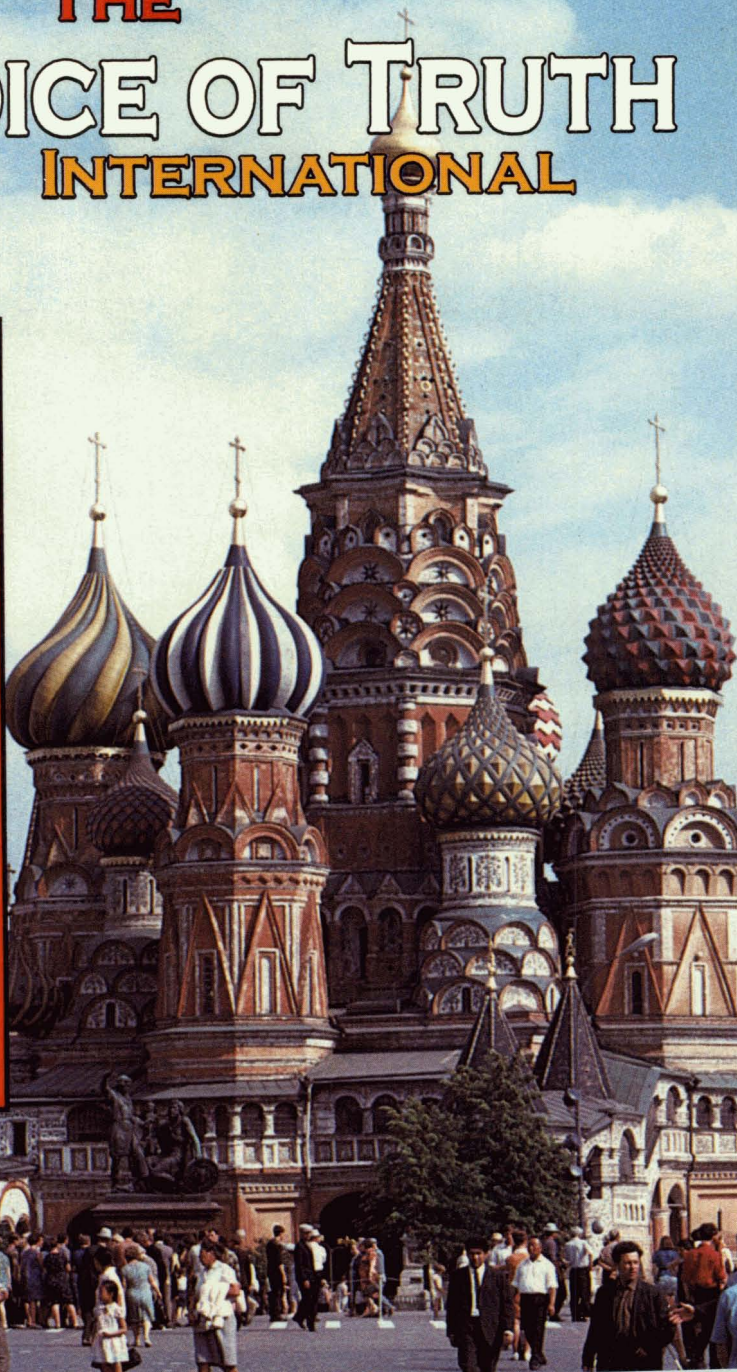
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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A WORD . . .

Have you ever heard anyone remark, "It's so hard to live the Christian life . . ."? It is true that God has not promised to shield His children from challenges and temptations. He knows that we develop spiritual muscles only as we face the realities of life and exercise the determination to do right. Admittedly, Christians who were deeply involved in the ways of the world are likely to have difficulty as they form a new life-pattern.

But if we want to see Christianity in its true perspective — if we want to realize just what an *easy* life it is — we need to look at our peers who are living by the morals, values, and concepts of the world. What hardships do the majority face? Broken homes and broken children, immorality and the resulting diseases, drug and alcohol addiction, compulsive gambling, lying, guilt — and too often life ends in premature death, brought on by sin.

God has given the guidance of His word to help us live safely in an alien environment. Compared to a worldly life, *the Christian life is easy!*



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TRUTH IS THE TRUTH

J.C. CHOATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What is truth? There are those who would ask this question to suggest that there is no such thing as truth, that there is no absolute, that the answer depends on the values of the one who is giving it, and that "Truth" varies from culture to culture and from country to country. *Is it really left up to each individual to decide what the truth is, what is right and what is wrong, what he will accept and what he will reject, what is good for him and what is bad for him?*

Surely if we believe there is a God in heaven, that there is a Creator, that he is all-powerful, knows all, sees all, hears all, and loves all, then we would have to conclude that He knows the facts, He knows our needs, and He knows what to tell us so that we may be saved and have the hope of eternal life. He would, therefore, not lie to us, deceive us, or mislead us. Neither would He tell one to do one thing and another to do something else. He would not have one message for one culture and another message for another culture. He created all of us, and He knows we are all in sin. Because of that, He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for the sins of the whole world. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

There is *one* God, *one* Lord, *one* Spirit, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* church, and *one* hope (Ephesians 4:4-6). We are also told that there is *one* way, *one* door, *one* gospel, *one* foundation, *one* name, *one* worship, *one* day of worship, *one* heaven, and *one* hell. In all these things, and others which could be added, there is ONLY ONE and all of us know that ONE means ONE, not TWO or THREE or MORE. Someone can explain truth away, misinterpret it, or reject it, but it remains, in spite of all, ONLY ONE. Fact is fact and truth is truth, and *it does not change.*

The Lord has revealed His will to us through the pages of the Bible. It is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17), it is Spirit and life (John 6:63), and is therefore from God and is God's word. It should not be added to, subtracted from, or changed, but left as it is (Revelation 22:18,19). God knew man's needs and, in response to those needs, He told man what he must do. With all people having the same disease — the disease of sin — God prescribed the same remedy for all (Mark 16:15,16).

The Lord knows what He wants us to do. He has told all of us to do the same thing, and when we do that, He saves all of us the same way, and adds all of us to His one church (Acts 2:38,47). God has spoken (Hebrews 1:1,2). He has spoken the truth (John 8:32). We are then to live by it, preach it, and take it to every creature under heaven.

Christ tells us that God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24). As the Lord's people, we are to direct our worship to God, in all sincerity and humility, and to worship Him as he has directed or commanded. Anything less than that, or more than that, will not be accepted.

The Lord's word, the truth, is said to be the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). We are exhorted to be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving ourselves (James 1:22). Christ says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). His word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35) and in the last day all will be judged by His word (John 12:48).

God does not lie; He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). He has always spoken the truth and will always speak the truth through His word. The gospel preached by the apostles in the first century is the same gospel that is to be preached today. It saved sinners then, and it saves sinner now. It is just as modern and up-to-date as the times. Why should man change it? Woe be to those who would attempt to do so. We can see in the inspired record what has happened with those of the past who have departed from God's truth. To change truth turns it into a lie, and a lie will damn all who follow it.

The truth, then, is the truth, consisting of facts, true information, and commands directly from the mind of God. Whether we like it or we don't like it, whether we accept it or we reject it, it remains the same. May God help us to believe the truth, to obey it, to live by it, to preach it, and never to depart from it or to be ashamed of it, so that in the last day we will be judged by the word to be faithful to God, and to be worthy of eternal life. †



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Byron Nichols
Managing Editor

Christians are different. Those of us who are in the church and belong to God, who have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), are different. We are not the same as people who do not have that relationship with God — we are “*His own special people*” (1 Peter 2:9); we are different. God and His Son both expect and intend for us to be different from the world.

Because we **are** different, we ought also to **make a difference**. If that is true, it becomes important that we know what kind of difference the Lord expects us to make. We must also somehow figure out how we can go about making this difference that is our responsibility to make.

We should make a difference in the quality of the world in which we live by the way that we live. Because of us, there should be more love displayed. 1 John 4:8 says that “*God is love.*” As His children, we are to be like Him; thus, we also must exhibit love.

We must be serious about making a difference in the morality of the world. The Bible is the Christian’s standard, our guide through life. The standard of morality found in the Bible will make a tremendous difference in our world if it is ever practiced by a very significant part of the world. But for that to ever come about, Christians are going to have to first live by that standard, and then teach others to do the same. The church, as God’s special people, can and must show that we are different because of our high standard of honesty and integrity. The world can be influenced by our being known for always being truthful and reliable in all our transactions and activities. We will make a difference for some if we will demonstrate to them that purity of life is not an impossibility, and that it most definitely has its rewards, even in this life.

You and I, as Christians, must set the example the world needs in showing compassion for our fellow man. Jesus taught us and showed us the need

for and the blessings of compassion; now He expects us to do the same for the rest of mankind.

Then there is the matter of hope. Christians are the only people in the whole world who can reveal the one realistic hope for eternity. With that capability comes responsibility – the responsibility to make a difference in the world by proclaiming our hope, Jesus Christ, to the lost. Multitudes all around us are struggling along with hardly any hope in this life, and certainly with no reason for any hope beyond this life. You and I can make a difference by giving them reason to hope now, but more importantly, reason to hope in the prospect of eternity.

In order for us to really make a difference, we Christians must be people of conviction. We must be willing to study the Bible diligently in order to know and understand what the will of God is. After learning God's will through His Word, we then must commit ourselves to living according to those instructions and principles. Those who are outside the church, even when they disagree with us, should be made to respect us because of the kind of people we are and the fact that we stand for what is good and right, to the best of our knowledge.

As an individual Christian, I can make a difference, not only in the world, but I can do the same in the church. I can encourage my fellow Christians to live more faithfully and zealously for Christ. I can very specifically encourage them by

my words of admonition and praise. I can also strengthen their commitment to the Lord by the way that I live. But I have to be consistent in how I live: they don't always let me know when they are watching me.

It is very true that we Christians do not all have the same abilities. We cannot serve the Lord in exactly the same ways. But, if we are going to change the world or the church for the better, we will not succeed in doing it passively. We can and will make a difference only through actively serving the Lord with whatever abilities we have, and not through living the philosophy of "Live, and let live." We certainly cannot force people to change their way of life or their convictions, but that does not mean that we should not be active, even aggressive, and even militant at times. The church can make a difference by actively, aggressively, and militantly promoting what is right and opposing what is wrong. Please remember, though, that all of our words and actions must be motivated by love and compassion, and must be accompanied by the same.

If my life comes to a close without having influenced others for good, without having improved the world, and without having helped the church to be stronger, then I will not have made a difference. If I have not made a difference, my life will have been lived in vain.

May God help both you and me to truly **make a difference.** †

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Readers:

We would like to hear your special requests for particular studies in the pages of this magazine.

Articles may also be submitted for review and possible publication.

The Editor

THANKS

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL, AND FOR HELPING US TO MAKE GOOD USE OF IT, WORLD-WIDE.

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JCC

New Sounds

The air

– suspended in the stillness
and the hush –
Seems stifled in this waiting.

My heart seems stifled,
too,
in this waiting,
in this house
grown strangely large
with its new emptiness.

My ears are hearing sounds
They've never heard
before:

The heartbeat of
a lonely house,
and sighing,
(Is it from possessions
left behind?)

The whisper of the
spider's loom
Weaving gossamer
and lace
where children played,
Entrapping soul
and house
and time
in Memory's web.

– Betty Burton Choate
from Sun and Shadows



The Heart, Soul, and Essence of Christianity

David W. Chadwell

In their evangelistic concern, Christians can easily assume too much. It is simple to assume that “everyone” knows right from wrong, distinguishes good from evil, and understands basic morality. Such dangerous assump-

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tions quickly betray the Christian teacher.

Christians' answers to these two questions are predictable: (1) What is the central truth of Christianity? (2) What is the foundation of Christianity? Informed Christians respond, "The central truth of Christianity is this: Jesus was raised from the dead to be Christ and Lord (Acts 2:36). Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity" (1 Corinthians 3:11). No truths are as fundamental to Christianity as these.

From these answers, Christians can make dangerous assumptions. Many assume that anyone who acknowledges these facts understands the meaning and message of the facts. Many assume the mere acceptance of these facts is sufficient knowledge of Jesus.

Because of these assumptions, many Christians make three critical mistakes as they seek to convert others. (1) They spend their energy and time trying to convert people to a religious system instead of converting them to the Savior. (2) They teach the unconverted more about the structure of the church than the content of Christianity. (3) They work hard to persuade a person to change religions, but do little to teach him about Jesus.

The whole of Christianity is based on a man named Jesus. He

was no ordinary man. Before His birth as a human infant, He shared the full deity and divinity of God the Father (John 1:1-4, Philippians 2:1-11). Though this divine One was God's instrument of creation, He became completely human. He hungered, thirsted, suffered, and experienced every form of human trial and temptation (Hebrews 4:14-16). He humbly endured the worst Satan could do to Him: betrayal, denial, desertion, gross injustice, abuse, indignity, humiliation, and the most degrading and cruel death one could die.

In what appeared to be the absolute defeat of Jesus and the total victory of Satan, God sealed the doom of Satan and all evil. Through Jesus' innocent blood poured out in death, God made perfect atonement for every sin that has been or will be committed (Romans 3:21-26). Through the blood offering of the sinless Jesus, the just God paid for all sin. He thereby obtained the right to extend perfect, complete forgiveness to everyone who places his faith in Jesus. The death of the sinless Jesus freed God's grace — God could extend mercy to everyone who placed his faith in the crucified Jesus.

Through Jesus' death, sin was defeated. Through Jesus' resurrection, eternal life became reality. God's power, which resurrected

GOD

Jesus, is the enduring proof that He has the power to keep every promise. Resurrection power declares God can redeem, justify, and sanctify any person who enters Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived in the flesh, experienced physical life, and died — just as do we — so that He might destroy sin's slavery and Satan's power (Hebrews 2:14-18). By sharing our full human experience, He qualified Himself to be the Christian's perfect High Priest as He serves before God in heaven (Hebrews 8:1, 2). Having been a temptable human, He perfectly understands us. Having been and being divine, He perfectly understands God. With perfect understanding and insight, He represents us before the God of mercy. In our weakest moments, we can come with confidence to God's throne of grace, knowing that we will receive mercy. That confidence is never founded in our merit; it is always founded in our perfect High Priest. In Jesus is the certain hope of the reserved, indestructible, eternal inheritance belonging to those who live in Him by faith under God's protective power (1 Peter 1:3-5). Jesus' resurrection makes that living hope a trustworthy reality.

Christianity is not built on the church, or an elaborate code of religious regulations, or a detailed system of theology. It is built on Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins and was raised from the dead. Only knowledge and understanding of Jesus give the church, commandments, and theology substance and significance.

Jesus built His church, but He is the Savior. The saved are placed by Him in His church, but the church cannot save. Jesus gave us many teachings to follow, but He is the Savior. In love and faith, the saved follow these teachings, but rote obedience cannot save. Through Jesus, God reveals theological truth, but Jesus is the Savior. The saved ceaselessly search for a clearer understanding of spiritual truth, but theological correctness cannot save.

One cannot be a Christian without understanding Jesus. A Christian must know Jesus, listen to Jesus, and be transformed by Jesus. Faith must begin with an understanding of Jesus' identity, teachings, death, and resurrection. Otherwise, it is not Christian faith, and it will not produce a Christian. †

David W. Chadwell is a writer and preacher living in Oxford, Mississippi.

*We walk alone unless we walk with God;
only God can know the inner man. BBC*

Napoleon's View Of Christ

Joe Malone

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) served as emperor of France as Napoleon I. His government was marked by such things as the proclamation of complete freedom of religious worship, the reconstruction of the school system, and by the famous group of laws known as the *Code Napoleon*.

Napoleon led the French forces in several wars, and usually won. On June 18, 1815, he attacked the British forces under Wellington at Waterloo, and the result was a total defeat for the French. Napoleon gave up his throne to his son and tried to escape from France, but failing, he surrendered. He was taken to the island of Saint Helena, where he was confined for the rest of his life.

Reportedly the following was said by Napoleon to General Bertrand on the island of Saint Helena as Napoleon had been rebuking the general for entertaining doubts related to certain human thoughts on eternal things:

*I know men, and I tell you
that Jesus Christ is not a man.*

Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity. We can say to the authors of every other religion, "You are neither God nor the agents of Deity. You are but missionaries of falsehood, molded from the same clay with the rest of mortals. You are made with all the passions and vices inseparable from them. Your temples and your priests proclaim your origin! Such will be the judgment, the cry of conscience, of whoever examines the gods and the temples of paganism."

It is not so with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is

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truly a being by himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truths which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things.

Can you conceive of Caesar as the eternal emperor of the Roman senate, and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? Such is the history of the invasion of the world by Christianity. Such is the power of the God of the Christians; and such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of faith and the government of his church. His arm has for eighteen hundred years defended the church against the storms that have

threatened to engulf it.

Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force! Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him! What proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absolute, he has but one simple end, the spiritual melioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union of that which is true, the holiness of the soul.

How wonderful it would be if all the people in this world held that same view of Jesus Christ and His church! †

Joe Malone, before his death a few years ago, had preached the Gospel of Christ for more than fifty years.

I wake with the lightness of heart

of dust particles dancing in the bright beam of the sun,
of the lilting trill of a bird's song on a warm spring day,
of Queen Anne's lace bowing and curtsying in the breeze,
of a little boy's squeals, flying too high in a swing,
of billowing white clouds sweeping the western sky,
of a glimmering rivulet rushing along in the sun,
of the joy and laughter of a family eating together,
of music, exquisite and heavenly, filling the still of the night,
of a prayer of sweetest thanksgiving wafting its way to God;

I wake with peace in my soul.

— Betty Burton Choate

The Last Prophet?

Bill Keele

Mark 12:1-12 contains a parable that Jesus told. The point? God had sent prophet after prophet, and they had been abused, even killed. Finally, God sent His Son. The attitude toward the Son — they would plot to kill Him, too! However, there is an interesting point that Jesus makes in Mark 12:6, *“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’”* The point? Jesus is it, He is the Son, He is the last.

If Jesus is the last, how could there still be men inspired to write the Scriptures after Jesus returned to heaven? How could Philip have four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9) after Jesus had ascended? How could Paul urge the Corinthians to be *“eager to prophesy”* (1 Corinthians 14:39)?

The answer lies partly in Jesus’ statements in John 17:8, *“I gave them the words you gave me,”* and in Matthew 28:20, *“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* The continuing content of the apostles’ message through the Holy Spirit was the teachings of Jesus. Mark 16:20 identifies their

preaching and the confirmation of that Word by signs. Further, Hebrews 2:3-4 tells us that the *“great salvation”* was first preached by Jesus, and God confirmed it with miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:3-4 affirms that He has given everything needed for life and godliness. Jude speaks of the faith *“once for all”* delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and Paul warns about preaching any gospel other than the one received (Galatians 1:8). These were temporary gifts (1 Corinthians 13).

No modern day new prophets. No new revelations. No further prophecy. The Word Jesus came to bring . . . the last. The message of those who were inspired after Jesus had gone back into heaven . . . Jesus’.

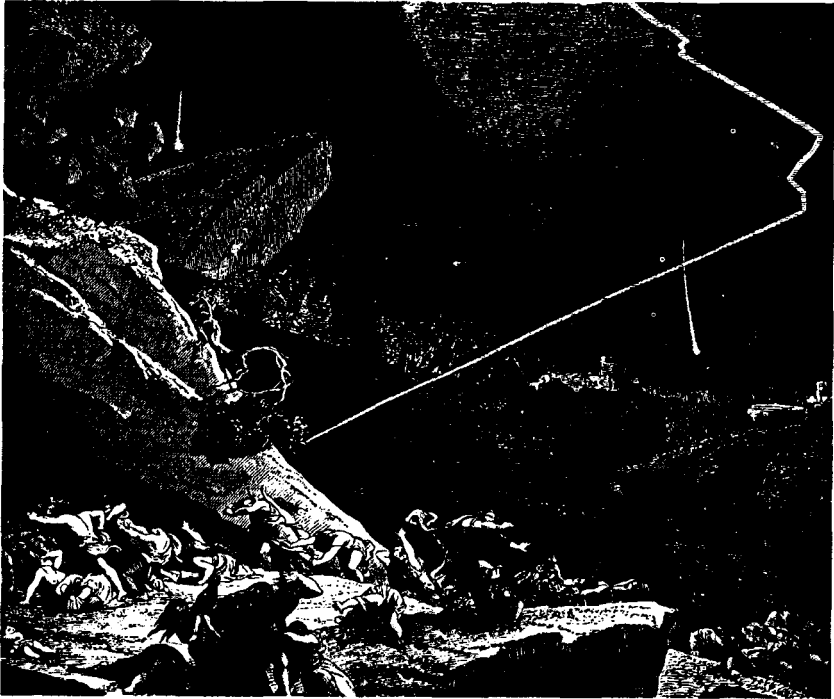
The writer of Hebrews put it this way: *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe”* (Hebrews 1:1-2). †

Bill Keele works with the church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

God

The Second Coming Of Christ

William Woodson



The Lord's Supper is observed with an awareness, among other reasons, that thereby we "*show the Lord's death till he come*" (1 Corinthians 11:26). How very significant is this realization that we look backward to the body and blood of the Lord and that we also

look forward to His coming again.

It is remarkable that the second coming of Christ has been the occasion of confusion and uncertainty. As one listens to or reads from some advocates of views concerning this event, there are numerous confusing words and ideas which are present-

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ed. Consider for a moment the following: *The Rapture, The Tribulation, The Time of Jacob's Trouble, The Two Resurrections, The Time Clock of the Lord*, etc. Such terms as the rapture, the time clock of the Lord, and the two resurrections are not found in the Bible; the *theory* which gives meaning to these terms is not taught in Scripture. There is little wonder that such views produce confusion.

The Bible, though, does not confuse us concerning the Lord's return. Note these brief statements concerning this vital theme:

1. **Jesus promised that He will come again** (John 14:3). This promise was echoed at the time of the Lord's ascent (Acts 1:11); at this return "*every eye will see him*" (Revelation 1:7).

2. **The time of the second coming is not revealed.** No signs of it have been recorded for us to use in seeking to set its date, whether soon or late. Jesus said, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*" (Matthew 24:36). He repeated that no one knows the hour of the coming of the Lord (Matthew 24:42, 44; 25:13). Assured of its reality, we wait in patience and hope for this fulfillment of Christ's word.

3. **The resurrection of the**

dead will be at the time of the Lord's return, stated in several verses to occur at the "*last day.*" Jesus said He will raise the dead on "*the last day*" (John 6:39,40,44,54). This will be the time of what Paul calls the "*last trump*" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Also, the judgment, said Jesus, will be at "*the last day*" (John 12:48).

4. **At the Lord's return, all will be gathered before Him for the judgment** (Matthew 25:31ff). Paul stated that at the Lord's return "*Then cometh the end*" (1 Corinthians 15:24). The destiny of those who hear the voice of Christ calling the dead from the graves will be determined by whether they have been righteous or unrighteous in this life. Of this, Jesus spoke concerning "*the hour that is coming*" (John 5:28-29).

These clear words concerning the coming of Christ, the last day, and the hour of the resurrection do not provide or allow for an elaborate scheme of human device concerning a supposed rapture, two resurrections of the dead, a thousand-year reign on earth, or a host of other purported teachings concerning His return. Better by far to rest content with the clear truth of the revealed Word. †

William Woodson teaches Bible at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

The Origin And Nature OF THE SOUL

Wayne Jackson

Does man have a soul? Atheistic materialism asserts that he does not. Religious materialists contend that man is a soul, but they argue that man "does not possess a soul separate and distinct from the body." Others admit that man has a soul, but they deny its eternal nature. They believe that the souls of the wicked will be annihilated. None of these ideas is correct.

The Existence of the Soul

The word "soul" is employed in various ways in the Scriptures. It may denote the whole person (1 Peter 3:20), or merely the life principle that animates a biological body (Genesis 1:30). On the other hand, it may be used of an intelligent, conscious entity that dwells within the human person. The Bible clearly teaches that the human being has within him/her an entity that is created "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26-27). That entity within the person may be called "soul" (Matthew 10:28), or "spirit" (James 2:26). This component of man is both intellectual (1 Cor. 2:11), and emotional (Dan. 7:15).

The Origin of the Soul

What is the explanation for the origin of the human soul? Different answers to this question have been suggested.

First, some of the ancient Jewish rabbis apparently believed in the pre-existence of the soul. Some other religionists allege that souls pre-exist prior to the formation of the body (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 3:5), so that when a body is conceived God dispatches a soul for that body.

The disciples once asked Christ a question regarding a man who had been born blind. "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (John 9:2). Though Calvin asserted that this suggested the doctrine of soul transmigration, such a view is not necessary. Some Jewish rabbis did argue, however, that infants could sin in the womb; they alleged that Esau attempted to kill Jacob before birth. There is, of course, no justification for such views and there is no biblical support for the theory that souls exist prior to the formation of the body.

Second, some suggest that the soul, like the body, is inherited from one's parents. It is thus alleged that the contamination of Adam's original

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sin, via the inheritance of the soul, has been transmitted to all men. Again, the Bible simply does not contain the evidence proving this notion. Moreover, this theory suggests some great difficulties. For instance, did Jesus inherit a tainted soul from Mary? And, if soul-sin is inherited, how could one be held personally accountable for his conduct?

The Bible actually teaches that the soul is formed by God and placed within the body; and the most reasonable inference is that this occurs at the time the body is conceived. Consider the following evidence. Jehovah is identified as “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Numbers 16:22). Solomon declared that it is God who gives the human spirit (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The prophet Zechariah affirmed that Jehovah “forms the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1). Finally, an inspired writer argues that God is “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews 12:7). Clearly, the soul is from God, not from one’s parents.

James affirms that the body apart from the spirit is dead (James 2:26). That would suggest that the body, united with the spirit, is alive. Since the body — tiny though it may be — is alive from the moment of conception, it would appear to follow that the human spirit is fused with the body at the time of conception, and leaves the body at death.

The Nature of the Soul

Does man possess an enduring soul, or an incorruptible spirit, that will exist forever? Yes. There is a soul that survives the death of the body, both for the righteous and the wicked (Revelation 6:9; Matthew 10:28).

The disobedient are to be subjected to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), which will consist of suffering (2 Thessalonians 1:9). There is, however, no punishment, or suffering, apart from consciousness. And yet, consciousness (knowledge, awareness) is a characteristic of the spirit (1 Corinthians 2:11). One must necessarily infer, therefore, that the spirit (or soul) of man will exist in an eternal conscious state.

Jesus once said regarding the traitor Judas that it would have been better for that man had he never been born (Mark 14:21). If Judas did not exist before his earthly life, and yet he was to be annihilated eventually, how does the Lord’s statement make sense? How is non-existence better than non-existence?

The soul is our most valuable possession; it is worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26). Let us, therefore, adorn the spirit with incorruptible apparel (1 Peter 3:4), befitting its nature. †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of the *Christian Courier* and lives in Stockton, California.

Where did God come from?

Bert Thompson

This question is often asked by sincere, well-meaning people. It is rarely far from the minds of youngsters, as well. On occasion, it is asked in the creation/evolution debate by those who deny God's existence. When pressed to explain where the matter/energy of the universe originated, the atheist more often than not responds with the statement, "You tell me where God came from and I'll tell you where matter/energy came from." He reasons in this way: "Christians cannot answer the question of the origin of God; therefore, I will not have to answer the question of the origin of matter/energy."

However, this will not work. First, the atheist is comparing "apples and oranges." He is equating matter/energy (something proven to require an origin in time/space) with God (Who has no origin). He is equating the non-eternal with the eternal. That is both illogical and impossible. Such a comparison (in terms of "origin") has no validity. Second, as a result of his mistake, the atheist has posed what is termed in philosophical terms a "nonsensical" question. That is to say, he has asked a question which makes no sense, and as everyone knows, nonsensical questions cannot be answered because of that very fact - they make no sense. The atheist has asked, "Where did God come from?" This implies that God "came from" somewhere - that is, He had an origin. But by definition, God is eternal. He has no origin, because eternal entities do not have origins; they are eternal. Not only has the atheist erred in making an invalid comparison (eternal vs. temporal), but he has also erred in ascribing some kind of "origin" to an eternal entity (God). God did not "come from" anywhere, nor is He "going to" anywhere. That would posit an origin, and possibly an end, for God, when in fact He has neither. †

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May We Never Be At Peace . . .

Until every soul on this earth has heard the pure Gospel at least once.

Until every member of the church has truly rebelled and revolted against Satan.

As long as there are those in the body of Christ who have given up on the ideals of restoring the church of the New Testament.

While there is even one member of the Lord's body who is uncommitted and unfaithful.

As long as our own community scarcely knows that we plead for the complete return to New Testament Christianity.

Until we have learned to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

Until we have learned to love our neighbor as ourself, to be concerned about his physical and spiritual welfare.

Until we learn to love one another as Christ has loved us; to help, encourage, and strengthen one another.

As long as there are those among us who put other things before Christ and the work of His church.

May peace come soon.

Can God have a Son?

Sometimes people try to bring God down to the human level. They say, "God was not married; therefore He could not have a son." But we must remember that the Creator of the universe is not limited in any way. In fact, the Scriptures say, "*...With God all things are possible.*"

So, yes— if God chooses to have a Son then, certainly, it is possible.

In Luke 1:35, the virgin Mary was told, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

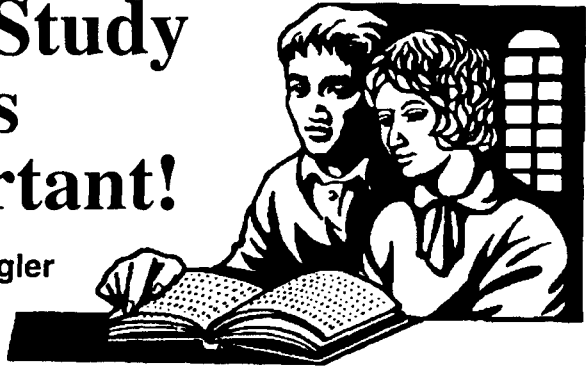
Why was this Holy One born as the Son of God? "...when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman... to **redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**" (Galatians 4:4,5)

How marvelous that *through* the sonship of Christ, *we are sons!*

**Next : Are all good
people children of God?**

Bible Study Is Important!

H. Joe Spangler



We Will Be Judged By The Bible

Every man that ever lived will one day appear before Jesus in judgment. The appointment has been set, and no one shall escape it (Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 2:1-16; 14:11, 12). It is the Word of Christ (John 12:48), the Gospel (Romans 2:16), and the Bible that will be used as the standard for judging. Thus, we see the great importance of Bible study. Without it one ignorantly and swiftly pursues a course ending in eternal punishment. *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15).

Salvation Depends On It

Without knowledge of the Gospel, one is yet hopelessly lost in sin. We must study God’s Word to know God’s will for forgiveness

and eternal life. *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life . . . ,”* said Jesus in John 5:39. *“. . . The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation . . . ”* (Romans 1:16). Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10), and one can only come to Jesus and that salvation who has first learned of Him (John 6:44, 45).

Faith Is Produced By It

The importance of Bible study is seen in the importance of faith. *“Without faith it is impossible to please Him . . . ”* (Hebrews 11:6). *“. . . Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Who would think of salvation without faith? Even so, there is no salvation without knowledge of God’s saving faith!

Growth Comes By It

Growth in all things spiritual demands Bible study. The context

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of Ephesians 4:15 (the preceding verses) reveals that maturity in Christ comes by knowledge of the Son of God. That His children may thus grow, God gave prophets and teachers to reveal His Word. In this 20th century we are the beneficiaries of their first century writings – inspired writings (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 3:15, 16). Real growth comes only by receiving the milk and meat of God's Word, and then exercising oneself therein (Hebrews 5:13, 14). *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2).

Happiness Is A Fruit Of It

Among the fruits of the Spirit are joy and peace (Galatians 5:22). This peace is of the greatest kind (Philippians 4:7), such as no other joy or peace can surpass. The medium by which the Spirit imparts this joy and peace is *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"*

(Ephesians 6:17). The truth is that mortal man is unable to produce any lasting, true happiness. Only the Eternal God, Creator of all that exists, is able to provide lasting fulfillment for His creatures. *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jeremiah 10:23). *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105). *"Blessed is the man that . . . his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night . . ."* (Psalm 1:1-2).

In view of the importance of Bible study, will you not make the coming months and years much more profitable by making the Bible your meditation day and night? *"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver"* (Psalm 119:72). †

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To be exact . . .

The company's employment office was checking on an applicant's list of references. "How long did this man work for you?" a former employer was asked.

"About 4 hours," was the quick reply.

"Why, he told us he'd been there a long time," the astonished caller said.

"Oh, yes," answered the ex-employer, "He'd been here for two years."

Many today can say, "Yes, I've been in the church for years." But we wonder, if we could check with their employer, the God of heaven, if we would find out their exact amount of service was considerably less than they had represented.

What Is the Standard By Which Men Judge?

Dr. Earl D. Edwards

The New Testament is, among other things, the most precious document we have regarding the origin of Christianity. And among the New Testament books which contain the greatest amount of historical data regarding the founding and development of the church, the book of Acts is undoubtedly in "first place."

Acts of the Apostles was written around 60 A.D. by a medical doctor named Luke who traveled a great deal with the Apostle Paul (see Acts 16:16-21 and Colossians 4:14). Though his work had previously been attacked by critics of the Bible, it is now recognized by almost everyone that Luke was a first rate historian. In fact, the famous English historian and archeologist, Sir William Ramsey, in his book called **St. Paul the Traveler**, which was published in London in 1897, tells (pp. 4-10) how he doubted the value of Luke's historical data until he did several archeological digs (especially in Asia Minor) and found Luke's information to be unusually precise.

It is in this book of Acts, composed by Luke, that we find the

apostle Paul being accused by non-Christian Hebrews as being "a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (24:5, New American Standard Bible). Of course the only real leader (in the sense of head) of the New Testament church is Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18), but what we want to note here is that the young church is called "the sect of the Nazarenes." It is understandable that the disciples would be called Nazarenes because Nazareth was Jesus' home town (Matthew 2:23), but why are they thought of as a *sect*?

The Greek work from which we translate "sect" is "(H)AIRESIS" (=heresy), and one of its definitions is "heretical sect" (Baur, Arndt and Gingrich, **Greek-English of the New Testament**, P. 23)! But if Paul, as most of the Christian world maintains, was one of the most authoritative representatives of Christianity in the first century, why is he here practically accused of being a heretic?

The proper response to this question is to be found in the fact that the leaders of the Israelite peo-

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ple at that time, though they called themselves “God’s elect people,” were really in disobedience to God to the point of calling Paul and others who rendered *true obedience* “heretics.” So, for those religious leaders, God’s *real* children were considered heretics! In fact, a bit later in that same chapter (24:14), Paul, in making defense for himself, says, “. . . but this I admit to you, that according to the way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our Fathers” Paul doesn’t admit that he *is* a part of a sect, but he does admit to being a part of what those religious leaders *called* a sect.


All of this is said in order to underline a significant truth: **The true standard by which we ought**

to judge any group or doctrine is not the consensus of the religious leaders of the particular time or country. If you accept the thinking of men as the authority, you must accept that Paul was a heretic!

Then *what* is the true standard by which we must judge a particular doctrine or set of doctrines? There is only one such standard, the truth. Jesus prayed to the Father saying, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

God help us to understand that the only way to test any doctrine is not its popularity, but rather its correspondence (or lack of it) to the truth, the word of God. †

Dr. Earl D. Edwards, Director of Graduate Studies in Bible at Freed Hardeman University, Henderson, TN.



Discover the Joy

Discover the joy of giving. Christians discover giving as a natural response to God’s love. We discover the privilege of extending that love throughout the year as our gifts to the church bring joy to other’s lives, and to our own lives.

Our gifts may start as ordinary dollars, but they transform into eternal expressions of God’s love through missions, education, worship, and more.

Rediscover the privilege of giving, and discover the joy.

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Loving God Means Loving His Word

Kenneth McClain

There is no greater way we can show our love for God and His Son than to love His Word. 2 John 1:6 says, “. . . *this is love that we walk after his commandments . . .*” Jesus also said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). God’s Word contains all things that man needs in order to live a life that pleases God. It contains all things necessary to prepare us to live eternally with God and all the redeemed in heaven. How can we show that we love His Word?

We show that we love God’s Word by accepting it as inspired, rather than the words of men. Paul declares that “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, when we deny the inspiration of the Scripture, we not only show a lack of honor and respect for it, but we make God a liar, because His Word says it is inspired.

We show that we love God’s Word by obeying what it says.

The Hebrew writer describes God’s Word as “. . . *quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . .*” (Hebrews 4:12). In Hebrews 5:8, 9 we learn that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to everyone who obeys Him.

We show that we love God’s Word when we attend the services of the church. God’s Word teaches us not to forsake the assembling of the saints (Hebrews 10:25) When we fail to assemble, we violate this command and must make it right in God’s sight. If we have the right attitude toward God’s Word, attending services will be a blessing, not an obligation. It will not be a “Do I have to?” situation. The services will be an opportunity to be inspired to do greater things in the service of God, and we will look forward to the next service.

We show that we love God’s Word when we tell others about it. When we tell others about God’s Word, we are telling the wonderful

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story of Jesus and His love for sinful man. Through obedience we have been set free from sin, and as Christians, we enjoy a new life in God's Son. No greater deed can be done for sinful man than to introduce him to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, and to help him understand the salvation He offers .

We show that we love God's Word as parents when we teach our children to have proper respect for the Scripture. Parents, God has placed a tremendous responsibility upon you to bring up your children in the way of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Let us give our children a good foundation to build on, so that when they are adults, they will have the proper attitude toward God, His Word, His church, and going to heaven.

We show that we love God's Word when we are faithful to it. Have you been faithful to obey every commandment of God? David said, "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*" (Psalm 119:105). Will you let God's Word be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path? If you have not been faithful to the things mentioned above, why not begin now to show your love for God and His Word? †

Kenneth McClain labors for the Lord in Indianapolis, Indiana, U. S. A.

Jesus, friend of sinners

Jesus, friend of sinners,
Be a friend to me;
I am weak and weary;
Let me lean on Thee.

Jesus, perfect teacher,
Help me learn Thy ways,
Guide my feeble footsteps
To Thy holy praise.

Jesus, loving shepherd,
Guard my wand'ring soul,
May I follow meekly
Under Thy control.

Jesus, foe of evil,
Help me win the fight;
May Thy weapons conquer
All that hates the right.

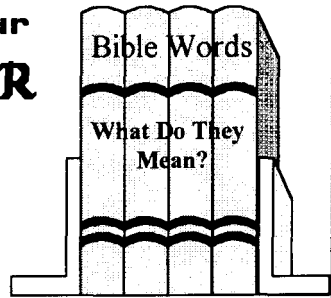
Jesus, Lord of Glory,
Hear this earnest plea:
After Life's brief story,
Take me home to Thee.

— Norman Gipson

A FRIEND is one who answers when you call — who often answers before you call.

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER

BY FENTER NORTHERN



Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context of Romans 12:1-3. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

1. **mercies** *n.*—A: benevolent gifts. B: Where compassion resides. C: forgiveness. D: Gratitude.
2. **present** *v.*—A: to place in close view. B: A gift. C: military review. D: to answer a roll call.
3. **living** *v.*—A: breathing. B: conscious C: active; not passive. D: not dead.
4. **sacrifice** *n.*—A: Slay illicit desires and offer a clean conscience to God. B: Kill an animal. C: to do without. D: Give a contribution to the church.
5. **holy** *adj.*—A: complete. B: fellowship with God. C: Clean — being without a spot. D: truly.
6. **acceptable** *adj.*—A: expensive. B: excellent. C: Well pleasing. D: approved.
7. **reasonable** *adj.*—A. logical. B: spiritual devotion. C: comprising; D: approval.
8. **service** *n.*—A: a church worship. B: the armed forces. C: work performed for another. D: ministry performed according to the requirements of God.
9. **conformed** *v.*—A: fashioned by a pattern. B: to be bent. C: to be aligned. D: molded
10. **transformed** *v.*—A: to carry across a line. B: to cross over into a different state of mind. C: converted. D: become maimed.
11. **renewing** *n.*—A: refinancing a note. B: refurbishing. C: change for the better. C: regret.
12. **prove** *v.*—A: personally examine for genuineness. B: offer evidence. C: testify on the behalf of an innocent person. D: to place under stress.
13. **good** *adj.*—A: pleasant to the taste. B: personal approval. C: the excellent nature of something as distinguished from others. D: pleasant
14. **perfect** *adj.*—A: mature; consummate virtue. B: exact. C: without sin D: adequate
15. **will** *n.*—A: a document of testament. B: decree. C: dominance D: pleasure of God.
16. **grace** *n.*—A: favor; holy influence on one's soul. B: extension on a note or insurance policy. C: to narrowly escape danger. D: a prayer before meals.
17. **soberly** *v.*— A: not inebriated. B: mentally alert. C: somber. D: to be moderate in self thinking; sound mind.

"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"



1. **mercies**—(Gk. oik-tirmos) B: Where compassion resides (here, the tender mercies, or the emotions of God; sometimes "bowels" in the KJV)
2. **present**—(Gk. paristemi) A: To place in close view. (As a life displayed on a sacrificial altar in view of God for his inspection)
3. **living** — (Gk. zao) C: Active, not passive. (Valid faith is always active, not just resigned. Such a person is living a godly life daily.)
4. **sacrifice**—(Gk. thusia) A: Slay illicit desires and offer a clean conscience to God.
5. **holy**— (Gk. hagios; akin to hagnos) C: Clean — being without a spot. (As Abel who offered an excellent gift, and not as Cain who offered less than best and have his offering rejected.)
6. **acceptable**—(Gk. luarestos) C: Well pleasing. (because the heart has demonstrated that it is concerned with more than meeting minimal standards).
7. **reasonable**—(Gk. logikos) B: Spiritual devotion (rendered from the heart in the spirit always with a clean conscience).
8. **service**— (Gk. latria) D: ministry performed according to the requirements of God. (as Noah, who received grace and did all things as God told him to do; or as Enoch who walked with God.
9. **conformed**—(Gk. suschematizo) A: Fashioned by a pattern; (in this context, be not fashioned after the pattern of the world.)
10. **transformed**—(Gk. metamorphoo) B: To cross over into a different state of mind. (the idea in context being to take on a new character after the example of Jesus.
11. **renewing**—(Gk. anakainosis) C: change for the better (a change from a selfish mind to a God pleasing mind.
12. **prove**—(Gk. dokimazo) A: Personally examine for genuiness.
13. **good**—(Gk. agathos) C: The excellent nature of something as distinguished from others.
14. **perfect**— (Gk. telios) A: Mature; consummate virtue. (not without any imperfection, but reaching a state of weighing all decisions by God's standards and striving to walk thereby)
15. **will**--- (Gk. thelma) D: The pleasure of God; what God would do through one in any given circumstance
16. **grace**— (Gk. charis) A: Favor; holy influence on one's soul.
17. **soberly**— (Gk. sophroneo) D: to be moderate in self thinking; sound mind.

(Greek source: Strong's Greek Lexicon; Kittel's TWDOT & NT)

Vocabulary Scale

- 7—10 correct.....good
11—13 correct.....Bible Student
14—15 correct.....Bible Scholar

The Grace of God

Leon Barnes

Titus 2:11-15

One of my favorite songs is, "His Grace Reaches Me." It is so easy to think God's grace is great enough to help other people around me who haven't done as many things wrong as I have, but not me! Our own failures often seem so great that we can't imagine God being willing to forgive sins like ours.

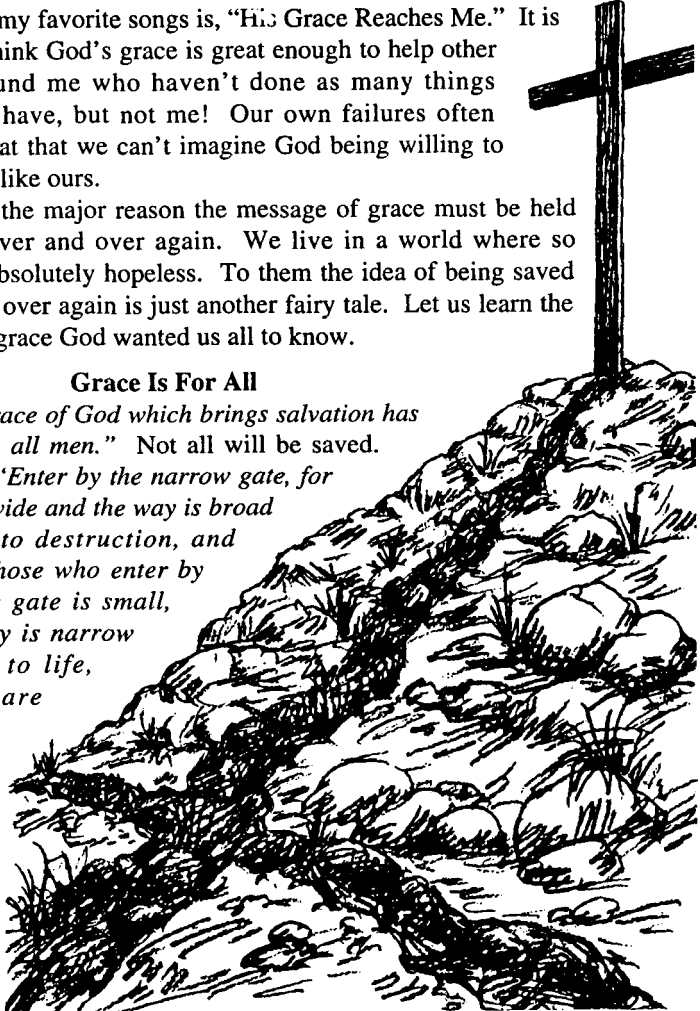
That is the major reason the message of grace must be held before us over and over again. We live in a world where so many feel absolutely hopeless. To them the idea of being saved and starting over again is just another fairy tale. Let us learn the message of grace God wanted us all to know.

Grace Is For All

"The grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men." Not all will be saved.

Jesus said, *"Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it"*

(Matthew 7:13,14). Grace has appeared to all. It has even made sal-



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

vation possible for all. But not all will take advantage of God's marvelous offer to be saved.

Grace appears to all, because Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every person (Hebrews 2:9). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he spoke of himself as the "*chief of sinners*." He said he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious to the cause of Christ. But God, in order to show the abundance of His grace, saved Paul so that all could learn that their sins, too, could be forgiven by God's overwhelming grace.

Grace Teaches Us To Change When We Are Saved

Don't mistake the idea of being saved *by grace* as a cheap grace which makes no demands on the one who is saved. All sinners can be forgiven, but they cannot remain saved if they do not change in their lives.

Grace teaches us to "*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts or desires*."

Being saved by grace demands that we stop living by senseless desires.

We can change with God's help, and He demands that we do it.

Grace teaches us to not only stop doing the wrong, but to begin living a different way. We are to

live "*sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age*."

Grace Gives Us Something To Anticipate

God wants the knowledge that Jesus is coming again to be a matter of joy and anticipation for Christians, instead of something to frighten them into submission. He speaks of Christ's coming as the "*blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*."

We have such a hard time looking at our own lives through the eyes of grace. We are too afraid that when He comes He will look at us through the eyes of judgment and say we aren't good enough for heaven. If only we could grasp the point that we never will be good

Grace means God has extended to each one of us the opportunity to know His truth and to be saved, not because of *our* goodness but because of *His* goodness. See Titus 2:11-14.

enough, even if we lived a million years and worked at improving every day. It will still be the grace of God with the cleansing blood of Jesus which makes the difference

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

for us when He comes.

Wouldn't it be marvelous if we could live so close to the Lord every day that we could think of His coming again and cry out with John, "*Even so, Come Lord Jesus*"? He wants us to anticipate His coming with joy.

Grace Means We Are Special

Christ gave Himself to purchase us. He redeemed us in that He bought us back from the horrible slavery of sin. Now our choice is to live as free people for Him, or to pick up Satan's chains all over again and live for him as voluntary slaves.

Christ bought us to purify us for Himself "*a people for His own*

possession." All the world belongs to God, but Christians belong to Him in a special way. We are His special possession. But note what sets us apart from the world: we are to be "*zealous for good deeds.*" What a marvelous thought to see ourselves as the special possession of God.

Nothing is a more beautiful message than the message of grace by which we can all be saved. But never mistake grace for a religion which makes no demands on those who are saved. Sometimes we have just misunderstood what grace really means about salvation. †

Leon Barnes preaches in Little Rock, Arkansas, U. S. A.



I Have Found Today

I've shut the door on yesterday,
Its sorrows and mistakes;
I've locked within its gloomy walls
Past failures and heartaches.
And now I throw the key away
To seek another room.
And furnish it with hope and smiles
And every springtime bloom.
No thought shall enter this abode
That has a hint of pain,
And worry, malice and distrust
Shall never herein reign.
I've shut the door on yesterday
And thrown the key away —
Tomorrow holds no doubt for me
Since I have found today!

— Unknown

Sanctification

Max Patterson

There are those who claim that God chose us (Christians) through justification (the first work of grace) to sanctification (the second work of grace). In other words, one is justified and then he is sanctified. However, Paul says, *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”* (2 Thessalonians 2:13). If sanctification comes after justification, then so would belief of the truth.

The man who is righteous is upright, just. He does what is right in the sight of God: *“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified”* (Romans 2:13). John said, *“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous”* (1 John 3:7).

The man who is sanctified is made holy or just, consecrated. He is set aside for holy and dedicated purposes. God has forgiven this person and set him aside for His holy purposes. When we were baptized into Christ, God sanctified and justified us (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Actually, being justified or obtaining the forgiveness of sins, and being sanctified are involved in the same process, Acts 26:18. Just as when one becomes a member of the church he also becomes a child of God, so when one is forgiven or justified one is also set apart for God’s service, or sanctified.

How wonderful it is that our sins can be forgiven and that we can be considered a part of the great work of God on earth! †

Max Patterson preaches for the Hillcrest congregation in Neosho, Missouri, U. S. A.

J beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1, 2)

How Can We Know We Have Repented?

O.P. Baird

God wants everyone to repent, because all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and all who have sinned will perish if they do not repent. God's Word tells us this in 2 Peter 3:9:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, . . . but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Therefore, it is very important to know what it means to repent.

Repentance is not sorrow for sin, but the right kind of sorrow causes a person to repent, "*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death*" (2 Corinthians 7:10). If a man is sorry he has sinned just because he suffered for it, that is sorrow of the world. If he has godly sorrow, he is sorry because he hates sin and loves God.

Repentance is not the change in

conduct, but repentance causes the change in conduct.

Jesus said,

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went" (Matthew 21:28-29). He repented first, and then went.

Thus we see that repentance is the change in the heart which is caused by godly sorrow. The heart controls the actions, so the change in heart results in a change in conduct or actions.

Some Tests of Repentance

Knowing the scriptural meaning of repentance, we can apply some tests to see if we have repented toward God.

* IF we have repented, we hate sin – all sin. We hate it because it is evil in the sight of God. We hate what God hates.

* IF we have repented, we love righteousness because it pleases God. We love what God loves.

* IF we have repented, we will be grieved instantly when we realize we have violated God's will in anything.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

* IF we have repented, all that is necessary to cause us to refuse to do something is to know that it displeases God, who loves us.

* IF we have repented, all that is necessary to cause us to do a thing is to know that it is God's will that we do it.

* IF we have repented, we "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*" (Matthew 5:6). We will love God's truth. The Word of God is truth. Jesus prayed for His disciples, saying, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). That is the only place where we find God's truth – in His Word, and we have that in the Bible. Search there for His truth, and follow it. †

O. P. Baird is a former missionary to Korea and now lives in Searcy, Arkansas, U. S. A.



Five Firsts to Success

1. Give God the FIRST HOUR of the day.
2. Give God the FIRST DAY of the week.
3. Give God the FIRST PORTION OF YOUR PAY.
4. Give God the FIRST CONSIDERATION IN EVERY DECISION.
5. Give God the FIRST PLACE in your heart.

AND IT REALLY WORKS, TOO!

Is There a Hell?

Betty Burton Choate

I've heard some people say,

"Oh, no,

There's no hell.

Never would a loving God

Make such a place

And send men there

To burn

For all eternity."

I wonder

If they've heard of men

— lost men —

In the flaming torment

Of Death Valley's heat

Or Sahara's fire

Or some other hell on earth,

Hells of living death

And no escape . . .

Sometimes men

in ignorance

or of their own accord,

Go beyond help,

Beyond the reach

Of other men,

Beyond the reach of God,

And find hell

Here . . . and hereafter . . .

The bottom line of truth

and

unchangeable

reality.

— from Sun and Shadows

“The Bible Says”

Joe Goodspeed

The New Testament repeatedly talks about being *in Christ*:

● *“Now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13).*

● *“Ye are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28).*

IN Sin

The Bible uses the little preposition **in** in an important way. It talks about some who were **in** sin (Romans 6:1). It speaks of those who lived **in** the lusts of their flesh (Ephesians 2:3). The meaning is that these people were practicing sin, and were under its control and dominion, so the Bible simply said that they were **in** that sin.

A similar use of the word **in** is seen in Acts 3:17, where Peter, in talking to some of those very people who were guilty of having crucified Christ, said, *“I know that **in** ignorance you did it.”* They were under the control of ignorance, dominated by it – that is what led to their behavior – so Peter said they were **in** ignorance.

IN Christ

So, it should be quite meaningful to us when we read the many

passages in the New Testament about Christians being “**in Christ**,” and therefore, participating in the many blessings which this involves. Ephesians 1:7 says that *“in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.”* Ephesians 1:3 says that every spiritual blessing is **in Christ**. 2 Timothy 2:10 tells us that we have salvation **in Christ**. Paul even says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“If any man is **in Christ** he is a new creature.”*

There are many other passages which point out the blessings and benefits of being **in Christ**, a very strong one being Romans 8:1, which says, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in Christ Jesus**.”* Continuing, in verse 4 Paul makes it clear that he is talking about people who, as he says, are not living by the lower nature, which he calls the flesh, but by the godly nature, which he calls the spirit. But what a wonderful statement of forgiveness is found in Romans 8:1!

What does it mean for something to be **in** something else? Well, we know what it is for a person to be **in** a family. We know what it is for a person to be **in** a

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

house. When we are in Christ, we have an obedient and faithful relationship to Him, as faithful members of a family have with each other. We are within His care and protection, just as a person in a house would not be inconvenienced by winds or rain, or threatened by a storm.

How Does One Come To Be IN Christ?

Paul mentioned to the Ephesians that at one time they had been, as he said, "*Separate from Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12). Then he said in the next verse that now in Christ, they who once had been far off were made nigh in the blood of Christ.

How Do We Get INTO Christ?

Romans 6:3 says that we are baptized into Christ. Galatians 3:27 uses the same term. This verse states, "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.*"

Of course, scriptural baptism is preceded by believing in Jesus, by

repenting of our sins, and by the willingness to confess Jesus before men. Baptism as an isolated act, without the conviction in the heart and the submission of the life, would be nothing. Yet, the baptism is important too, so much so that these two verses, Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27, speak of being baptized into Christ.

Yes, in Christ are all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). In Christ we contact His blood (Ephesians 1:7). In Christ is salvation (2 Timothy 2:10). In Christ we are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).

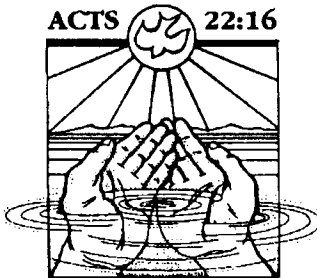
Moving out of the sinful world and into Christ is made possible by our humble submission to the Lord's will for us to do the very same thing that God's spokesman Ananias instructed Saul of Tarsus to do: "*. . . arise, and be baptized, washing away your sins . . .*" (Acts 22:16).

Let us make every effort to be sure that we are following God's will for our lives. †

Joe Goodspeed preaches for the Longmire Road congregation in Conroe, Texas, U. S. A

RISE *and be* BAPTIZED

ACTS 22:16



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Has it occurred to you that you can be **just a Christian** — nothing more nor less than a plain Christian? Yes, even in the midst of the religious confusion of our creed-bound, denomination-divided age, it is possible for you to be **just a Christian!**

Being just a Christian means trusting and obeying Jesus Christ, just as Paul and Philip and the early Christians did in the first century after Christ. It means going back beyond all the distinctive Catholic and Protestant teachings and doctrines of today to find Christ just as He is revealed in the inspired New Testament.

You see, there were no different denominations in the beginning of Christianity. The early disciples were all of one body. They were called simply "*Christians*" (Acts 11:26). They did not follow different creeds, but were guided by "*the faith once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). The New Testament, first as the spoken Word, and later as written down by "*holy men of God*" as they were guided by the Holy Spirit, was their only rule of faith and practice (2

Peter 1:21). We have this same New Testament today and can reproduce the same pure Christianity which flourished in the first century after Christ.

Jesus built only one church, and God added everyone who obeyed the Gospel of Christ to this non-denominational church, the body of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). The Bible teaches

that you will be added to this same body today when you believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son, repent of your sins (John 8:24;

Luke 13:3), and confess Christ

as the Son of

God before men (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5).

Why not become a Christian, according to these simple guidelines of the New Testament, and worship and work in the non-denominational church of Christ in your community?

Woodrow Yates serves as an elder in the Granbury Street congregation in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.

*You
Can Be
Just
A Christian*
Woodrow Yates

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Many sincere people have been caused by false teaching to believe that a person should choose a religion on the basis of convenience and preference, like a housewife selects a loaf of bread, or a bar of soap. Many members of denominational churches admit that they selected a church only because of its size, its popularity, or its nearness to their residence.

Many people who would eagerly go a long distance to see some entertainment would not travel one mile to scripturally worship God, although Jesus says, "*God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24).

Jesus did not build a multiplicity of churches so that people could find a church corresponding with their own preference. This is what the Lord Himself said: "*. . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:18).

The apostle Paul says:

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence"

(Colossians 1:18).

"But now are they many members, yet but one body"
(1Corinthians 12:20).

I earnestly urge you to diligently study your Bible, especially Acts of Apostles and the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, and

Peter, John, James, and

Jude, and then

adamantly

refuse to

embrace

any reli-

gion except

the nondenom-

inational Christianity

which is plainly described therein; because, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Book of God, by which all men will be judged in the last day (Revelation 20:11-15), clearly says: "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).

Let us never forget that our Lord Jesus Christ declared that "*. . . Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*" (Matthew 15:13). †

G. F. Raines is a writer and preacher living in Newton, Mississippi, U. S. A.

Choosing a Religion G.F. Raines

Enlist Now!

Gordon Hogan

God calls men and women to enlist in a spiritual army, with His Son as commander-in-chief. This army, the church of Christ, does not kill or destroy, but rather brings to willing, faithful soldiers happiness, fulfilment, constructive service, and life everlasting.

Enlistment comes first! Because the enemy, Satan, is constantly seeking whom he may devour and destroy, enlistment is urgent! The terms of enlistment require that the recruit must believe that his commander-in-chief, Jesus, is the Son of God, and trust Him fully (John 5:24; 6:29; 8:24). He must make a declaration and acknowledgement of Jesus with his mouth (Romans 10:9-10). He must turn to God in repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3). He must be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Galatians 3:26-27).

Soldiers of Christ have a terrible, wicked enemy in Satan. Therefore, Christ's men and women must be trained and equipped for the defense of righteousness.

The formula is set forth by the Apostle Paul as follows:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication for all saints . . . (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Every member of the Lord's army is to be on active duty, always ready for service. †

Gordon Hogan is a missionary in Singapore, having served in Asia for twenty-five years.

“If You Stay Where You Are”

David Roper

The story is told of a man who fell into an empty well. Another man, passing by, heard him calling for help and located a rope and began to try to rescue him. But the man in the well was afraid and asked, “What if the rope breaks?” The rescuer earnestly replied, “**What happens if you stay where you are?**”

Spiritually speaking, this question needs to reach the hearts of those who have not obeyed the Gospel. Sure, there are uncertainties in living the Christian life, but “**What happens if you stay where you are?**”

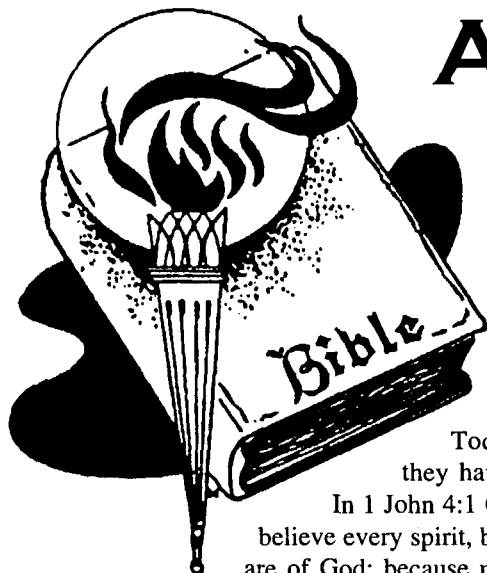
At the present time, you are “*dead in sins and trespasses*” (Ephesians 2:11). In this state, you are “*without Christ, without God, and without hope*” (Ephesians 2:12). You are lost! What happens if you stay where you are? You will lose your soul forever (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

We urge you, with compassion in our hearts, to trust and obey!

They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . Save yourselves from this untoward generation (Acts 2:37,38,40).

Those of us in Christ can also profit from the question, “What happens if you stay where you are?” Peter stated the truth that we must “*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). **But what if we stay where we are?** What if we do not grow in Bible study and prayer? What if we are not becoming more faithful in our attendance in worship and in serving the Lord? We can become unfaithful and be lost (2 Peter 1:3, 9)! †

David Roper is a writer and preacher living in Searcy, Arkansas, U. S. A.



A TEST OF SPIRITS

Ray Hawk

In the first century, when miraculous gifts were found in the church, there were false teachers who claimed to have those gifts.

Today there are people who say they have the same gifts and powers.

In 1 John 4:1 God directed: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

If the Holy Spirit gave a test by which to try a false teacher in the first century, that same test may be applied in the 20th century to try those who claim to have miraculous gifts. That test will prove whether the person is telling the truth or making false claims.

When some questioned Paul's apostleship, he told the Corinthian church that they knew he was an apostle because they were "the seal of (his) apostleship in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:2). The apostles were the only ones who could lay hands upon Christians and give them miraculous gifts (Acts 8:17, 18). Since Paul had preached in Corinth (Acts 18:1), some had received these gifts from him. Since they had those gifts, it proved he was an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Paul knew that some falsely claimed to have miraculous gifts. Here is the test the Holy Spirit gave to him to use, to discover whether or not those who boasted of having the power to do miracles were speaking the truth. He stated, "*But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power*" (1 Corinthians 4:19, 20).

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A person may claim anything he desires. However, claims are not miracles. Those today who claim to have miraculous power refuse to submit to Paul's test! They spend their time trying to get out of proving that they have miraculous power, rather than confirming their claims through the performance of a miracle.

Paul said if a person had power, he would prove it. If he was making a false claim, he would not be able to do anything. I have personally challenged preacher after preacher, claiming to have miraculous signs, to prove it. Not one of them has done anything except chastise me for asking them to submit to Paul's test. *The Holy Spirit Himself* gave the test, and all of them have failed it.

If someone today says he has the baptism of the Holy Spirit and can perform miraculous signs, demand that he prove his claims with signs. What signs?

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it (Mark 16:17-20).

If these signs do not follow the person who claims to have miraculous power, God isn't with him. By the absence of that power he is proved to be a false teacher.

I have never been able to get one of these preachers to allow a poisonous snake to bite him. I have never been able to get one of them to drink something poisonous which I have supplied. I have never been able to get one of them to go to the hospital and send everyone home in perfect health. I have never been able to get one of them to speak a language which he has not studied.

The refusal of these men to take the Holy Spirit's test indicts them as false teachers. Their failure to perform the signs of Mark 16:17, 18 confirms that God is not with them, because God would not fail to support true disciples. If a person claims to have miraculous power, he should be willing and eager to prove it by performing these signs! †

Ray Hawk is a gospel preacher in Jackson, Tennessee, U. S. A.

Instrumental Music In Christian Worship: *From God Or Man?*

Ken Tyler

The only way we can answer this question is to go to the New Testament and see if instrumental music was a part of worship in the first century. The New Testament contains ten passages which will plainly answer our question. Notice each one of these verses very carefully:

1. *“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”* (Matthew 26:30).
2. Mark 14:26 says the same as Matthew 26:30.
3. *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them”* (Acts 16:25).
4. *“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name”* (Romans 15:9).
5. *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also”* (1 Corinthians 14:15).
6. *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:19).
7. *“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”* (Colossians 3:16).
8. *“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will sing praise unto thee”* (Hebrews 2:12).
9. *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”* (Hebrews 13:15).
10. *“Is any among you afflicted: let him pray. Is any merry: let him sing psalms”* (James 5:13).

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After studying these passages, the honest person must confess that we read about only singing (vocal music) in the New Testament. No one can cite a passage which mentions the piano, organ, or any other kind of instrument being used by the church. The reason for this is simple: **the churches of Christ did not use an instrument! Christians just sang!** Therefore, we must conclude that instrumental music in Christian worship is from man and not from God. As a matter of fact, the instrument was not added to so-called Christian worship until hundreds of years after the church began. The first organ introduced into worship of any body claiming to be Christian was 670 years after Christ. Pope Vitilian I tried this, but it threatened or caused division in the Roman Catholic church and was removed to preserve unity. Eight hundred years after Christ, the organ was reintroduced into the Roman Catholic worship over some opposition. The Greek Catholic church refused it and still refuses it today.

All of us should be able to plainly see that the instrument was not used in the worship of the church which Jesus built. The New Testament does not authorize it and secular history teaches us that the instrument was not introduced until hundreds of years after Christ.

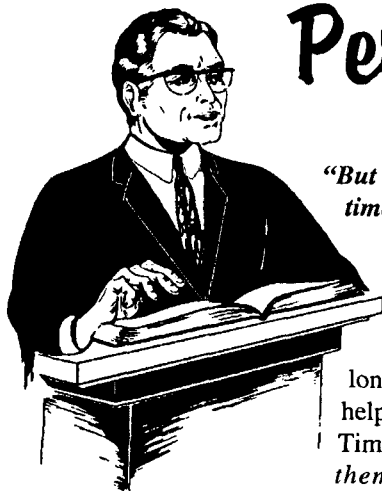
Before concluding this study I want to consider one particular argument which is used most often by individuals who try to defend the instrument in Christian worship. Many ask, "Was not the instrument used in the Old Testament?" The answer to this question is **yes**. For example, Psalm 150 mentions a number of different instruments that were to be used in praising God. However, just because something was practiced under the Old Testament law does not mean it is to be practiced under the New Covenant. If I asked why you do not offer animal sacrifices or burn incense in worship today you would answer, "Animal sacrifices and burning of incense were part of the Old Testament worship." Your answer would be absolutely correct, because we no longer live under the Mosaic Law (Romans 7:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11; Colossians 2:14). What we do in worship today must be found in the law of Christ. There is just as much authority for offering animal sacrifices and burning incense in Christian worship as there is for the instrument.

The instrument cannot be found in the worship of the first century church. Christians were commanded to sing (vocal music). Let's be satisfied with God's way. Jesus said, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). †

Ken Tyler is a gospel preacher living in Arab, Alabama, U. S. A.

Perilous Times

Wayne Barrier



“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come” (2 Timothy 3:1).

The apostle Paul was trying to prepare his preaching brother, Timothy, for coming days as he wrote this second letter. The Holy Spirit, with a longer view, was giving us information for help in times like today. He warns us in 2 Timothy 3:2-5, *“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters,*

proud, blasphemers, disobedient, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away.”

The people described in these verses are familiar to us. We see them everywhere. Maybe they have always been around, but it seems that there are more of such ungodly people now than in the recent past. It is not only in the world that we find them but even in the church, and they are the basic reason for many of the problems both in the world and in the church today. They are further described in 2 Timothy 3:7 as *“ . . . always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

Paul gave advice regarding these people, and we need to follow his advice today: *“ . . . from such people turn away.”*

In our own lives, **first**, we must be careful not to fall into the same trap as these men. We must use God’s word to guide us through life and life’s decisions. Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:10-17:

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

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But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Second, preachers have a responsibility regarding the perils of these times. Preachers who fail to properly accept and handle their work are the reason for many problems in the church today. Preachers don't *preach* in many congregations. They perform other duties: public relations, marketing, counseling, program management (education, involvement, etc.) cheerleader, and crowd control speaker. All of these duties may be necessary, good, and useful, but none can replace the primary work of a preacher. This work is defined in 2 Timothy 4:1-5:

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His

kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Perilous times result in the loss of many souls and lots of heartache. These times are especially hurtful, considering where we came from, and where we could be going. We can survive and even overcome the problems of today to win. Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 remind us that all can end well:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, AL and is part of the World Evangelism team in the United States.

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am a good example to follow as a Christian.

1. 100 I Persecuted the Church Jesus established. (Acts 22:4)
2. 90 I was blinded by a light and heard a voice speaking from Heaven. (Acts 22:6,7)
3. 80 The voice said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting." (Acts 22:8)
4. 70 For three days I fasted and prayed, grieved that I had been fighting God. (Acts 9:9)
5. 60 A Christian named Ananias came and said, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)
6. 50 I became a great preacher for Jesus teaching governors and kings. Christ, even (Acts 9:15)
7. 40 I was the "apostle born out of that is, I was chosen after been crucified. (1 Cor.15:8) due season", Jesus had already
8. 30 I was the special apostle "... to open their eyes ness to light, and to God, that they sins and an inheri-sanctified by sent to the Gentiles, and to turn from dark- from the power of Satan may receive forgiveness of tance among those who are faith in Me." (Acts 26:16-18)
9. 20 I was saved from the mob by God's provi- dence, in the form of a Roman commander. (Acts 23:11-22)
10. 10 I said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

See answer on inside back cover.

My Score _____



THE CHURCH

More than 1900 years ago, some one hundred and twenty miles north of Jerusalem, near the foot of Mount Hermon, Jesus made a promise to His followers: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not pre-*

the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

The worship of this family of the Lord consists of praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17), singing (Ephesians 5:19), communing (Acts 20:7), giving (1 Corinthians 16:1,2), and studying (2 Timothy 2:15). This worship is characterized by simplicity. It may be conducted in

Jesus Made A Promise

Jerry Jenkins

vail against it” (Matthew 16:18). In less than five years this church which He promised was a growing, blooming organism which would impact the world forever.

What did the Lord build? It was not a physical building, a political association, or a social club. It was and is His body, His family, His kingdom. The primary purpose of His progeny was to tell an old, old story of a Savior and His love for His followers.

Though membership in this church is open to men and women of every nationality, there are conditions which all adherents must meet. These include: [1] Faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24), [2] Repentance of all past sins (Acts 17:30), [3] Confession of the precious name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32), [4] Baptism by the authority of Christ and for

the most elaborate building ever constructed, or it may be conducted under the shade tree of a farmer’s pasture.

The commitment of this family is to bring glory and honor to the name of the Father by living in a manner pleasing to Him. Christ affirmed His desire to please the Father when He stated: *“ . . . for I do always those things that please him”* (John 8:29). Christ was the model of early Christians (1 Corinthians 11:1), and He must serve as our example in every area of life. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps”* (1 Peter 2:21). †

Jerry Jenkins preaches the Gospel for the Roebuck Parkway church in Birmingham, Alabama, U. S. A.

Viewing the Church from the Spiritual Perspective

Sunny David

When the subject of the church is discussed, one thinks of a physical building in which people gather together for worship, because a modern dictionary defines the word in that way. The word "church," however, is never used in the New Testament of the Bible to convey such a meaning.

In the Scriptures the word "church" denotes the body of people who have become the family of God. Upon their obedience to the form of the gospel of Christ (Romans 6:16-18) — the new birth of John 3 — the Lord Himself added them to His spiritual body, which is His church.

The English word "church" is a translation of the Greek word "ek-klesia." In some languages, such as Hindi and Urdu, the

word is left untranslated and simply reads "ka-lisia," which means "the body of citizens or the assembly of people." Christ, in Matthew 16:18, had promised, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church." The rock to which He referred was the fact that He was and is the Son of the living God. The very foundation of the family of God — the church — is this bed-rock truth.

After Jesus' ascension into heaven and then the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2,

His disciples, according to His great commission, for the first time declared the gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead before a great multitude of people. Hearing the good news of the love of God and the death



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of His Son for the sinners, those people were cut to the heart, and they wanted to know from the apostles, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" They were convinced that they had sinned, and now they wanted to receive forgiveness for their sins.

"Then Peter said to them, Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37, 38). Continuing, we read, "*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them*" (2:41).

Thus the body of the saved people was established and built, beginning with the twelve apostles and the three thousand souls who had believed in Christ with all their heart and had repented of their sins, being baptized in order to have their sins washed away.

Note, now, that the last verse in this second chapter of the book of Acts tells us more about these three thousand baptized and forgiven people, that they were, "*. . . praising God and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*"

Now the church Christ had promised to build was established. Before Acts, chapter 2, the church

was spoken of as being in the future, that is, it is going to be built but is not in existence yet. After chapter 2, whenever we read of the church in the pages of the Bible, it is always spoken of as present and in existence in the world. From that point in time, the Lord was daily **adding** to the church those who were being saved in the same manner as the three thousand souls were saved on the day of Pentecost.

The inference is that no person can ever **join** the church — the church Christ Himself had established, His own church — by his or her own will or choice. The Lord **adds** the saved because He knows those who, after hearing His gospel, truly believe with all their heart that He is the Son of God, repent or change their mind to no longer walk in sin, who go down into the waters of baptism to have their old self buried and to come up out of the grave of baptism to walk in the new life in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:3-6), and thus have been born anew (John 3:3-5).

The term "church" and "the kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of God" were interchanged by Christ in Matthew 16:18, 19 when He told Peter, "*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are*

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Peter (Greek: Petros — pebble or stone), and on this rock (Greek: Petra — ledge of rock) *I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*”

Notice, dear reader, that in the same statement the Lord promised to build **His church** and to give the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven. He said that not even Hades could prevent the establishment of the church — and then a few breaths later He promised the coming of the kingdom during the lifetime of the apostles (Matthew 16:28) *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power”* (Mark 9:1).

The church of Christ is the earthly form of the kingdom of heaven. This is evident from the promises made on this occasion to the apostles.

We also remember how Christ, in His conversation with a Jewish leader, had told him that unless one is born of **water and the Spirit** he cannot enter the **kingdom of God** (John 3:5). This is the **new birth, the baptism in water** described in Acts 2, after which the Lord added the obedient to the **church**.

The Holy Spirit who inspired the men of God in the writing of the Scriptures instructs us what we must do to be saved and thus become members of the Lord’s church and citizens of God’s kingdom (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16). The apostle Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “. . . by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body . . .” That is to say, by learning what the Spirit has taught of the Words of Life, we are all baptized into one body. The body, according to Ephesians 1:22, 23, is the church which the Lord established (Ephesians 4:4).

Thus, we conclude that a person enters the kingdom of heaven and the church of Christ at the same time and by the same process. The saved, as we read in Acts 2:47, were **added by the Lord to the church**, and in Colossians 1:13 the apostle wrote: **“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”** The church of the Lord exists and so does His kingdom exist. One who is in His church is also in His kingdom. Yes, the Lord adds the saved to His church, His kingdom — but *only when one obeys the commands of His gospel, picturing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.* †

Sunny David preaches the gospel in New Delhi, India, and is featured in the nation-wide Hindi radio programs.

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By apostolic injunction, Christians are taught “*to love the brotherhood*” (1 Peter 2:17). To do so genuinely and sincerely is one of the proofs that our lives are right with God: “*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren*” (1 John 3:14). To have a heart filled with love for God (1 John 4:19; Matthew 22:37), and for our brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Peter 1:22; Romans 12:10, etc.), is a natural thing for the truly converted.

But a legitimate question arises: *exactly who are my spiritual kinsmen?* Who composes “**the brotherhood**” of Christ? Is it not reasonable to be instructed by the guidelines from Jesus Himself in seeking to know exactly who our spiritual brothers and sisters are? Obviously not everyone is a spiritual kinsman. Certainly unbelievers would not be. Jesus taught that those who do not believe stand condemned. Read John 3:18; 8:24; Mark 16:16, etc. Just think of how many multiplied millions of people are either atheists, agnostics, or adherents of religions that do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: the Jews,

the Hindus, the Shintos, the Buddhists, the Confucianists, the Mohammedans, etc. There is no way that they could be classified as “spiritually related” to members of the Lord’s church.

Neither can we consider those our spiritual kinsmen who through obstinate rebellion, or ignorance of His Word, do not submit to the Lordship of Jesus. Note what He said:



Who
Composes
THE BROTHERHOOD?

Maxie B. Boren

“*Not everyone who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21).

Again, in a context in which the subject is the very thing this article pertains to, Jesus identified His spiritual relations by saying, “*Who-soever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother*” (Matthew 12:50). The Father has made His will known through revelation: “*All scripture is given by the inspiration of God . . .*” (2 Timothy 3:16). And the Father wills that we **hear** His Son (Matthew 17:5 and Hebrews 1:1, 2), to whom He has given “*all authority*” (Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:22, 23), and

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who saves those who “*obey him*” (Hebrews 5:9). Thus, those who worship according to the doctrines of men do so **in vain**, as the Lord Himself said in Matthew 15:9. He asked, “*Why do ye call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46).

In conclusion, those who compose the true brotherhood of Christ are the ones who believe with all their hearts that He is the only begotten Son of God, who love Him as their Savior, humbly obeying His Gospel, and who live their lives submissively to Him as Lord. They

are members of His spiritual body, which is the church. They are children of God, citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They are Christians . . . people who are loving, kind, compassionate, gentle, forgiving, serving, and yet who are courageously resolute in standing for right and truth and against wrong and error. They “*walk in the light as He is in the light*” (1 John 1:7), and do their best to be faithful unto Him in all things in light of His Word. †

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Is One Church As Good As Another?

David Tarbet

If you have thought about this question, I am sure you will agree that:

(1) A church which teaches error is not as good as a church that teaches the truth. Jesus promised: “the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32), but those who teach something different from the truth revealed by Jesus and His apostles are to be rejected (Galatians 1:8-9).

(2) A church which teaches part of the truth is not as good as a church which teaches all the truth. Christians are to embrace the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). When man-made traditions are mixed with the pure Word of God the purposes of God are blocked (Mark 7:13).

(3) A church which changes God’s plan of salvation is not as good as a church which upholds the plan of salvation. God’s plan to save us from sin focuses on Jesus, who gave His life as a perfect sacrifice (Titus 2:14). Our response to His cross includes personal faith (John 3:16), repentance of our sins (Acts 17:30-31), and immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4). †

David Tarbet is a preacher of the Gospel in Clovis, New Mexico, U. S. A.

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In a time of rapid change, one of the things the church needs most desperately is a strong sense of identity. Many Christians have a weak concept of what the church is. We are often unsure of who we are and what clear right we have to exist. So, biblically speaking, who are we?

We are the church of Christ. He came into the world as the goal of all Old Testament prophecy. He was the Seed of

Abraham in whom all nations would be blessed, the King of David's lineage who would rule the kingdom of God, and Daniel's Son of Man who would rule people of all nations.

Jesus Himself explained that to be under His rule would mean accepting the invitation to God's great banquet. It would mean going home to God, like the prodigal repented and went home to his father. It would mean being found by the Shepherd when we were lost. It would mean accepting God-given responsibility, and fulfilling it until the Master returns. It would mean going into God's vineyard to work, and accepting God's gracious

reward. It would mean accepting the Word of heaven like fertile, soft ground accepts a seed. Jesus planned for those who did these things to be His church (Matthew 16:18). As the apostles proclaimed His Lordship to the world, those who submitted themselves to Jesus

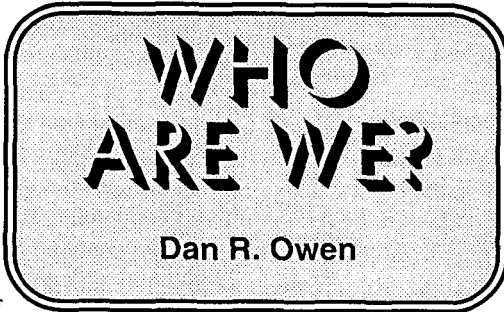
became the blood-bought church of Christ.

Who are we? We are the church of Christ. Jesus' aim was to establish an identifiable

group of people who had been reconciled to God. The group is identified in terms of its submission to Jesus' Lordship, in terms of its entrance requirements set forth in the Great Commission and in Acts, in terms of its God-ordained organization and worship, and in terms of its godly life, of its mission of making disciples and obeying all that Jesus commanded.

We are the church of Jesus, the people of Christ, saved by His blood, and functioning in the world as He directs. Nothing is more important than being part of His spiritual body, the church. †

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The Paradox Of The Church

Hardeman Nichols

When a congregation is established according to the divine pattern of the New Testament, it is composed of elements of perfection and imperfection. Since it is a divine institution, it deserves respect and appreciation. Everything that such a church is and does, as authorized of God, is divine. God's part is perfect. He has designed a perfect plan of salvation and a perfect system of worship (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The Bible is its only guide, is *"the perfect law of liberty"* (James 1:25). The church has a perfect Savior who holds before us His perfect life for our goal, saying, *"Follow Me"* (Matthew 16:24).

But here is the paradox. Man is not perfect, nor does he perfectly follow the Lord. The human element in the church is as imperfect as its members. The church would have been an imperfect institution if it had been designed only for perfect people. It would have no members at all, *"For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"* (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Its perfection is retained by the

way it deals with our imperfections. It does not overlook sin, but believes the grace of God is perfect in dealing with it. And it must distinguish between the penitent and rebellious, between the humble weak and willful reprobate. God now *"commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30). The church believes that Christ promises pardon for all imperfect beings who, in godly sorrow for their sins, penitently seek mercy and forgiveness. His invitation is to imperfect men. When one repents and is baptized, Jesus forgives his sins and adds him to His church (Acts 2:38, 47).

The church offers strength to help us in our weaknesses, courage when we are faint-hearted, comfort when we are sad, and *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (1 Peter 1:8), along the way. Its call is to all men to come and be saved. Its God-ordained teachings and services restore lost humanity back to God. Thanks be unto God for His perfect church and its wondrous benefits to imperfect men. †

Hardeman Nichols is an evangelist and lives in Dallas, Texas, U. S. A.

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The church has come in for a lot of bad publicity in the liberal media who are anxious to publicize and magnify the mistakes of some church leaders.

Many people, having been disillusioned by the bad press given the church, have come to believe a person's salvation is strictly between himself and God, apart from the church. They honestly believe they can be faithful Christians and never be a member of the church.

It is a matter of Scripture teaching that the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), all of them, every one of them. Nevertheless, the saved are still human, and they are not sinless, except in the fact that they have been forgiven and continue to walk

in the light of the Lord (1 John 1:7).

Behavior of some church members brings reproach upon the church, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, and the brother in Corinth

who had taken his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5). But the glory of God's church is not in the human element.

The church has a **divine** side as well as the human, and herein lies the strength, the beauty, and the glory of the church of God.

The glory of God's church is in its divine origin.

It is not a man-made arrangement, nor was it an afterthought of the Lord when His plan to establish the kingdom failed due to



God's Glorious Church

Mack Lyon

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His rejection by the Jews; but it was a part of God's redemptive plan from the very beginning (Eph. 3:10).

The glory of God's church is in its builder.

The church is not a human institution; it was not built by Luther, Wesley, Campbell, or any other human being. When Peter confessed, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matthew 16:16), Jesus pronounced a blessing on him, then replied, ". . . *Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" Does anyone doubt He fulfilled that promise?

confessed — that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That makes it impregnable.

The glory of God's church is its head.

The Bible teaches that upon His resurrection God has highly exalted Christ "*far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*" (Ephesians 1:21-23). The church is

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also *loved* the church and *gave Himself for it*, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word

that He might *present it to Himself a glorious church*, not having *spot or wrinkle or any such thing*, but that it should be *holy and without blemish* (Ephesians 5:25-27).

The glory of God's church is in its foundation.

Every movement, whether social, political, religious, or otherwise, is founded on some basic tenet which adherents believe to be truth. The truth upon which Christ founded His church is not the preeminence of Peter, as some interpret the above-quoted conversation with Peter, but upon the truth Peter had

not subject to the dictates of any pope, or college of cardinals, or conference, or convention of mere men, but to Christ alone (Ephesians 5:23-27).

The glory of God's church is in its divinely-given mission.

Some people became disillusioned with the church when it did not succeed in works in which the church should not have been

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involved in the beginning. As noted before, Gods original purpose for the church was *"to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"* (Ephesians 3:9-10).

The passage can be interpreted to mean that the very existence of the church declares the manifold wisdom of God. But it really means that it is the church's mission and work to declare the manifold wisdom of God, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30) to all the world. What a glorious purpose for existence!

The glory of God's church is in its eternal destiny.

When Jesus comes He will take it to be with Him in eternal glory (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24).

The church should not be rejected because of the weaknesses of the human element, but accepted because of the beauty and glory of the divine element. Be saved, my friend, and the Lord will add you to His church. Then you can share in His glory. †

Mack Lyon is the speaker on the international television program "In Search of the Lord's Way."



He Endured

It is galling, frustrating, to appear less successful materially, less authoritative, less upright, less capable than we know we really are. How difficult it must have been for the human side of Jesus to have been elevated before the eyes of the world . . . but on the degrading cross of a criminal instead of a kingly throne.

It must have hurt deeply to appear a failure in the eyes of man, a villain and dependent on the mercy of others, unable even in words to speak out in His own defense and clear His name in the hearts of those who meant the most to Him.

How shameful it must have seemed for the King to have lived and died as a pauper, dependent even in His burial and grave on the outpouring of those who cared about Him personally.

But . . . " . . . for the joy that was set before Him (He) endured the cross, despising the shame . . ." (Hebrews 12:2, 3)

Betty Burton Choate
— from **Still Moments**

THE CHURCH

Oh come, let us worship!

Betty Burton Choate

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, For He is our God! (Psalm 95:6)

Jesus described worship in His new dispensation with these words: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. . . .” (John 4:23)

Let us remove ourselves from the tradition of ‘worship’ as many in the Lord’s church have experienced it, week after week, all of their lives, and look at biblical statements which describe the reality of worship.

Genesis 24:26: Then the man *bowed down his head and worshiped* the Lord.

Genesis 17:3: Then Abram *fell on his face*, and God talked with him . . .

Exodus 34:8: So Moses made haste and *bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped*.

1 Chronicles 16:23,26,29,36: *Sing to the Lord . . . Give to the Lord glory and strength. . . Bring an offering and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth . . . And all the people said, ‘Amen!’ and praised the Lord.*

Psalm 66:4: All the earth shall *worship* You and *sing praises* to You.

Psalm 99:5: Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy.

Psalm 132:7: Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool.

1 Corinthians 14:25: . . .and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God. . .

Revelation 5:14: And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Even Satan, when he tempted Christ to worship him, knew exactly what he must have to satisfy his hunger for exaltation: “All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9)

I have no desire to be accusing or unduly critical, but I think a personal examination concerning our worship would be very helpful. Jesus, Himself, stated emphatically that only one type of worship is acceptable to God:

“ . . .those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

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Too often, as I am sitting in my seat in the church building, surrounded by the typical distractions and devotions, as I am passing through the biblically prescribed vehicles of worship — that is, singing, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, studying, and giving — I feel myself to be physically and emotionally relaxed, mentally floating through thoughts concerning what is being said, momentary examination of self, reflections of yesterday and tomorrow, feeling myself to be a 'spectator', being 'entertained'

Too often, though I may be *thinking about spiritual things*, I am not actively *conscious of being in the presence of God*. At the end of a designated worship period, in retrospect it is amazing to realize that sometimes I have not worshiped at all! I have sung songs about *myself* and *my* anticipation of eventually going to heaven; I have listened to words of a prayer about *the congregation's* collective wishes and needs; I have focussed my attention on the *ability and the thoughts* presented by a *preacher*, usually dealing with *my* comprehension of God's message, *my* response to it, about *my own self-image* and how to feel better about *myself*, or even about the wondrous things God in His love has done for *me*; I have made a cursory examination of

my past week's behavior as brief prayers were said and the bread and the fruit of the vine passed down my pew; I have written a check from *my* week's earnings and laid it in the basket, conscious of the fact that these funds are necessary to pay for the building, the utilities, the salaries of those who have been employed to take care of the needs of the congregation — of *me*, in plurality.

And often I have been dismissed without ever once feeling myself emotionally prostrate before the great and awesome presence of God, without feeling surrounded and comforted in His continual outpouring of love, without feeling both humbled and exalted by the tremendous experience of worship. Most of my thinking throughout the scant hour was centered around *myself*, not *God!*

Yes, we live in physical bodies, and the physical world serves as a distraction from the spiritual. And, yes, certain prescribed 'acts' must be the framework of our worship. And, yes, it is a simple matter for any prescribed list to become a line of empty rituals, if the unthinking Christian allows it to be so.

And this is my point! I think we have done that, in many cases. I am convinced that the traditions which have developed as our mode of 'worship' have actually hindered

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worship. Instead, they have been a means of Bible study, of personal edification, and even of spiritual entertainment. And while some today desire to replace those traditions with a new electrifying ‘worship’, the end result is more of *personal entertainment* and ‘feel goods’ than the actual forgetting of self in adoration of God.

Re-read those passages about worship. Do they sound like relaxed, laid-back, watch-the-clock, doze-a-little, me-centered experiences? Or would an honest survey of them convince us that true worship is adoration, requiring our best energy, our undivided attention, directed in reverence toward the glorious presence of God, an emotional and spiritual setting in which it would be *near-blasphemous to be watching the clock*?

What could we do, differently, yet *within the framework of the truths God has given as guidelines*, so that the time we spend together on Sundays, as His children, is actually worship?

Risking replacing one set of traditions for what might in time become only another traditional formula, I believe these suggestions would better inspire me to actually worship:

Always . . . always . . . always, the men leading the parts of worship must keep their own minds and the

minds of the congregation focussed on the fact that everything we say and do is to honor, glorify, and praise God. While participants will be strengthened by worship and will benefit in many ways, this time is devoted to adoration of God, not to self-edification. That kind of study should be reserved for the Bible class periods.

1. I should begin preparing for worship by (a) being sure to get enough rest Saturday night, (b) waking early enough Sunday morning to make unhurried preparations to go to the building, and (c) getting there early enough to set my mind in the proper channels for worship. These optimums may not always be possible, but they should be my goals.

2. Arriving at the building, all ‘visiting’ should be done outside the auditorium. Entrance into that area should signal the beginning of the actual attitude of being in God’s presence in corporate worship.

3. While awaiting the beginning of the designated worship period, I should spend the time reading the Scriptures, praying, or meditating — concentrating my thinking very pointedly on the person of God.

Worship, itself:

A. The Godhead should be the focal point, throughout. Hymns should be selected to inspire each participant to sing

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from the depths of his very soul, words that praise, glorify, thank, and express our love for our God.

B. Prayers should also concentrate more on praise and thanksgiving than on self; however, great care should be taken to learn the specific concerns and needs of the individual Christians, before praying. Any area-wide, or national crisis should receive special attention, taking it sincerely to the Heavenly Father, who is the Lord of all, and asking Him to overrule according to His will.

Prayers should perhaps be shorter, yet more frequently interspersed throughout the meeting, and dealing with specific needs, requests, and concerns, with some intervals of prayer being devoted entirely to praise.

Prayers should be worded with sincerity, avoiding formulaic phrases, and being sure that each thought is from the heart.

C. As Christians of the first century met on the first day of the week to commune with their Lord and the Father through the Supper, so this feast and all of its meanings should be the central part of today's worship.

Before the actual Supper, it

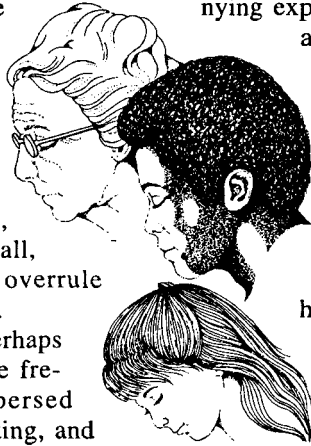
would be in order to have a time of prayer and silent personal examination, so that any grievances among brethren could be corrected at this time, as Jesus instructed in Matthew 5:23, 24.

All hearts now cleansed and united, appropriate Scriptures should be read, with accompanying explanations and encouragement, designed to remind and inspire the participants in their remembrance of Christ as well as in their renewal of commitment of self to Him.

D. Rather than have a 'sermon' which has largely deteriorated to a display of talent, ability, and entertainment, perhaps it would be

better if various ones of the men (either spontaneously or by pre-arrangement) would intersperse throughout the meeting, readings which would lead the participants to thoughts that glorify and worship God. Some commentary and words of exhortation might be given, but they should not take precedence over the Scriptures themselves.

If there is the choice to have a sermon, as such, the topic should be carefully chosen to keep the minds of the congrega-



THE CHURCH

tion focussed on God and adoration of Him.

E. Contributions should reflect an outpouring of individual and congregational love, in response to the inspirational period of worship. If our attention was focussed, as it should have been, on the greatness of God and His love for the world, we should be motivated to help spread that truth to those who live in darkness.

Should we stand or sit or bow or what, as we worship? No rule is laid down, as such, in the Scriptures, but what we read there does serve as an example. Obviously, for much of the time it would be better to sit. In the Scriptures people were spoken of as 'standing' in the presence of God.

But more prominently than any other posture, the Bible describes worshippers as bowing before God, even putting their faces to the ground. I am convinced from my own private worship at home, that human pride has designed our public worship periods, deliberately omitting this humbling posture. I am also convinced that we won't experience the type of adoration and glorification of God that Abraham, Abel, David, and others knew until we long to fall prostrate in His Presence.

How do the Scriptures themselves describe the setting of wor-

ship? By inspiration, the writer of Hebrews in 12:22-24, contrasting God's appearance to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai with the thunder and lightnings, speaks of the assembly of the church:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

What an awesome assembly! Into what glorious realms we enter, when we presume to worship God! With what humility and soul-searching we should dare to join that throng! What an inspirational experience it should be for us each Lord's Day!

Following worship there should be a lengthy period of Bible study, divided into age-groups. During this meeting, the preacher would have opportunity to impart to the congregation the fruit of his own Bible study. The 'teaching and admonishing one another' that has been the thrust of worship periods should be moved to the Bible class time. †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, missionaries to India.

The Book of Luke for adults

Unscramble these Parables of Jesus — without looking up the scriptures, if you can.

Luke 15:8-10 NOISTCOL _____

Luke 20:9-18 YAENIVDR _____

Luke 6:39-45 DLINBDLINBLNIDEAG _____

Luke 12:35-40 THREADISTWLUFAP _____

Luke 15:1-7 POSEELHTS _____

Luke 19:11-27 ESTPDONUN _____

Luke 8:4-15 LOISS _____

Luke 16:19-31 MINCHRA and SULRAAZ _____ and

Luke 21:29-33 GRITEEF _____

Luke 14:7-14 NOSEHEDROUGT _____

Luke 15:11-32 DRIPLAGONSO _____

Luke 10:29-37 SMARTODONAGAI _____

Luke 5:36-39 THOCL and NEISKIWSN _____ and

Luke 18:1-8 MAWON and the DUJEG _____ and the

Luke 13:18-19 STARMUEESDD _____

Luke 12:13-21 CHOLIRFO _____

Luke 11:33-36 PTMALLHGEID _____

Luke 18:9-14 SEAPHIER and ELLOOCCTTRAX _____

and _____

Rescued!

Gary Moore

Psalm 18 is David's song of praise in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies. He sang:

"I love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies" (Psalm 18:1-3).

Rescued! There is not a word with any greater impact. Being rescued from anything calls for rejoicing. David's song is actually our song, for we, too, have been delivered through the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of His finished work at Calvary, we have been:

(1) Rescued from the enemy of sin. *"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins . . . But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)"* (Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5).

(2) Rescued from the enemy of death. *"But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' . . . but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 15:54, 55, 57).

(3) Rescued from the enemy of uselessness. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:8-10).

On a dark and lonely afternoon nearly two thousand years ago, a man of Nazareth, named Jesus, hung from a cruel cross and cried forth, *"It is finished!"* And Heaven cried forth, **"Rescued,"** giving you and me a song of praise to sing eternally! †

Gary Moore preaches in Loveland, Colorado, U. S. A.

We *Are* *Set* *Apart*



Dale Grissom

Christians are set apart from the world in a spiritual sense. We have committed our lives to Christ and are looking for another home — a home in heaven. Because of this commitment, Satan works night and day to entice Christians to turn from Christ and follow him. Satan knows his time is limited; he knows that when Christ comes again, he and his followers (those who have refused to repent) will be put into the devil's hell to suffer forever.

It is so sad when one of God's children turns away from the hope of heaven and sells his soul for the pleasure of sin. God has made the supreme sacrifice: He gave His Son to die for us. If we turn from the joy of living for Christ, we will make a terrible mistake.

I believe that the reason some Christians go back into the world is because they haven't fully given themselves to Christ. When one obeys the Gospel and begins to live for Christ, he must continue to study the Word and grow as a Christian. Christians need a very active prayer life to help us become stronger in our convictions. We need to become concerned about the souls of others and reach out to them to help them learn about Christ and what they must do to be saved.

It is difficult to imagine anyone who has enjoyed all the blessings Christians receive ever turning his back upon the Lord and neglecting to tell others the story about Jesus. The hope of salvation is such a blessing to those who have obeyed the Gospel! Wouldn't it be wonderful to know you had helped someone to obey the Gospel? God uses His children to teach others; we are the earthen vessels. We must be about our heavenly Father's business.



Dale Grissom is an elder in the North One Mile church at Dexter, Missouri, U.S.A.

It Was In His Heart

Bill McFarland

The magnificent temple had been completed and Solomon was leading the people in dedicating it. As he prayed, he thought of the way the whole project had begun. He said, "*Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel*" (2 Chronicles 6:7).

Great things accomplished for the Lord always start with a purpose in someone's heart. A servant of God sees something that could be done to his Lord's glory and sets his heart on doing it.

In David's case the dream grew out of his respect for God's holiness and his appreciation for the way he had been blessed. He did not believe it was right for him to tend to his own needs without glorifying God (2 Samuel 7:1, 2).

And the purpose of his heart was not small. Not just any house would be acceptable for his great God. He said, "*The house that is to be built for Jehovah must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries*" (1

Chronicles 22:5).

Unfortunately, though, it became clear that David was not going to accomplish what was in his heart. God would not allow it, for David was a man of war (1 Chronicles 28:3). But when a man has God's glory in his heart, he does not care who gets the credit. So David set out with all that he owned to make preparation so that Solomon could accomplish the task (1 Chronicles 29:2). No sacrifice was too much for him.

God said that David did well to have such a thing in his heart (2 Chronicles 6:8). He became an encouragement to the people in seeking after the Lord and in serving Him.

What do you and I have in our hearts to do for our Lord? What are our purposes and dreams? The answer to this will tell the story of what we accomplish in a lifetime of devotion to our God. †

Bill McFarland preaches for the National and High congregation in Springfield, Missouri, U. S. A.



**He who offers God a second place
offers Him no place at all.**

The Biblical Connection Between God's Grace And My Giving

Dick Sztanyo

Is there a connection between the grace of God and giving? Some would probably say, "No!" Others might suggest that there is **some** connection, but that it is not very strong. I submit to you, however, that the connection between grace and giving is actually inseparable.

1. God is a gracious Lord who gives. In 2 Corinthians 8:9-15, one discovers the most extensive discussion of giving in the New Testament. Read these important words with me: "*Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich . . . And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed . . . Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift*" (2 Corinthians 8:1,9; 9:8, 15).

Among other things, the grace of God provided the gift of Jesus Christ (see Titus 2:11ff; John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 9:15). This was the culmination of years of history, all of which has its root in the graciousness of God! Moreover, all of it represents a God who graciously

gives every good gift to His children (see James 1:17). Indeed, as Jesus Himself put it, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35).

2. We must, therefore, be gracious people who give. Read the Scriptures again with me: "*We urged Titus that . . . he would complete in you this gracious work as well. But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also*" (2 Corinthians 8:6, 7).

When we give to support the work of preaching, we are abounding in graciousness. Likewise, we are gracious when we give our time to our families and our friends, when we give a "*cup of cold water*" to another in the name of Christ, when we assist others in obeying the Gospel, etc. **There is an inseparable connection between grace and giving.** We must seek to be like our Father in both areas (see Ephesians 5:1). †

Dick Sztanyo works with the Lord's church in Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A.



How Can We Have True Self-Esteem?

Mark Hall

We all seek self-esteem, but for most of us it proves to be elusive. There are several reasons for this, one of which is the fact that we live in a world that is constantly forcing us to compare ourselves to other people who are more successful, better dressed, have better cars, more perfect families, and fewer hang-ups than we. We are bombarded by commercials which tell us that we can find our true selves only by wearing the right jeans, using the right deodorant, and drinking the right soft drink.

How can we possibly feel good about ourselves when someone is continually telling us we don't meet the standard?

How? First, we need to realize that none of these things that our society values can bring any real worth into our lives. In 1 John 2:16, God says, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*"

Second, we need to recognize these superficial "values" for what they are: traps that Satan set long ago and that people continue to fall into (and Christians are no exception) day after day, century after century.

The key to the problem of self-esteem is that *self-esteem* is not really what we need at all. What we need is *God-esteem*, focussing on Him and then seeing ourselves through His eyes. God has created each one of us with *intrinsic* value. The Genesis account tells us that we were made in the *image of God*. He demonstrated His own estimation of our worth by loving us enough to send Christ to us while we were still in our sins.

In Colossians we read concerning Christ, "*For in Him, all the fullness*

of deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete." As we seek after God and desire to have Him as our savior and friend, we can know that in Him we have everything we need to make our lives whole. When I, individually, acknowledge God for who He is — His power and glory, His grace and love — and realize that He cared enough for me to send His own Son to die for me, how can I not feel convinced that I have value?

As His children, we have fullness in Him through Christ, and in Him we lack nothing at all. †

Mark Hall is a pediatrician-missionary, currently working in Lubbock, TX.



God of Grace

O grant us faith, dear God of grace,
That strengthens and sustains —
A faith that reigns triumphantly
Through all our earthly pains.

Grant comfort that reveals Thy love,
Console our hearts, we pray;
God, wipe our tears, and courage give
To walk in hope each day.

O grant us peace, dear God of grace,
Peace Thou alone canst give;
That we may rest our souls in Thee,
And in Thy sweetness live.

— Beverly J. Anderson

HIS

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth

— Isaiah 53:2-7

Some Plain Facts

David Pharr

This permissive age has produced a generation which neither knows nor cares about Bible principles of morality. Chastity, the sanctity of marriage, and purity of heart almost seem to be relics of another age. Our young people are growing up under constant suggestions from the media and many of their friends that in moral matters “each can do his own thing.” Many people of more mature years are also affected. Here are some plain facts for young and old.

Fornication is sin. This means every kind of illicit sexual activity. The Bible is plain. Those who practice fornication cannot go to Heaven (Galatians 5:19-21).

Homosexual activities are contrary to nature and God (Romans 1:27). What is called “gay” will result in the damnation of Hell.

Pornography is a medium for lust and lasciviousness. This applies to suggestiveness, lewdness, nudity, etc., whether in printing, movies, or television. Jesus said, “*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*” (Matthew 5:28).

Things done in secret are never hidden. Actions too shameful to describe are sometimes done in secret (Ephesians 5:12). Modern situations which provide privacy cause many to feel their sins are secret. God sees it all (Proverbs 15:3). Every secret thing will be brought into judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Love is not an excuse for sin. A typical defense for illicit sex is, “We love each other.” At best this is self-deception. Love involves honor. In the highest sense of love, one will not cause the one he/she loves to do that which will put him/her in danger of the fires of Hell. One should be honest enough to call things by their right names. It’s not love, it’s lust (Romans 13:14)!

Married love is God’s plan for sexual fulfillment (Hebrews 13:4). The duties and privileges of the marriage relation-

ship are clear (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). Husbands and wives are required by law (God's law) to love each other (Ephesians 5:25, 28; Colossians 3:18, 19). Couples who "fall out of love" are not following God's plan.

Marriage is for life. No teaching of Christ is more plain than this (Matthew 19:3-9). Regardless of what counselors, lawyers, or judges might say, one who causes the breakup of marriage for any cause except fornication sins against God. If he/she marries another (except when the mate who was put away was guilty of fornication), it is adultery.

There are situations (caused by sinful attitudes, selfishness, hatefulness, etc.) when a couple cannot stay together, but they are still married to each other. Even if under civil law they are divorced, they are not free to marry others. The same restrictions of fidelity apply as if they were still together. They have no more right to "date" or to consider another marriage than they would if they were happily living together (see 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11).

There is never a marriage breakup without sin being involved. Both may not be guilty, but sin is an essential ingredient to divorce. It is tragic how casually some men and women hurt their mates, ruin their homes, and break the hearts of their children. It is more tragic when we consider the awful and eternal consequences of such callous disregard of the will of God (Hebrews 10:30, 31).

Marriages which are guided by the principles of Christ are happy marriages. Because human beings are involved, there are often some stresses and strains, but principles as in Ephesians 4:32 and 5:22, 23, 1 Peter 3:1-8, Acts 20:35, and Matthew 6:33 and 7:12 will show the way to overcome problems and to build happiness. †

David Pharr is the Director of the East Tennessee School of Preaching in Knoxville, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Only as genuine Christian holiness and Christ-like love are expressed in the life of a parent can a child have the opportunity to inherit the flame and not the ashes.

— Stephen G. Green

Affinity With Sin

Frank Chesser

“Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab” (2 Chronicles 18:1). Ahab was the seventh and one of the most wicked kings of Israel. Incited by Jezebel, he drove Israel to such depths of sin that even the mighty confrontation on Mt. Carmel was unable to shake loose its deep roots in idolatry. Of him the record states, *“Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him”* (1 Kings 16:33).

Jehoshaphat was the fourth and one of the most righteous kings of Judah. He sought after the Lord and walked in His commandments. He commissioned princes, priests and Levites to go throughout Judah and teach the people the law of the Lord (2 Chronicles 17). However, he made a costly mistake when he allied himself with Ahab. Jehoshaphat’s alliance with Ahab was sealed by the marriage of Jehoram his son, to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Though difficult to envision, the son of one of the most righteous kings

of Judah became the son-in-law of one of the most infamous couples in the history of mankind. Note the tragic consequences of Jehoshaphat’s affinity with Ahab:

COMMITMENT TO WAR

Having been wined and dined in ostentatious fashion, Jehoshaphat did not hesitate to join Ahab in battle against Syria. This decision almost cost him his life. As the enemy compassed about him, *“Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him”* (2 Chronicles 18:31). Only by divine intervention was Jehoshaphat spared an untimely death. God’s mercy saved Lot from the brimstone of Sodom, and that same trait of Deity rescued Jehoshaphat from the sword of Syria.

Kinship with sin always means war. It creates war in the heart, making it *“like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt”* (Isaiah 57:20). It produces war in the home, for *“unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build*

it" (Psalm 127:1). It yields war in the church as it foments "*envying and strife and divisions*" among brethren (1 Corinthians 3:3). It is the basis of war among nations. Thus David prayed, "*Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man; Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war*" (Psalm 140:1-2).

HEARKENED TO FALSE PROPHETS INSTEAD OF GOD

Having devoted little thought to the matter, Jehoshaphat agreed to join Ahab in battle. Desiring to calm his fears over his decision, Ahab sought to pacify him with four hundred false prophets who encouraged them to go against Syria with God's blessings. Yet unsatisfied, Jehoshaphat asked, "*Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?*" Reluctantly, Ahab sent for Micaiah, who foretold Ahab's death and Israel's defeat should they proceed with their plans. Rejecting the word of God, Jehoshaphat hearkened to a lying spirit and suffered the wrath of the Lord.

HIS FAMILY AND JUDAH SUFFERED SEVERELY

At Jehoshaphat's death the royal scepter fell to Jehoram. Inspiration declares that the influ-

ence of Athaliah played a major role in his extreme wickedness. He commenced his reign by killing his six brothers and various princes in Israel. He permeated Judah with idolatry and "compelled" the people to commit fornication. Divine judgment brought suffering to Judah and death to Jehoram and all of his sons except for Ahaziah. At Jehoram's death, Ahaziah took the throne and continued the wicked ways of his father. When he was slain, Athaliah usurped the throne and gave the southern kingdom its own "Jezebel." She inaugurated her reign in blood by murdering all potential heirs to the throne, including her own grandchildren, and set out to make Baal the national god of Judah.

Therefore, as a result of Jehoshaphat's affinity with Ahab, his ruling son killed all of his other sons; his daughter-in-law murdered his great-grandchildren and others; his ruling son and grandson were so corrupt that both were destroyed by the hand of divine judgment; and for fifteen years Judah suffered inconceivable spiritual damage under his son, grandson, and daughter-in-law. Such are the inevitable results when man forms an "affinity with sin." †

Frank Chesser is a gospel preacher working with the Lake Forest congregation in the city of Jacksonville, Florida, U. S. A.

Overcoming Temptation

T. Pierce Brown

One of the most beautiful stories illustrating the mind of Christ is His experience in overcoming temptations on the mountain with the Devil. How can I develop a Christ-like mind and be able to do likewise?

First, there must be a deliberate choice to be led by and filled with the Spirit. This simply means that when one finds a command or desire of God in any area, no matter what his conscious desire or preference is, he deliberately chooses, as Christ did, "*Not MY will, but THINE be done*" (Luke 2:42). Of course, this means that the principles herein mentioned do not apply to one who is not a Christian.

Second, we must notice 1 Corinthians 10:13, "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" But how does one accept and appropriate that promise?

As a foundation principle, he has to be aware of the promise and have it in his conscious and subconscious mind to be able to rely on it. It is also important to be "*filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18, 19) by letting "*the word of Christ dwell in you richly*" (Colossians 3:16). That word "*richly*" suggests a deep and broad familiarity with the Word, and a constant practice of its contents. When you are familiar enough with the Scriptures, you will discover that there is no temptation that can come to you that a Scripture does not fit. If you are consciously relying on God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13, the Devil will simply not have enough power to overcome you.

This is the specific way you "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). You have noted that Jesus quoted Scripture to the Devil when He was tempted, but you may not have been aware that the principle of "*letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly*" will give you the same kind of power. You will simply be "*strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man*" (Ephesians 3:16) so that you will not fall. †

T. Pierce Brown is a gospel preacher living in Wartrace, Tennessee, U.S.A.

"What Do You Do For Fun?"

Jack W. Carter

Several years ago a very sweet Christian girl told me about an incident with a young man who had been asking to date her.

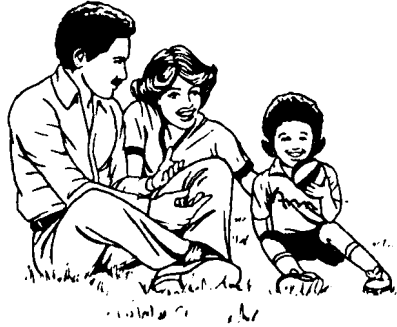
He was not a member of the church, and they just didn't have anything in common. She had turned him down twice, and now she said "no" to attending a rock music concert with him.

In mock exasperation the young man asked, "What do you do for fun? You don't dance, you don't drink alcohol, you don't attend rock concerts *What do you do for fun?*"

Her response was a classic message from all Christians with conviction. She told him, "For fun I get up in the morning without feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and guilty about what I did the night before." The young man had nothing more to say.

It is true. That is fun! Come to think of it, there are many things in her life that are fun. She is married now to a fine Christian man. They have a little girl and are building an outstanding Christian home together.

She is having fun every day not having to live with the affliction of deep scars and regrets from her past.



It is fun getting all prettied up each afternoon to receive a husband home from work, knowing that he won't be stopping off at a local bar for a few drinks with the fellows.

It is fun knowing that while he is away from her, his Christian conduct won't allow infidelity, or even flirting. It is fun watching him hold his little girl on his lap with loving, protecting arms. It is fun knowing that her little girl will never see her father in a drunken stupor or experimenting with drugs. It is fun living with the assurance that the home will be led by a spiritual leader who will guide the family members toward heaven.

The list of fun things for Christians is endless *What do you do for fun?* †

Jack W. Carter is the editor of The Rocky Mountain Christian and preaches in Castle Rock, Colorado, U. S. A.

“ . . . Not To Be High-Minded . . . ”

Don L. Norwood

Christians are warned in the New Testament not to be “high-minded,” trusting in material wealth and feeling puffed up with self-importance. The expression “high-minded” used in the text under consideration can also be translated “proud” or “puffed up.”

This same attitude keeps a person from being humble before God and man. It keeps him from being willing to confess wrong and to repent when he needs to. It also keeps one from seeking and granting forgiveness.

We humans, even though we may be genuine Christians, will always need God’s mercy and forgiveness (Romans 3:23). And God has made it very clear to us in His Word that He will only forgive us if we sincerely forgive others from our hearts (Mark 11:25, 26; Matthew 6:14, 15).

Jesus made it clear in His parable in Matthew 18:23-35 that if we do not forgive each other, we will not be forgiven by the Lord. Moreover, we will spend eternity lost and paying the debt.

The “pride of life” is a worldly attitude and is not what the Father would have us display in order to keep a right relationship with Him (1 John 2:15-17). It is one of the things that we must put away if we are to inherit eternal life with God.

Jesus’ parable about the wayward (or prodigal) son (Luke 15:10-32) points out to us the great need for humility, complete honesty with ourselves, and the willingness to admit wrongdoing, and then to sincerely repent. Also, He teaches the necessity of openly confessing the wrong that one has done. The father was eager to forgive and to receive him happily back in the home and family when he (the father) saw that the son had really repented. This shows us that God is ready and willing to forgive when we humbly repent and confess the wrong. This kind of humble attitude will always make it easier for us to forgive and to be forgiven. †

Don L. Norwood preaches for the church in Mason, Texas, U. S. A.

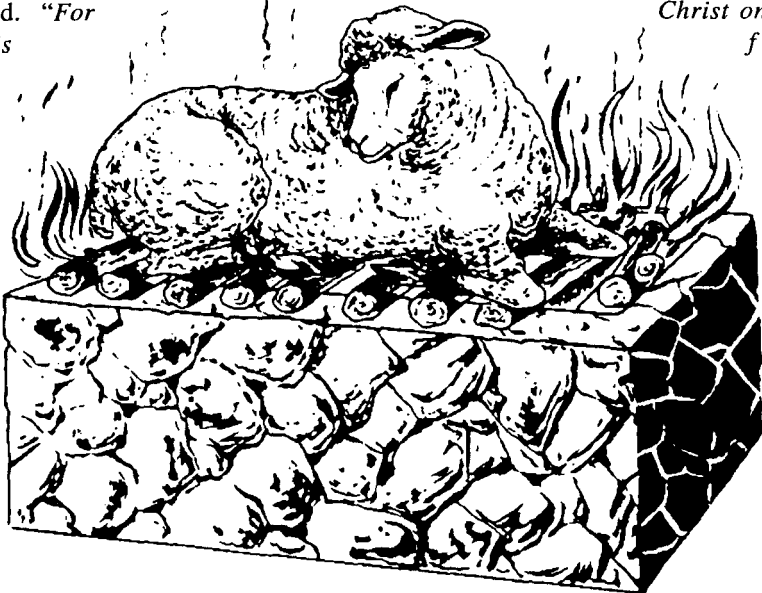
When Do Our Sacrifices Actually Count?

Garell L. Forehand

Our God has always required sacrificial service from mankind. From the time of Abel, sacrifice has been uniformly set before us as the God-appointed way that we approach our Creator.

Of course, sacrifices from sinful people have ever been the means whereby appropriation of the one great sacrifice becomes possible. If a sacrificial offering is accepted by God, it is clearly because of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. "For
it is

*not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure . . . Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus
Christ once
for*



DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

all" (Hebrews 10:4-6, 9, 10).

In response to that single effectual sacrifice, man has been called upon to offer the God-ordained sacrifices, while depending upon Christ's payment. "*Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord*" (Psalm 4:5). That is completely different from offering the sacrifices, and putting one's trust in the sacrifices he offers!

Christians are called upon to "*offer up spiritual sacrifices*" that are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). We are informed that doing good and sharing are sacrifices with which God is well-pleased (Hebrews 13:16). We are even taught to offer our own bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord (Romans 12:1). But how may we be assured that our sacrifices are truly acceptable to God?

When We Are Truly Penitent.

True sacrifice to God is a response to Him because of our own sin. At its 'roots' is actually a desire for reconciliation that has been lost due to our transgressions. To be acceptable, our sacrifices must spring from pure motivation. David understood this principle, and he humbly confessed his sin to God. "*For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart – These, O God,*

You will not despise . . . Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering" (Psalm 51:16-17, 19).

When We Are Being Obedient To God. Sacrifice is certainly a condition of obedience, but never a substitute for it. Upon accusing King Saul of not having obeyed the voice of the Lord, the prophet asked: "*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry*" (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

When We Are Ourselves

Merciful. Sacrifice is an appeal to mercy. It would be the height of hypocrisy for one to sacrificially approach God for His mercy while at the same time refusing to offer mercy to others. When the Pharisees grew offended at Christ's eating with the "sinners" of the people, Jesus told them: "*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*" (Mt. 9:12, 13).

Garell L. Forehand is the preacher for the Granbury Street church in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.

Distinctions Are Essential

Hollis Miller

A man once told me that his mother had become a religious fanatic. Before questioning the man's judgment, it might be advisable to study the Pharisees of the New Testament. So concerned were they with keeping every tedious detail of their assembled traditions that they were rendered both blind and deaf to the teaching of Jesus. It is possible to become a religious fanatic, if by the term one means meticulous attention to endless matters that are neither taught nor sanctioned by the Scriptures.

But relatively few individuals in the modern world become religious fanatics. The opposite is more often the rule. I recently read a cartoon in which one individual was asking another: "Do you think it necessary for a Christian to regularly attend worship?" The individual being asked replied, "I never knew a Christian who did not want to." That cartoon is an excellent catapult for projecting us into many questions. For example: "Is it necessary for a Christian to feed one who is hungry; love and care for his family; or be merciful and forgiving?" It is difficult to find a stopping place for such questions, isn't it?

The Christian spirit is nowhere represented in the Bible as one which seeks to avoid pleasing and serving the Lord. Rather, it is always pictured as a spirit of willing and obedient surrender. Paul put it this way: "*I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*" (Philippians 3:8).

With regard to serving the Lord, one who finds himself asking such questions as "Must I?" or "Do I have to?" needs to review the commitment of his heart. †

Hollis Miller is an evangelist in Elkton, Kentucky, U. S. A.

Six Stewardship Principles

1. You reap what you sow. (Gal. 6:7)
2. The attitude of the giver is more important than the gift itself. (2 Cor. 9:7)
3. The time to give/commit is now! (2 Cor. 9:5)
4. We must give ourselves to God first. (2 Cor. 8:5)
5. "Freely you have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:8)
6. Give God the "firstfruits." (Prov. 3:9-10)

Rosemont Reminder
Fort Worth, TX

What Shall We Say To These Things?

Tom L. Childers

The Bible says, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*" (Romans 8:35). Does Paul mean that, regardless of what happens, God will always love His people? Or does Paul affirm that he is not going to allow the things that happen to him to cause him to quit loving the Lord?

Paul describes the suffering a Christian must endure: "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Romans 8:18).

Next, Paul says we are saved by hope: "*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*" (Romans 8:24). Hope is what Christians must do.

Then Paul asks the question: "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*" (Romans 8:35). The "*who*" can also be translated as "*what things.*"

Next, Paul lists a catalogue of things that could separate the Christian from God. Paul says there is someone who is pleading our case (Romans 8:26, 27). There is help

for us in dealing with trials and tribulations. Paul says God is for us (Romans 8:31). Paul says we are conquerors of all these things (Romans 8:37). He says that he is persuaded that nothing will cause him to separate himself from the love he has for God (Romans 8:38). He does say that the only way he would give up his faith would be if it would bring about the salvation of the Jews (Romans 9:4).

About these verses, R. L. Whiteside wrote:

All the things mentioned are things without. Nothing is here said of what corrupting influences may do to the heart. No powers of persecutions can compel one to stop loving God; if he quits, he does it of his own accord. Love cannot be destroyed by force of imperial command, but it may wax cold. Some even depart from their first love (Revelation 2:4). Paul recognized that people depart from the faith, but he was persuaded that no evils coming on us from without could destroy the love of

God.

If this is really the case, then, as a Christian who loves the Lord, I will not allow:

- The accidental death or terminal disease of a loved one to destroy my faith in God.

- The sins of my children to so embarrass and discourage me that I will quit the Lord and His church.

- An unfaithful spouse to so unsettle me that I will give up the faith.

- The mistreatment of those in the church or out to cause me to give up and quit.

- The losing of a job or position to so disillusion me that I will stop serving the Lord.

- Poor health or aches and pains to cause me to give up on the goodness of God.

- The weaknesses, shortcomings, disappointments, and hypocrisies of brethren to disillusion me and weaken my faith in Jesus.

I know not what the future holds, but I am like the apostle Paul, in that I am persuaded that I will never, ever, ever stop loving the Lord and believing in His goodness and mercy. With the Lord's help, may it ever be so. †

Tom L. Childers preaches the Gospel in Ripley, Mississippi, U. S. A.

What Have We Done Today?

We shall do much in the years to come,

But what have we done today?

We shall give our gold in a princely sum,

But what did we give today?

We shall lift the heart and shall dry the tear,

We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,

We shall speak the words of love and cheer;

But what did we speak today?

We shall reap such joys in the by and by,

But what have we sown today?

We shall build us mansions up in the sky,

But what have we built today?

Oh, how sweet it is in fond dreams to bask,

But right here and now we must do our task.

Yes, this is the thing our souls must ask,

Just what have we done today?

— Nixon Waterman

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter three.

1. Why did Nicodemus believe Jesus was from God? (V. 2)
2. The prophets of God from old had prepared the Jewish people for the coming of God's _____. (Daniel 2:33; Isaiah 2:2,3; Joel 2:28)
3. Jesus said that no one can enter the kingdom unless he is born of _____ and of the _____. (V. 4,5)
4. Was this "new birth" a physical birth or a spiritual birth? (V. 3-8)
5. Jesus said that He, the Son of Man, had come from where? (V. 13)
6. "For _____ so loved _____ that He gave _____, that whoever believes in Him _____, but have _____." (V. 16)
7. What statement did Jesus make, prophesying of His own death on the cross? (V. 14)
8. Who is "condemned already"? (V. 18)
9. Why was John the Baptist in the area called Salim? (V. 23)
10. This statement indicates that baptism, the spiritual cleansing, was (1) sprinkling of water on the person. (2) pouring of water over the head. (3) immersion of the person in the water.
11. Was John "the Christ" (Messiah)? (V. 28)
12. "He must _____, but _____." (V. 30)
13. John knew that Christ came from _____. (V. 31)
14. Christ testified of what He had _____ and _____. (V. 32)
15. How do we certify that God is indeed true? (V. 33)
16. For _____ whom God _____ speaks the _____ of _____, for God does not give _____ by measure. (V. 34) See also Luke 3:21,22; Colossians 2:9; John 1:14)
17. What has God given into the hands of His Son? (V. 35)
18. He who believes in _____ has _____; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see _____. (V. 36)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

Two Fathers Who Failed

Betty Tucker

On the front page of today's newspaper is the account of the disgrace of a family. A 63-year old man watched as his twin sons were sentenced to serve time in a federal prison. They had broken the law, and now the moment of retribution!

The judge sentenced the father to a lesser term for "his acquiescence in their venture." He said that this father's "greater punishment will be his knowledge that he could have stopped his offspring from engaging in their illegal activities, and failed to do so."

The judge further stated that this father "is going to bear that scar from now until the day the casket closes." What a sad destiny for him!

Echoes From The Past

This story reminds us of King David's experience with his son, Absalom, as recorded in 2 Samuel. The young man aspired to sit upon his father's throne. He finally led his band of followers in an attack upon David's army, but was defeated. As he fled, Absalom was caught up in the branches of an oak tree (2 Samuel 18:9) by his long hair. Joab, commander-in-chief of David's army, seized the opportuni-

ty and initiated the death of the young usurper (18:14).

Hear the agony in the cry of this biblical father, upon hearing that his beloved son was killed. Feel his pain as he laments in the last verse of chapter 18, ". . . *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*"

Today's Children

Children of today have more money to spend than have any previous generation. They are the most entertained youngsters the world has ever produced. Yet, there are also far more children labeled "disturbed," "incorrigible," "emotionally unfit," etc.

We have numerous hospitals, detention centers, and other facilities staffed by highly trained and highly paid personnel who are trying desperately to help our children.

The big question is, why? Why are so many of the very young hurting? What has happened, that our youth are in such desperate straits?

Little Men And Women Too Soon

Listen to a group of today's children talk. Hear them rave about

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the latest musical group or discuss their newest "sweetheart." Little girls are already beginning to compete for attention from the opposite sex. They dress like beauty pageant contestants. Their jeans may easily cost more than their fathers earn for a hard day's labor.

Our society slants everything toward sex and worldly pleasure. Television, movies, and the media glamorize sin and make it appear satisfying. No longer are virtue, honor, and truth the standards used by our young people.

They taste the forbidden fruit of sensual pleasure at a tender age. By the time they are 17, there is "*nothing new under the sun.*" They are bitter and bored with life, and so they search ever farther for more thrills.

Parents! Wake Up!

Parents, you must realize that you must guide your family through the dangerous undercurrents:

* You control the TV set. Do not allow Johnny to watch whatever delectable morsel of sex and violence is being served up.

* You are in charge of the purse-strings. Do not tolerate filthy, lustful music being played in your home.

* Keep a watchful eye upon the literature that they read, the movies and videos they view.

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (15:33).

* Know their friends. Know where your child is and with whom he spends his time. He will become like them, at least to a degree. Remember the father in our opening narrative. Perhaps he did not "bother" or "have time" to monitor his sons' friendships through those early formative years.

The wise man advises in Proverbs 22:6, "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"

Moses urged the people to ". . . teach (the commandments of the Lord) diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Only by careful guidance and by setting the proper example in our own lives can we direct the children of our youth toward heaven. "*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are the children of his youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them*" (Psalm 127:4, 5). This is a happy contrast to the father who would "bear the scar of his sons' indiscretions until the day the casket closes." †

Betty Tucker is a Christian writer from Lobelville, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Homebase

Jeril Cline

* Maryland's "Choice" program saves taxpayers \$43,000 for each child not put in detention. It has proven to be so successful that other states are considering implementing it in their program. What is it? It is a parent substitute, a social worker who checks on a child (juvenile) three to five times a day, at school and at home, day and night. This personal follow-up includes praise for every accomplishment, great or small.

* Merry White, administrator of Harvard's East Asian Studies program reports that it is not primarily the Japanese school system that is responsible for the extraordinary academic achievements of Japanese youngsters, but the Japanese family. A much smaller proportion of mothers hold jobs outside the home in Japan than in the United States, and they are primarily responsible for their youngsters' mental development.

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* Contrast our national 47% adult functionally illiterate rate with Japan's 1%.

* **Home By Choice** author **Brenda Hunter**, a psychologist who specializes in infant attachment, has raised serious questions about child development with and without parental nurturing at specific ages.

* **Brenda Friedan**, feminism's First Lady confesses,

I sense the exhilaration of super-woman giving way to tiredness, disappointment, disillusionment.

* After trying to find the perfect child-care setting which included a housekeeper or nanny, **Linda Burton**, a full-time fund-raiser for a public-interest law firm, decided she was the answer to her problem. In her book, **What's A Smart Woman Like You Doing At Home?** two of six day-care directors advised her to do everything she could to stay at home with her children. She states,

I had wanted someone who was loving and tender, with a sense of humor and an alert lively manner — somebody who would encourage my children's creativity, take them on interesting outings, answer all their little questions, and rock them to sleep. Slowly, painful-

ly, I came to a stunning realization: the person I was looking for was right under my nose. I had desperately been trying to hire me. And that's what a smart woman like me is doing at home.

* **Burton White**, author of **A Parent's Guide to the First Three Years**, and former director of the Harvard Preschool Project, says,

After more than 30 years of research on how children develop well, I would not think of putting an infant or toddler of my own into any substitute-care program on a full-time basis, especially a center-based program. Unless you have a very good reason, I urge you not to delegate the primary child-rearing task to anyone else during your child's first three years of life. Babies form their first human attachment only once.

* **Dr. James Dobson** said,

If you had asked me this question five years ago (whether mothers of elementary and high school students ought to be employed outside the home) I would have said that mothers are needed at home primarily during the preschool years. But now I feel even more strongly about the

need for mothers to be at home during the adolescent years. This will not be a popular view, but I can only report honestly what I feel and have observed.

The frantic activities of teenagers create great stresses on families, which require adult attention. Who will be there to taxi the kids back and forth and get ready for the slumber party and sew the new dress and attend the first football game and keep up with all the 'must dos' of those years? Not only is Mom needed to hold things together at home during these pressurized days, but she must brace herself for the conflict so typical of these years. It is not a good time for her to come home exhausted each evening from a job that has required her total commitment. That sets the stage for emotional explosions between generations.

God knew all along that there was no success in life that could compensate for failure in the home. He graciously placed us in the most important place at the most important time for the most important work. †

Jeril Cline is the wife of Danny Cline, minister for the Lord's church in Blue Ridge, GA. Jeril is a writer and home-maker for her family.

Analysis of a Child's Future

Mary Oler

What do I want for this child of mine?
Shall he see riches and fame combine
Into a life of renown and wealth?
No . . . but God grant him peace and health.

What do I want for this child I hold?
Shall it be said he was wise and bold,
Aby directing his "Master Mind"?
No . . . but let him be gentle and kind.

What do I want for this child I teach?
Shall he invent some machine to reach
Into earth's secret and unknown part?
No . . . let him have a humble heart.

What do I want for this child I keep?
Shall he go onward while others weep,
Pushing ahead though the helpless call?
No . . . but let him be loved by all.

What do I want for his future years?
Shall I dare hope that he shed no tears?
No . . . but let laughter and tears combine
Into pure joy for this child of mine.

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Weddings are a nervous time. Although the exchanging of vows is the heart of the marriage ceremony, most brides and grooms are too excited and nervous to realize what they are promising. Of course many couples experience pre-marital counseling, but it is important to remind ourselves of the serious promises we made on that special day.

When I was just a boy I thought the marriage ceremony was in the Bible. On several occasions I searched diligently for that part of the Old or New Testament which contained those vows. Of course, they are not there. The ceremony the preacher used was on a piece of paper stuck in his Bible. Yet, the basis for the ceremony and the vows needs to be God's word. Marriage is not just an agreement with your spouse and the state; it is also a contract witnessed by God (Malachi 2:14).

In almost every ceremony, these are some of the vows exchanged:

"Do you promise to love, honor, and cherish . . ."

To most people desiring marriage, these are easy vows to take. After all, love is the basis of the relationship, so the expectation is there that one will automatically honor and cherish the mate.

At the moment of marriage both parties are overflowing with affection for each other. In time, circumstances may test that love, yet another

part of the vows must be remembered, **" . . . in sickness and in health, in prosperity, for better or worse."** It is easy to pledge love when the bride is wearing white and the groom is dressed in a rented tuxedo. Yet, this vow is also binding when there is a sick baby, or when one partner is depressed, unresponsive, or sick.

"Do you promise to obey . . ."

Some couples request this statement to be omitted from their ceremony because the woman finds it distasteful to contemplate obeying a man. Even when the vow is included,

Another
Look
At
Our Vows

Ancil Jenkins



"Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God."
Ephesians 5:21

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many may make it with mental reservation, promising to obey as long as the wife agrees with her husband's decisions. Yet, this part of the vow is Biblical. The New Testament speaks of the wife as being submissive. God's order is for the husband to be the leader, the head of the house. God commands him to do this with the same kind of love for his wife as Christ had for the church (Ephesians 5:25-28).

The marriage vows are for "... **as long as you both shall live.**" The vows of marriage should not be taken lightly. They are permanent. God designed the covenant to be broken only by death (Romans 7:1-4). Although He allows separation, and even divorce and remarriage under certain conditions, these are

not His primary will (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11).

Men and women approaching marriage do well to accept this state as permanent. God does not intend for people to be trapped in an unbearable situation, but the husband and wife can work with each other, and with others as needed, to make their marriage viable and meaningful, as well as lasting.

"Marriages are made in heaven," someone said, and added, "so are thunder and lightning." Another has said, "Marriages are not made in heaven. They are a do-it-yourself kit you put together here on earth." Let the vows you take be the basis of building your marriage. †

Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher in Miami, Florida, U. S. A



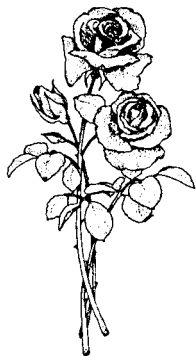
Highway of Life

J touch your hand now and then
As we travel the road of life,
Together in sad times and good
Through many troubles and strife.

J have not been easy to live with,
Sick, moody, and sad,
Forgive me for words J have said,
Remember the sunny days, not the bad.

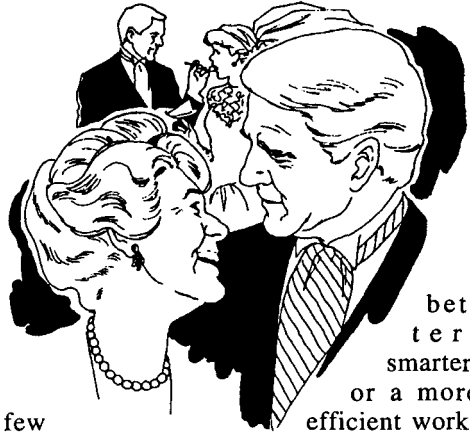
God in His wisdom knows
In my heart there is a love
That will weather the storms of life
Until we reach that home above.

Coleman Cabaniss



Joined At The Heart

Frances Parr



better,
smarter,
or a more
efficient work-

Anyone watching even a few hours of television will observe the media's idea of modern manhood. Husbands are featured cleaning kitchens, doing laundry, sampling new foods, and changing diapers. Magazine advertisements feature father with baby; mother is nowhere to be seen.

Many television programs portray the father as a person to whom the simplest basics must be carefully explained or one who must be continually watched to avoid his falling into impossible situations.

None of this would be demeaning toward men were it not for the attitudes of other characters in the production. As the wife issues instructions, her tone and language give the impression that she's talking to someone incredibly stupid and far beneath her.

Certainly equal pay for equal work necessary and any job a person, male or female, is capable of doing well, should be available to either. The attitude that one sex is

er is archaic. In ancient times, even in Bible accounts, the idea that males were superior was common. However, this notion came from man, not God.

In our attempt to gain equality among men and women in the work force, have we over-compensated and perhaps forgotten God's domestic plan?

Genesis 2:18 reads: *"The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.'"*

After noting this situation, God created every animal and bird, from the dust of the ground. Adam named the animals as God presented them. When all had been brought, not one animal or bird was found to be a helper comparable to the man.

Genesis 2:21-23 tells how God made woman. When she was given to the man, Adam said, *"This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man."*

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The first woman was a unique creation, like none other. It seems significant that she was formed from Adam's rib. Why wouldn't a bone from the foot have served, or perhaps one of the many cranial bones? As in all things, God's every action had special meaning. Perhaps He used a rib because it is close to the physical heart, near the center of the body.

Woman was made for man; she is to complement him in every way. She is meant to be the perfect helper, the perfect mate, the perfect companion. She is neither superior nor inferior to him. Man and woman belong together, each half of a complete and whole being.

In the Garden of Eden, Eve was tempted by Satan and did the one thing God had forbidden. She influenced her husband, and he also sinned. This is not to insinuate that Adam might not have sinned if he had been the one to whom Satan first appealed.

When God decreed their punishment, Adam was reprimanded, not only for the sin of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but also for heeding the voice of his wife. From the beginning, God intended for the man to be the head of the family.

Paul repeats this in Ephesians 5:22, 33. The husband is the head of the wife, and wives are to be in subjection and respect their husbands. Before we women bristle at this, read on. The men receive an even more exacting commandment.

They are to love their wives as much as they love themselves, even as Christ loves the church!

Peter echoes Paul's statements in 1 Peter 3:1-7. The chaste, submissive conduct of a wife can win an unbelieving husband to the Lord. Rather than fine clothing, expensive jewelry, and elaborate hair styles, a quiet and gentle inner beauty is more becoming.

Husbands are to be understanding, honoring their wives as the weaker vessel. Peter warns if a man does not do this, his prayers may be hindered.

In today's world, wives must often work outside the home to supplement the family income. It would be less than fair for a husband not to share the responsibilities around the house. This can be done without challenging his manhood or his role as leader of the family. In fact, this sharing fulfills the early Scriptures of man and his comparable helper.

Perhaps the media's treatment of husbands' and fathers' roles is all in fun. Nevertheless, how easy it is to be unaware of gradually accepting an idea, and then to suddenly realize that a whole mental concept has changed. God's plan for the team of a man and woman who respect and love each other, working equally together to maintain a harmonious home, brings happiness and peace for all who dwell therein. †

Frances Parr is a Christian writer living in Eldon, Missouri, U. S. A.

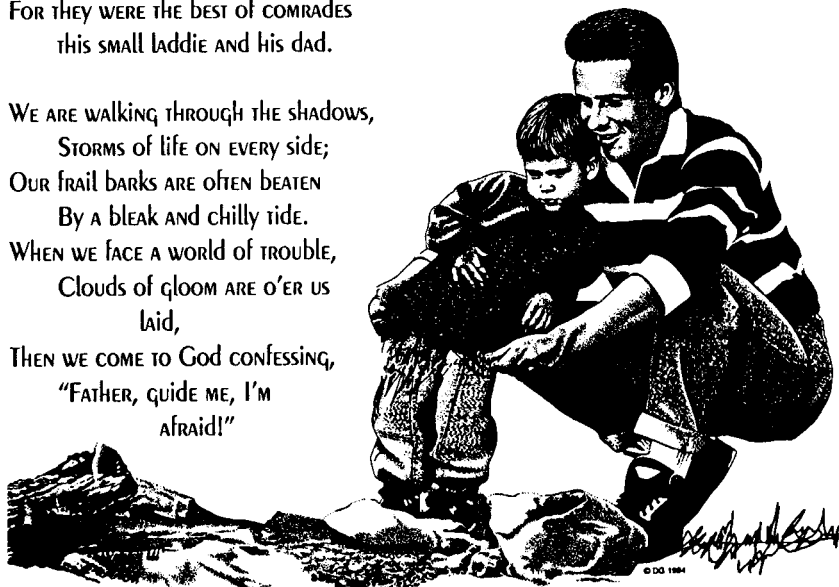
FATHER, LEAD ME!

THEY WERE WALKING THROUGH A WOODLAND,
A FATHER AND HIS SON,
WHEN THE SHADES OF NIGHT WERE FALLING,
AFTER SETTING OF THE SUN.
AND THE BOY SO SHYLY LISTENED
TO THE SOUNDS THE INSECTS MADE,
THEN HE CROPT UP CLOSE AND WHISPERED:
"FATHER, LEAD ME, I'M AFRAID!"
DID THE FATHER NOT IN KINDNESS
LEAD THE LITTLE FELLOW THROUGH?
DID HE NOT SPEAK WORDS OF COMFORT,
PAT HIS ARM, AND CHEER HIM, TOO?
WOULD HE NOT HIS LIFE HAVE GIVEN
TO PROTECT HIS DARLING LAD?
FOR THEY WERE THE BEST OF COMRADES
THIS SMALL LADDIE AND HIS DAD.

WE ARE WALKING THROUGH THE SHADOWS,
STORMS OF LIFE ON EVERY SIDE;
OUR FRAIL BARKS ARE OFTEN BEATEN
BY A BLEAK AND CHILLY TIDE.
WHEN WE FACE A WORLD OF TROUBLE,
CLOUDS OF GLOOM ARE O'ER US
LAID,
THEN WE COME TO GOD CONFESSING,
"FATHER, GUIDE ME, I'M
AFRAID!"

Clyde M. HARTLEY

Will the FATHER NOT IN MERCY
SURELY LEND A HELPING HAND?
Will HE NOT RELIEVE OUR SORROWS,
GIVE US GROUND ON WHICH TO STAND?
Will HE NOT WITH ALL TEMPTATION
MAKE A WAY FOR OUR ESCAPE?
HE'S A FRIEND, IF WE WILL SERVE HIM,
ONE WHO NEVER WILL FORSAKE!





“Go Ye Into All The World”

Grady Miller

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Here was Christ’s “Great Commission.” Here were the “marching orders” Jesus gave in the first century; here is our challenge and obligation today.

The work of evangelism is a task for all the church. Certainly we all have different abilities (Matthew 25 and 1 Corinthians 12). But to sow the seed of the Word of God, to declare the name of Jesus, to point the lost to the Savior and testify of His righteousness is a responsibility for each member of the body. We must all lift up Jesus in every way that we can.

The field of work is all the world. Truly, *“God so loved the world . . .”* (John 3:16). His teachings are to be carried to all nations and to every race. But, surely, we can see that if the Great Commission involves every nation,

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

it also includes every neighborhood. If it means to carry the Gospel overseas, it means we must go across the street. If Jesus intended for native-born, Galilean Jews to take His word “*unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8), how can we draw the line and ignore other classes and other colors?

The work is ours until the end of time. Jesus must be preached until He returns in judgment and this world is destroyed. This is the work of the Lord, in which we must always abound (1 Corinthians 15:58). This is the work in which we must not grow weary in well-doing (Galatians 6:9). This is the work — the only work — that will survive this world and last into eternity.

“Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain” (Philippians 2:16). †

Grady Miller preaches the Gospel of Christ in Arnold, Missouri, U. S. A.

How Long Has It Been Since You...

Took the time to go see someone who lives alone?

Wrote a letter to someone who crossed your mind?

Read the Bible to someone too ill to read for themselves?

Encouraged someone who was having a hard time being a Christian?

Prayed earnestly for someone who was faltering?

Tried to have a Bible study with someone you knew was lost?

Told a teen that you were proud of their efforts to live for Christ?

Spent more time on your knees praying than on the phone talking?

Informed your family of your love and appreciation of them?

**EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN DO SOMETHING
TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE ELSE!!!**

The Weakest Link

Lewis G. Hale

There is a proverb that says, "A chain is no stronger than its weakest link." This cannot be successfully contradicted.

This is true of our character. Sometimes an otherwise great man has a fatal flaw. We say, "He has a chink in his armor." *We spend so much time trying to improve on our strengths that we may overlook a very critical weakness.*

Churches are not immune to this problem. We may have a multiplicity of problems, but one surpasses all others.

It is a matter of judgment, but it seems to me that our greatest weakness is a *failure to evangelize*. Perhaps there was a time when we did most of our preaching in the area of what it takes to become a child of God. We may have neglected sermons on true worship, spirituality, generosity as manifested in contributions on the first day of the week, fervent prayer, helping the helpless, and a host of other important matters. But could it be that, realizing our failures, we turned almost exclusively to these areas, and that we are now neglecting preaching about salvation?

Several years ago a major denomination announced it would abandon evangelism in favor of serving man's needs for the here and now. About five years ago, they announced that this was a mistake. **It was a death warrant.**

How long will it be before our brethren realize that without evangelism the church dies? It reminds me of the Essenes who preached celibacy. If believed and practiced by all, the human race would become extinct! God forbid that we as the church become extinct.

Lewis G. Hale preaches for the Southwest church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

**"I am a debtor . . .
I am ready . . .
I am not Ashamed . . ."
(Romans 1:14-16)**

Paul said later, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another" (Romans 13:8). Paul recognized an eternal debt of love that could never be repaid because of the grace of God bestowed upon him. He recognized he was lost and without hope. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (Ephesians 2:4, 5).

Any man who understands this will feel the same responsibility. He will say with Paul, "For necessi-

ty is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

God had lifted Paul from the wallowing in the mire of chapter 7 of Romans, and had elevated him to the position

he now holds in Romans chapter 8.

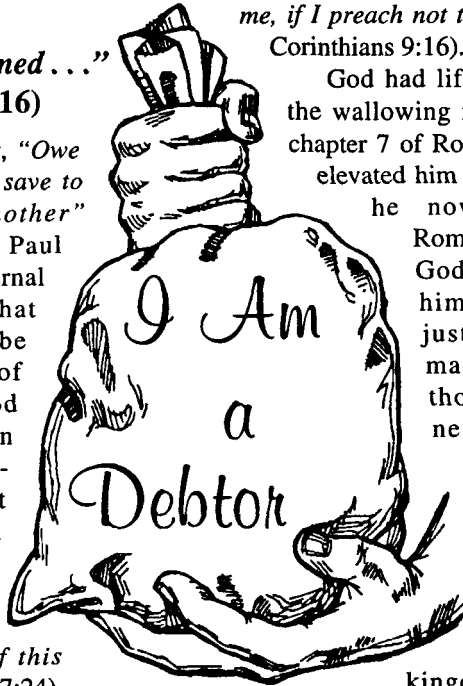
God had adopted him as His son, justified him, made him as though he had never sinned,

revealed His will unto him, given him an inheritance, made him a citizen of the heavenly

kingdom, and had sealed him with His Holy Spirit.

Every child of God has received these same blessings. If we would contrast our former condition with the present, we would say with Paul, "I am a debtor, and I am ready." †

Roy Dunavin proclaims the Gospel of Christ in Fort Smith, Arkansas, U.S. A.



Roy Dunavin

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . . Romans 1:16

IF A MAN HAS NOT HEARD THE GOSPEL, IS HE LOST?

Demar Elam

Some people say, "If a man has not heard the Gospel, he is not lost." This kind of thinking is why we have not evangelized the world in our day. Many say, "Surely, if God is a loving God, He would not hold one who has not even heard what to do to be saved eternally responsible." Let us realize that God and man do not always view matters exactly alike.

One must realize that man is not lost because he has not heard the Gospel, but because he is a sinner. Paul said in Romans 3:10, "*As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.*" "*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). ALL men need the blood of Christ applied to their lives to be saved. "*. . . without the shedding of blood there is no remission*" (Hebrews 9:22). Peter stated, "*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ . . .*" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). The blood of Christ was shed to save all men from their sins. However, it is not until all of God's

requirements are met that a man receives the blessings of that atoning blood.

We have long taught, and rightly so, that one receives the benefits of the blood by believing (Hebrews 11:6), repenting (Luke 13:3), confessing (Matthew 10:32,33; Romans 10:9,10), and by being baptized into Christ's death, where His blood was shed (Romans 6:3-8). These are the essential steps which finalize the "New Birth" spoken of in John 3:1-13. Can the man who has not heard be saved in heaven without experiencing the "New Birth?" If Jesus was correct (and He was), then one **cannot** be saved without the new birth, because Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he **cannot** enter into the Kingdom of God." Did Jesus really mean this, or is the man saved who has not heard?

The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47), and Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). The one who has not heard the Gospel is not a part of

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the church, the saved.

Baptism is required if a man is to put on Christ. Galatians 3:27 says, "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*"

Men should be careful about saying so readily that God is being unfair to punish people for their sins even though they have not heard. God has the divine prerogative and responsibility to deal with sinners as justice and righteousness demand.

Mankind imagines that sin is not bad enough for one to lose his soul over. Man views sin through human eyes, not through holy eyes, as God does. God is a righteous God (Psalms 89:14; Jeremiah 23:5-8). Righteousness and justice demand that sinners be punished. Because of His divinity, God could not overlook one unrequited sin without ceasing to be God.

The cure for man's sinful state is the gift of His only begotten Son on the cruel cross of Calvary. That cure has been provided by a loving and merciful God.

Let us try to illustrate, in this way, the condition of a man who has not heard of God's provision for his salvation: Suppose a man has a terrible disease, and a cure has been provided for this disease, but the man does not have access to the cure. He dies! Did he die because he did not have access to the cure,

or because he had the disease? To draw a parallel, those who say that the man who has not heard the Gospel is *saved* would say that the diseased man *actually did not die*, or that he died solely because *he did not have access to the cure*. But that is not the case at all. He died because of *the disease* he had. If the people who have not heard the Gospel are lost, it will not be because they have not heard of the cure (the Gospel), but because of the disease (sin) they have.

Why did Jesus give the apostles a commission to preach the Gospel to every creature? If people are saved *because* they have never heard the Gospel, the Lord made a mistake in giving the commission because *many who do hear will reject the message, thus sealing their doomed state*. Dare we accuse God of sending out a message of damnation?

No; men are not lost because they have not heard, but *because they are sinners*. In that sinful state, they are not a part of that group which comprises the saved, the church (or body) of Christ. This is why the commission was given. *Men are lost until they accept Christ and receive the benefit of His blood in their lives.* †

Demar Elam lives in Montgomery, Alabama, U. S. A., and is actively involved in world evangelism.

What Is Our Mission?

Albert Gardner

Is our mission the building and the maintenance of places of worship, the care of physical things?



The church is divine and has a divine mission. A clearly defined purpose prevents misunderstanding, promotes the work we are to do, and helps us not to lose sight of our objective. It seems clear that many have lost their way. They stay busy, but still fail to do what is divinely appointed.

The devil is not afraid of a busy church as long as it is not saving souls! As one reads the inspired history of the church in the book of Acts, one is impressed with the work of the apostles and early preachers. As they left one city to go to another city to preach the Gospel, they had a burning desire to teach more people.

Their purpose, as they went, was to make disciples by teaching them and baptizing them (Matthew

28:19). It was this deep belief that people were lost and the Gospel would save them that moved the great apostle Paul to go preaching to the entire world. When there was opposition, he did not give up. At Corinth the Lord told Paul not to be afraid, but to speak the Word, "*for I have much people in this city*" (Acts 18:10).

Why do we think our mission is any different? The gospel preaching that turned the world upside down, when softened and weakened, will be ineffective. Can you imagine Paul's going into a city like Athens, where his spirit was stirred because they were given over to idolatry, and announcing his first lecture as "How To Feel Good About Yourself," and for the next three nights lecturing on the

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“Psychology Of How To Get Along In A Pagan World”?

On the mission field, when souls are not being taught and won, it is easy to turn to social projects. These are not wrong and do have their place, unless they are used to replace the direct preaching of the Gospel. When the apostles preached and people obeyed, churches were started, and they were off to another city to repeat the process.

The mission of Christ is summed up in Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that

which was lost.” This is our purpose, too. Everything we do should contribute to this purpose. We must not get involved in some less important project, or think that being busy is the same as being approved.

Jesus told the apostles to go teach all nations, baptizing believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then He adds, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

you.” One thing He had just commanded was “to teach all nations.” This is how the Great Commission becomes our duty. As long as there is even one person in any nation of the world who has not been taught the saving Gospel, we have not finished our job.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Fa-ther, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway,

even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16). †



Our mission is to seek and save the lost.

Albert Gardner serves the Lord in Shelbyville, Kentucky, U. S. A., and has been involved in mission work for many years.

Lessons from Malachi

Leon Cole

The Book of Malachi

The Author

The book of Malachi has the distinction of being the last book of the Old Testament. Little is known of its author. There are those who believe that Malachi was not a proper name, and that we actually do not know the author. It is known that many Jews believed him to be Ezra the scribe. It is apparent that he was closely connected with the work of Nehemiah (compare Malachi 1:8 and Nehemiah 5:15, 18). His name means "Messenger of Jehovah," and he lived up to that name. Many of the great principles he addressed need close attention in our day.

Rejection Of God

The great love God had extended was rejected by His people. God even accused Israel of despising His name (1:6). The reason for the charge was based upon their making unacceptable offerings while expecting God to respect them. It is not uncommon to observe those who wear the name Christian take the blessings of God and use them

for their selfish purposes. They never seem to realize that God's love obligates us to love Him in return, "*we love him because he first loved us*" (1 John 4:19).

Faithful, Or Just Busy?

Malachi also condemns faithlessness on the part of the priests. It should be remembered that today every Christian is a priest unto God (1 Peter 2:5). This makes this lesson even more important to us. The priests of Malachi's day were very busy, but their duties had become mere form and ritual. Is it not true that there is a tendency for us to merely engage in an outward form of worship rather than in worship which comes from a deep, abiding faith? We also tend to get too involved with insignificant matters. We are like the lady who was so busy doing "church work" she had no time to win souls.

Divorce

A third difficulty to which Malachi speaks is how divorce had become an accepted thing of the

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day. It is sad, but such has become an accepted thing in the church. Multi-divorces and remarriages are no longer uncommon among us. It should be remembered that God still hates putting away (2:16).

As in our day, in the time of Malachi values were reversed. Those who were evil were called good, and the good were called evil (2:17). Today the emphasis is on the physical over the spiritual. A pleasure-crazed society has no concern for *"seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33).

Many would view the most terrible crime of the people in the days of Malachi to be the one found at 3:8. They robbed God. It was not that they gave nothing; but they failed to give what was really due God. We do not live under a law that sets a specific amount, but we are to give "as we have been prospered" (1 Corinthians 16:2). Are we giving according to our prosperity? It appears that we are often allowing God's cause to suffer and die in favor of materialism. We are recipients of God's grace and love; let us not reject His mercy and blessings in favor of the world.

We can profit greatly from the lessons proclaimed by this unfamiliar prophet of old. †

Leon Cole works with the church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Walking With God

Sometimes I walk in the shadow,
Sometimes in sunlight clear;
But whether in gloom or brightness
The Lord is very near.

Sometimes I walk in the valley
Sometimes, the mountain's crest;
But whether on lowland or highland,
The Lord is manifest.

Sometimes I walk in the desert,
Sometimes in waters cold;
But whether by sands or streamlets
The Lord doth me enfold.

Sometimes I walk in green pastures,
Sometimes on barren land;
But whether in peace or danger,
The Lord holds fast my hand.

— Author Unknown

Imitating Christ

Harvey Porter

"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Philippians 2:1-2).

Philippians chapter 2 is a truly great passage of Scripture, beginning first with the statement, "*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ.*" Paul said in Romans 6:3 that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus ". . . *were baptized into His death.*" In verse 5 he added that in this ". . . *we were united with him in His death.*" This is like marriage. Each draws on the strength and love of the partner. They share the same life. How could we describe the "encouragement" we receive from knowing we are united with Christ? It is so great that it is indescribable. Yes, there is tremendous encouragement realizing that we are in Christ.

Second, Paul said, ". . . *if any comfort from His love . . .*" What a source of strength to know that someone loves us. But to know that Christ loves us is far greater. Indeed, this is real comfort.

Third, Paul wrote, ". . . *if any fellowship with the Spirit . . .*" This is the Holy Spirit who dwells in

God's children. The very Spirit of God and Jesus dwells in us to comfort us and help us.

Then Paul reminded the church of the "*tenderness and compassion*" they enjoyed in God's family. We all want this. Young and old alike, even animals, understand tenderness. It is a universal language.

Paul said all of these things to exhort the Philippian Christians to act this way toward one another. He concluded by saying, ". . . *then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose . . .*" Every congregation must practice these things. Paul continues by saying, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves*" (verse 3).

These great teachings will work in any century and in any culture. Let's all give earnest attention to these words. †

Harvey Porter preaches for the Lord's church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Hindrances To Thanksgiving

Colin McKee

6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer (1 Corinthians 10:6-10)

Christians should be always thankful. However, the truth of the matter is that we are often unthankful; we frequently go about our everyday affairs without thinking of where our blessings come from or of how we should be grateful for life and all things we enjoy. Israel is a tragic example of ingratitude. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul mentions several things that hindered them from being thankful.

1. They lusted after evil (verse 6). They were not thankful for what they had, nor the good that God had provided. Their discontent prompted them to seek things that God had prohibited, things which destroyed their spirituality.

2. They were idolatrous (verse 7). Their minds were divid-

ed. Their loyalty was shattered. They turned from the divine power of the Creator and manifested the lowest form of ingratitude: ". . . nor were thankful" (Romans 1:21).

3. They focused on the sensual (verse 8). They became base, giving license to their fleshly desires. Those who live on the level of brute beasts will not likely be thankful.

4. They tempted Christ (verse 9). They were not satisfied with the food and provisions that God sent; they were not thankful for the daily bread He gave.

Let us avoid the terrible mistakes Israel made; let us rather be thankful. †

Colin McKee is a former missionary to Asia and now preaches in Huntsville, Alabama, U. S. A.

Don't Give Up!

D. R. Boggs

"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9).

The life that God has planned for us is one of endurance in the working of righteousness. He asks for our faithfulness to the end of this life. Whatever may come to us, peace or persecution, we are asked to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and stay committed to Him.

The devil has many tricks to attempt to convince us that Christianity is not worth the effort. Sometimes it is to make life so difficult that we want to give up, and thus lose eternal life. Some-times it is an attempt to convince us that there is nothing difficult about right living, and cause us to become complacent and quit before the end.

God says that nothing is more valuable than the life eternal. That gift is granted to those who overcome. It is the reward for steadfastness regardless of the circumstances. Many have made the beginning, only to decide that the reward is not worth the cost. They

have fainted along the way and lost the crown of righteousness. Perseverance to the end is an absolute necessity.

God has not promised that all of our brothers and sisters will act the way they should all of the time. If we put our confidence and measure of faithfulness in the trust of frail humans, we will be disappointed. Our Christianity cannot be based upon the social approval of others. It can only be based upon faithfulness to the Word of God. It is nice to have the association and approval of others. However, one's salvation is not measured in that way. It is measured by whether we continued in well-doing according to God's measure. If we hope to hear God's blessing in judgment, we must not grow weary in righteousness. If circumstances should so require that we be the only one who stands for right, we must stand with God. Don't give up! Stay faithful to God!



All Hands Point Toward Pentecost!

KINGDOM IN PROMISE

Zech. 1:16 [B]

Matt. 4:17 [B]

Luke 10:9 [B]

Matt. 16:18 [B]

Luke 22:16 [B]

Mark 9:1 [B]

Matt. 6:10 [B]

Matt. 3:2 [B]

Isa. 2:2 [B]



PENTECOST

KINGDOM IN EXISTENCE

[B] Acts 2:29-31

[B] Acts 14:22

[B] Acts 28:23

[B] Rom. 14:17

[B] I Cor. 4:20

[B] I Cor. 15:24-25

[B] Col. 1:13

[B] Heb. 12:28

[B] Rev. 1:9

**Burying
Our Chains
In A Grave**
Romans 6.3-7

Freedom From...

- The Penalty For Sin**
Romans 6.7
- The Power Of Sin**
Romans 6.6
- The Practice Of Sin**
Romans 6.1-2

Bobby Dockery
Romans 6:3-7

Introduction:

I. In the year 1838, the slaves on the island of Jamaica in the West Indies were set free. On the evening before their freedom became official, they built a huge mahogany coffin and dug a deep grave. Into the coffin the liberated slaves threw the remainders of their life of slavery: chains, handcuffs, iron collars, whips, branding irons, even the garments they had once worn. Then the lid was sealed. At the stroke of midnight, the coffin was lowered into the grave and covered over. Then they joined in singing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"

II. In a sense, that is a picture of what happens to us spiritually in baptism.

A. We are buried with Christ; our old man of sin is put to death; we are set free from sin and raised to newness of life.

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- B. The chains of sin are buried in the grave of baptism.
- C. "Freedom From Sin" is Paul's theme in Romans 6. What does it mean to be free from sin?

Body:

I. Free From The Penalty For Sin.

- A. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). All are guilty (Romans 3:23).
- B. In baptism we become the people for whom Christ died. We accept His offer to pay our penalty for sin.
- C. We are set free from the guilt of sins of the past; the slate is wiped clean; we start all over (Acts 22:16).

II. Free From The Power Of Sin.

- A. "*Henceforth we should not serve sin*" (Romans 6:6).
- B. Those who live in sin are under the power and jurisdiction of Satan.
 - 1. Sin reigns in their mortal body (6:12). It has dominion over them (6:14).
 - 2. When we live in sin we are slaves (literally) of sin (6:16).
- C. Baptism cancels Satan's dominion; his ownership ends in the grave of baptism (6:7).

III. Free From The Practice Of Sin.

- A. Those who have died to sin cannot consistently continue to live in it (6:1, 2).
 - 1. We have been set free to serve righteousness (6:17).
 - 2. We have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- B. Paul is not saying that those who have been baptized will never sin again.
 - 1. Rather, he is saying that we are no longer enslaved by the lifestyle of sin; the propensity to sin has been shattered; the pull of sin has been weakened.
 - 2. Grace does not provide motivation to sin, but to righteousness.

Conclusion:

"Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you o'er evil a victory win?
There's wonderful power in the blood!"

— L. E. Jones

Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U. S. A.

IF YOU SHOULD HAVE THE CHOICE

Revelation 3:1-3
George Akpabli

Introduction:

1. We all must die, no one can stop the hands of death (Ecclesiastes 8:8; 1 Corinthians 5:22).
2. Physical death puts an end to everything (Hebrews 9:27).
3. Our text speaks of spiritual death, the only death over which you have some control.

Discussion:

A. What Is Spiritual Death? (Ephesians 2:1-5)

1. Carnal lifestyle (Romans 8:6, 13).
2. Separation from the love of the Father (Luke 15:32).
3. A life of sinful pleasures (1 Timothy 5:6).

B. Some Causes of Spiritual Death

Which of these causes of death would you choose if you had the option?

1. Death by hunger

- a. Some people kill themselves by going on hunger strikes.
- b. Some die due to lack of food in famines, wars, etc.
- c. Some Christians die due to spiritual hunger (Matthew 4:4).
- d. The Word of God is the Christian's spiritual food (1 Peter 2:2; Job 23:12; Isaiah 55:2).
- e. Failure to nourish oneself on God's Word causes spiritual malnourishment and death.
- f. Would you choose to die in this manner?

2. Death by cancer

- a. Sin's formation is like a cancer that spreads (James 1:12-15; 5:20; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8).
- b. Would you choose to die of spiritual cancer by allowing sin to spread all over you and become cancerous? (2 Peter 2:20-22).

3. Death by heart attack

- a. This is a result of insensitivity to spiritual needs and conditions

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

leading to death (Romans 2:4-5; Matthew 13:14-15; Acts 28:27).

b. Some causes that lead to a spiritual heart crisis (Romans 1:28-32).

4. Death by an accident

a. Unforeseen stumbling blocks (Romans 14:13).

b. Lack of love (1 John 2:10).

c. Misunderstood liberties (1 Corinthians 8:9).

d. You need not die this way (Philippians 1:27; 4:1; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 15:58).

5. Death by suicide

a. Can be caused by voluntary rejection of Christ and the destruction of the spiritual life (Ecclesiastes 7:17; Romans 1:27; Hebrews 10:27).

b. An apostate person has committed spiritual suicide.

Conclusion:

1. In the spiritual realm, you have control over your own death. You need not die in any of these ways.
2. Result of spiritual death (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 2:11; 20:14-15).

George Akpabli is from Ghana and is doing mission work in the Republic of Benin, West Africa.

God is eternal, having had no beginning and knowing no end. Man is not eternal but immortal. He had a beginning, with the beginning of his life as a human, but he is made in God's image which means that once that life was begun, it will have no end.

So, man is immortal, at once both a thrilling and a frightening realization. The one thing which can be said of every relationship of this physical world is, "This, too, shall pass." Sometimes it is with regret that we see a thing come to an end, sometimes it is with profound relief.

But no such statement can be made of the soul. It will never pass. So, if we choose a life with God, preparing for eternity with Him, what a thrilling thought immortality is! But if we ignore God or defy Him and die in disobedience, immortality will be an unending curse from which there can be no release.

—Bearing the Family Image by Betty Burton Choate

Should we try to restore the New Testament Church?

Cecil May, Jr.

When we speak of “restoring the New Testament church” we refer to the attempt to be today what the New Testament tells us the church ought to be. Yes, the goal should be pursued.

“Restoring the New Testament church” has never, to my knowledge, been used to mean duplicating a particular first century congregation with its human failings.

We are to seek to restore, rather, what God requires the church to be and to do. We should restore, for example, what the church at Corinth would have become by putting into practice the corrections Paul made in his letters to them. We are to attempt to conform, not to the church as it was in any particular local manifestation, but to the church as Christ desired it to be in every location.

Have we already restored the church, or are we in a never-completed process of restoration?

Certainly there are places where the church has so apostatized that there has ceased to be a church of God in that location. Whenever

the Gospel is faithfully preached there, those who gladly receive the Word and are baptized are added by the Lord to His church. The church is “restored” in that place.

There is a sense, however, in which restoring the New Testament church is an ongoing, never completed process. The human element in the church has never been perfect. The church at Corinth was a church of God, but it still needed to restore the apostolic doctrines to its teaching and practice if it was to continue to be a faithful church. The apostle commanded them to continue that process of restoration.

We do need to continue seeking to restore the New Testament church by bringing it back into being wherever it is not, by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. We need to continue the process of restoring New Testament understandings, attitudes, teaching, and practice everywhere and in all things which Christ, the Head, instructs His Body to do and to be.†

Cecil May, Jr. is president of Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Mississippi, U. S. A.

How Do You Understand Baptism?

David Marube



... one Lord, one faith,
one baptism. . .

-Ephesians 4:5

According to Paul in Romans chapter six, when we are baptized three things happen:

(1) **We die with Christ (verse 3).** This is the one area that is often ignored by many people when they are baptized. They are buried with Christ in water without first being crucified with Christ. What does it mean to “die with Christ”? No doubt it means to “die to self.” S. D. Gordon expresses it this way: “In every redeemed heart there is a throne and a cross. If self is on your throne, Jesus is on the cross . . . If self is your king, if self is on your throne, Jesus is on the cross . . . Let self be on the cross and Jesus on the throne.”

Surely we need to deal with the question — *Did I crucify self on the cross before I was buried in water during baptism (Colossians 3:5-7)?* Self cannot allow one to act like a Christian while self is alive and on the throne!

(2) **We are buried with Christ (verse 4).** This makes it very clear that baptism is a burial,

and it requires much water to be done biblically (Acts 8:38; John 3:23).

(3) **We rise with Christ to walk in newness of life (verse 4).** After baptism, we become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17) who have put off our old selves (Ephesians 4:22). Surely we ought to appear new in comparison to what we were before we became Christians.

How do you understand baptism? If you have not yet been baptized, why not make that decision now, so that you may become a member of the body of Christ (His church), where there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1), and where are found all spiritual blessings, redemption, and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:3, 7)? If you have been baptized, were you crucified with Christ before you were buried with Him? Are you walking in newness of life? If so, **GREAT!** †

David Marube preaches the Gospel in Kisii, Kenya, East Africa.

Since Mary, the mother of Jesus, was given special recognition by God, why would it be wrong for us to give her our recognition and adoration?

Gary Workman

It is never wrong to give "honor to whom honor" is due (Romans 13:7) and give special recognition to someone because of his achievements, but to ascribe adoration and veneration to someone other than God is to worship "the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). This is what has been accorded Mary by many people. People have knelt before statues of her, and she has been prayed to, sung to, and worshiped in many other ways. There is seemingly no limit to the divine honors that have been paid to Mary. But let us notice what the Bible says about her.

1. Mary was certainly a good woman (Luke 1:28-30), but she was not divine. She was just a woman. Otherwise, Jesus could not have been the "Son of man" (Matthew 8:20). Long before she gave birth to Jesus, He was her Creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). Mary acknowledged God as her Savior (Luke 1:47). Therefore, she was not



sinless, as some have made her out to be.

2. Mary was a young virgin (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27) at the time she conceived Jesus, just as the prophesy had foretold (Isaiah 7:14). But the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is false. After she had given birth to Jesus (Matthew 1:25) she had four other sons and at least two daughters by Joseph (Matthew 13:55-56).

3. "Blessed art thou among women" is what was said to Mary, not "above" women (Luke 1:42). No one but God is to be worshipped (Matthew 4:10).

4. Mary did not ascend bodily into heaven as was pronounced by some in 1950, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Mary and all others will be raised at His second coming (1 Corinthians 15:23). †

Gary Workman is editor of *The Restorer* and lives in Mesquite, Texas, U. S. A.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Who Am I?

(from page 46)



Saul of Tarsus

Puzzle from Luke

Lost Coin; Vineyard;
Blind Leading Blind;
Faithful Steward; Lost
Sheep; Ten Pounds;
Soils; Rich Man and
Lazarus; Fig Tree;
Honored Guest;
Prodigal Son; Good
Samaritan; Cloth and
Wineskins; Woman
and the Judge;
Mustard Seed; Rich
Fool; Lighted Lamp;
Pharisee and Tax
Collector.

from page 63

Verse Search - 3 (from page 82)

1. Because of the signs (miracles) He did.
2. Kingdom.
3. Water; Spirit.
4. Spiritual.
5. Heaven.
6. God; the world; His only begotten Son;
should not perish; everlasting life.
7. That He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up
the serpent in the wilderness.
8. He who does not believe in the Son of God.
9. There was much water there.
10. Immersion of the person in water.
11. No.
12. Increase; I must decrease.
13. Heaven.
14. Seen; heard.
15. By receiving the testimony of Christ.
16. He; has sent; words; God.
17. All things.
18. The Son; everlasting life; life.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



Russian Federation

December 26, 1991

Government: FEDERATION

Prime Minister: VIKTOR CHERNOMYRDIN

President: BORIS YELTSIN



Secular Facts:

Location: Eastern Europe, stretching across West Asia to the Pacific.

Land Mass: 6,592,800 square miles.

Population: 149,527,000.

Cities of 1,000,000 or more:

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Samara,
Nizhny Novgorod.

Ethnic Groups:

Russian82%
Tartars.....3%
Mixed.....15%

Languages:

Russian.....(National Language)
Ukrainian
Belorussian
Uzbek
Armenian
Azerbaijani
Georgian
English.....Strongly pushed as second language

Literacy: 99%

Religion:

Russian Orthodox.....25%
Muslim12%
Protestant.....3%
Roman Catholic2%
Jewish1%
Non-religious57%

The Church:

Congregations: 94 churches in 85 cities.

Membership: 6,500 baptisms.

History: Resulting from the work of Russian **Josef Cherski** who was converted in the U.S. in the 1920's, there might have been 30,000 Christians in the country by the beginning of World War II. After the war, **Otis Gatewood**, **Bob Hare**, and **Gwen Hensley** made many short mission trips behind the Iron Curtain, teaching secretly. **Stephan Bilak** has had radio broadcasts from Switzerland, **Ivan Kolesnikow** from Montreal; World Christian Broadcasting has also directed programs to Russia.

Modern History: With the fall of communism, probably more churches have sent more short-term teaching teams to Russia than to any other nation. 36 American households now work regularly with 24 congregations. Southern Christian University coordinates teaching teams for the universities. There are 6 Bible Training Schools, with 3 additional schools planned. Christian literature is now being printed within the country, as well as being shipped in.

For information, contact **Demar Elam**, Southern Christian University, P.O. Box 240240, Montgomery, AL 36124.

Front Cover: **St. Basil's Cathedral** in Moscow. The 400 year-old structure became a museum during communist control of the country.