

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### *Gift Of The Holy Spirit*

Almost two thousand years ago when the Good News Of Christ's death for the sinners, His burial and His resurrection from the dead was proclaimed before a large audience, by the apostles of Christ, in the city of Jerusalem, for the first time, the Bible says that those who had listened the wonderful story of cross, were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do." (Acts 2:37). In other words, they had realised for the first time in their lives that they were in sin, and that when God has done so great and wonderful thing for their redemption from sin, through Christ, then what must they do now to receive the redemption, the forgiveness of sin? Peter then 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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38, 39).

Notice, after hearing the Good News of Christ they had become believers in Him. Now, they were told to repent, that is, change their minds from sin and ignorance, and then be baptized for the remission or forgiveness of sins; then resultantly they would receive: the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now what was the gift of the Holy Spirit that they were to receive as a result of their baptism into Christ? Earlier, in chapter one of the book of Acts we read the story of the resurrected Christ as He was about to go back to the Father in heaven, He told His disciples, the

apostles, to wait in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father, and that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit shortly; and that they were to receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. (Acts 1:4-8). The Lord had promised here that His apostles would receive the Holy Spirit, in being baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that they would receive power when He, the Holy Spirit had come upon them. Power to speak in tongues or languages that they hadn't learned; power to perform miracles and supernatural acts; power to perform instant healings; power to speak and teach by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Which all came true as we read in Acts 2:1-11; 43; 3:1-10; 5:12,16.

Now, the Lord had made the promise to the apostles that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. And, in fact, that was the precise and specific reason for them to be baptised with the Holy Spirit. But the apostles made the promise to all others, as we read in Acts 2:38 & 39, that as they would be baptized for the remission of their sins, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Again, what is the gift of the Holy Spirit then?

To understand this we need to go back to the time when Christ, the Saviour of mankind was born. In Matthew 1:18-20 thus we read: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Christ, therefore, was the child of the Holy Spirit, that is, He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made possible for Christ to be born as a man. He was not born by the will and the power of man, but He was born by the will and the power of the Holy Spirit. He was born to save man from sin. "For the wages of sin is death," says the Bible, at Romans 6:23, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Inferentially, then, the gift of the Holy Spirit for the entire human race is salvation, redemption, the eternal life of heaven that is available in Christ Jesus for all. "For by grace," says the Book, "you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8). The gift of God or the gift of the Holy Spirit is the same; which is salvation from sin or eternal life in heaven. While the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was made to a few, the apostles; the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is for everyone, and to all who are

afar off. All are invited to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the basis of belief in Christ, repentance from sins, and baptism for the remission of sins. While the baptism of the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to perform supernatural acts; the gift of the Holy Spirit is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

## ***Using Excuses To Cover Up And To Justify Ourselves***

**J.C. CHOATE**

People are prone to try to justify their actions. For example, we often hear the statement, "Every one is doing it." Whether it be lying, dishonesty, immoral sex, accepting bribes or bribing others, or a thousand other things, the one who is doing the wrong will offer the excuse that everyone is doing it. He thinks that since others are guilty, that makes it all right for him to behave in the same way. Of course everyone is NOT doing it, but suppose everyone was; would that make it right? If a thing is wrong, it is wrong, regardless of how many may be doing it. If a thing is right, we should do it even if others are not. Even though we may be among the few who do the right things, the people of the world will generally respect us for doing right and refraining from that which is bad and wrong. (Romans 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:12).

Sometimes we use excuses to try to justify NOT doing good things. In the church there are those who will tell you that it is a waste of time to invite people to worship. They say that they have invited their friends and people in general many times but they have no interest in coming to worship or study. Such Christians have given up on evangelizing. But the problem is that they have heard others say that people are not interested so often that they begin to say it too. This is Satan's propaganda and most of the Lord's people have fallen for it. What if a business man used that kind of reasoning? "There is no need to try to sell my product because no one is interested and will buy it." If he reasoned that way he would soon be out of business and would be going hungry. But salesmen do not so reason. They have something to sell, they believe in it, and they work at it. They may be turned down again and again but they believe that if they will work they will be successful in selling their goods, and so they are. If we believe in Christ, that he is the Son of God, that he died on the cross for our sins, and that

he can save us, then we will go forth with excitement and zeal for that message, and we will be able to win souls to Christ, encourage our friends to attend worship, to study the Bible, or whatever else we are trying to accomplish. Read Acts 8.

There are those who will not let it be known that a Bible correspondence course is being offered by the church of Christ. They say that people are prejudiced and will not take a course if they know that it is from the church of Christ. Yet, in most cases the church is hardly known in the particular area. How could people be prejudiced against it when they know little or nothing about it? Maybe we are the problem because of the way we have presented the church to them. But the point is, sooner or later they must learn about the church if they are going to be taught the truth. That is simply because the truth concerning Christ also includes the truth about His church, and that church wears the Lord's name, and therefore, if one obeys Christ and is saved, Christ is going to add him to His church, making him a member of the church of Christ. Read Acts 2. Now how can you offer one a Bible correspondence course, or teach one the truth, without these things coming out? If a person is prejudiced against the church, and you start off without identifying it, such a person may not appreciate it once he finds out that you are representative of the church of Christ. Why be ashamed of the Lord and his name? Furthermore, if a person is that prejudiced against the Lord and his church, he probably will not be a very good prospect for conversion.

The fact is, in all of this, there are those who try to justify their actions on the basis that the majority do it, or the majority don't do it, or they are afraid that someone will not accept the truth for what it is. We must remember, however, that the Lord is the way to heaven, the only way, and His way is narrow. (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13, 14). We must do what he wants us to do whether anyone else does it or not. Or if the Lord forbids that we do a thing, we cannot do it and be acceptable to him even if the whole world is doing it. Furthermore, when we really believe in the Lord and we are ready to put him first in our lives, we are going to find many opportunities to teach and convert souls to Christ. The offering of excuse for not doing so will be the furthestest thing from our minds. We will love the Lord, freely acknowledge him, proclaim him to the world, serve him faithfully, and bring forth fruit to his honor and glory. In all of these things, it is a matter of what we believe, how strong our faith is, and how much we want to go to heaven.

## ***The Bible Is God's Word***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

"... holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) "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." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

"... I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18, 19).

"Mother," Anthony began, "there are so many religious books that people follow, and they teach so many different things. How can we *know* which book is right, and which religion is right? How can we *know* that the Bible is from God?"

"Well, Anthony, if you were far from home and you got a letter in the mail from me, do you think you would know it was mine?"

"Yes—it would sound like you," Anthony answered.

"You're right. And that is how we can know the Bible is from God. Because, as the Creator, God would have knowledge and power beyond anything any man would know. So His book tells us truths beyond our own ability to find out. And since God has always existed, the Bible gives information no human could know. It even tells us how things were before there were any people, and it tells us how God made the world. That is knowledge nobody but God could tell.

"The Bible was written in a wonderful way. Men who sat and thought about their beliefs in religion wrote the books that guide other religions, but God Himself gave us the Bible. He used about forty different men to do the writing. Most of them never knew the others, because the last one lived about sixteen hundred years after the first one wrote! God's Spirit told them exactly what to write, so their sixty-six

individual books fit together like chapters of one complete book. Each of them wrote different parts of one whole message.

"Aseema, do you know what that message is?" Mary asked.

"Daddy said last night that Jesus is most important, as God's Son," Aseema answered.

"You're right," agreed Mother. "We learned the scripture, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' That promise was made first in the first book of the Bible, and the Bible ends with the promise that Jesus will come again to take His Family—the church—to live with God forever. All of those writers couldn't have understood and written their parts about Jesus if God had not been telling them what to write.

"There is another way that we can know the Bible was actually written through the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. There are scientific facts in the Bible that the men who penned it could not have known. At a time when people thought the earth was flat, or that the land was floating on the back of a huge turtle, or carried by an elephant, the Bible said that God sits above the circle of the earth (Isaiah 40:22), and that 'He hangs the earth on nothing.' (Job 26:7).

"The Bible is an accurate history book, too. There are no mythological people and places in it, but even archaeologists use the Bible as a guide for finding the locations of cities of the past. There are kings and nations described in the Bible that had disappeared from all other known records. People who doubted the Bible said, 'Aha! Those nations never existed! The Bible is wrong!' But the more archaeologists dig into the ruins of the past, the more they discover that the Bible was right and the doubters were wrong!

"One of the most important ways, though, that we can know the Bible is from God," Mary explained, "is that we can follow the laws God gives in it, and they will bring only good into our lives. In religions developed by men there are wrong teachings as well as some truths. But when people follow those wrong directions, problems will come into their lives. Whole countries have problems because of the religions they follow. But the Bible contains *only* the truth, *all* of the true directions we need for living safely and happily in this world, and there is no law in it that will be *bad* for us. There is not another book in the world that can make such a claim! We as Christians are so blessed to have God's thoughts written in His book, to be our guide."

# *Paul's Concern For The Lost*

**BILL BROWN**

"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptation, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house". (Acts 20:17-20).

One of the great tragedies existing today is apathy toward the lost. Too much emphasis has been given to expensive, showy buildings instead of a very modest building with the members having a great mission program and plan. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the ages." (Matt. 28:19-20).

An individual or a Congregation is great only in proportion to their concern for the lost. Paul delivered one of his great sermons on his third missionary journey to the elders from Ephesus. This was his farewell address to them. Our concern for the lost must be like him. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ". (I Cor. 11:1).

The very basis for Paul's concern for the lost was that he regarded himself as a servant (V-19) and he referred to himself as a "servant" (Phil. 1:1; Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 9:19). He was willing to serve in behalf of lost souls, as one who planted the seed (Lk. 8:11), as one who watered and cultivated, lay the foundation of a congregation or build the superstructure. The service concept is essential in Soul-Winning. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise". (Prov. 11:30). All Christians are called to serve others. "I beseech you, brethren, (Ye know the house of Stephanas, . . . and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helpeth with us, and laboureth". (I Cor. 16:15-16).

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". (Eph. 2:10) "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in

heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God". (Eph. 3:10).

The characteristics of the apostle Paul's service was "With all lowliness of mind". Therefore, salvation by grace understood and appreciated makes for great humility. Paul gloried only to preach a humble, crucified Christ. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world". (Gal. 6:14). If we think we can commit and dedicate ourselves to a heavy financial load for material things and just play around at trying to save the lost, we have things cross-ways and priorities backwards. Paul no doubt shed tears because of ignorance, (Acts 19:2), and because of blasphemy (Acts 19:9), and because of idolatry (Acts 19:28). We, too, should be moved to sadness and tears for the lost when we think of sin with its misery now and its condemnation in eternity. "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 6:23). Paul suffered much because of his deep concern for the lost. And every Christian needs to recognize that he or she is a soldier of Christ and must be willing to endure. "Thou therefore endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". (II Tim. 2:3). The extent of Paul's concern for the lost was motivated by a desire to fulfill the command to "GO", and he tried to fulfill this on three major missionary journeys: suffering much hardship. (II Cor. 11:23-28). In his going he taught fearlessly, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God". (Acts 20:27). He loved people enough to teach them what was profitable—not popular or pleasant, or agreed upon, but that which would save if obeyed.

Paul could say after his fearless preaching that he was "pure from the blood of all men". (Acts 20:26). May it never be that any New Testament Christian would disparage in seeking the lost, whether it be using a postage stamp to send the glad news of salvation or giving generously to those who are physically able to take the message as Paul did.

"Over the hills and in the valleys,  
through the meadow's hue,  
across the grassy plains, to the horizons blue,  
there are souls to be won to Christ,  
by me and you".



# 18,000 Sermons

JIM FAUGHN

A few weeks ago I heard brother J. A. Thorton speak. In the process of his presentation he mentioned that he had spoken more than 18,000 times during his lifetime. He also told how his "career" could have ended a long time ago.

According to brother Thorton, he went to a particular location for a "try—out" one Sunday when he was a very young man. He thought that his sermon on Sunday morning went fine. He then spent the afternoon visiting with some of the brothers and sisters. During the conversations, one sister's name kept coming up. She seemed to be universally appreciated and admired in that church for her knowledge of the Bible.

As brother Thorton recounts the events of that day, he describes his sermon Sunday evening in very unflattering terms. I believe he used the word "disaster."

At the conclusion of the service, the sister who was so widely respected walked up to him. He says that if she had told him he'd never make it as a preacher, he probably would have never tried again. That is one indication of how terrible he felt about his presentation that evening.

However, the sister shook brother Thorton's hand and said, "I got some-thing good out of that." Seven words. That's all they are, but what a difference those seven words made!

Who can count the number of people who have been helped by 18,000 sermons? Who knows who might be in heaven because of one or more of those sermons? *Who knows what brother Thorton might have done with his life if one lady had been critical instead of encouraging??*

Is there anybody you can think of who might benefit from an encouraging word from you???

## **"Let God Be Found True!"**

DILLARD THURMAN

Paul's most difficult obstacle was the unbelief of the Jews. He

openly challenged them with: *"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar."* (Rom: 3:3-4). It is upon this premise that our salvation is hinged, so that saints are standing *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."* (Tit. 1:2). God is true and faithful in what He has promised: and He has vouchsafed this for man: *"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."* (Heb. 6:17-18). You can peg all your hopes on the integrity of God, and know that all His promises are secure! In all things, *"Let God be found true, but every man a liar!"*

### **God is Always True and Faithful!**

From the very first, God has shown Himself to be faithful to His word! Wicked Balaam did not hesitate to affirm: *"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall not make it good?"* (Num. 23:19). Men may breach their word, promise, contract and covenant; but God changes not! His promise, once made, shall stand forever! Moses said of Him: *"He is the Rock, his works are perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."* (Deut. 32:4). Abraham confronted the Lord in a telling way when he asked: *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"* (Gen. 18:25).

### **God is the True and Righteous Judge!**

As the Judge of all men, God will always judge righteously! There will be no misfits in heaven; and there will be none out of place in hell! To this idea Hosea concurred in writing: *"For the ways of the Lord are right."* (Hos. 14:9). Harken to the Psalmist: *"The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity."* (Psa. 7:8). He knew that judgment would be right: *"he hath prepared his throne for judgment: And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness."* (Psa. 8:7-8). Yet again the Sweet Singer of Israel said: *"Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: . . . He shall judge the people righteously."* (Psa. 97:10). Though *"it is a fearful thing to fall into*

*the hands of the living God,"* (Heb. 10:31), still it is a comfort to know we will be judged righteously by One who wants us to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9).

### **Right Judgment Given to His Son!**

The judgment will be no less true and right when administered by His Son! Jesus openly taught, *"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."* (Jno. 5:22). He continued by saying, *"As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just."* (Jno. 5:30). He did not arbitrarily judge, but said: *"And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."* (Jno. 8:16). We must remember that we shall be judged by One who can *"be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb. 4:15). Those who love and serve Him will find they will be judged by a loving, compassionate Saviour!

### **Paul Recognized Christ As Judge!**

While preaching on Mar's Hill in Athens, Paul declared that God *"Hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."* (Acts 17:31). A sobering truth is that we must accept the *Judicial Office* of the Son of God! *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* (2 Cor. 5:10). That is a tribunal that every man must face! Jesus pictured this scene in saying: *"Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations."* (Mt. 25:31). In speaking of Christ, Peter wrote that all men *"shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead:"* (1 Pet. 4:5). Paul said that Christ *"shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."* (2 Tim. 4:1). There will be no exemptions, and no "plea bargaining" in that day! The judgment will be impartial, and it will be fair and right!

### **All Judged By God's Word!**

We shall face Christ at the judgment; but we will still be judged by God's Word! Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."* Yet the integrity of God is still to be reckoned with: *"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which*

sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (Jno. 12:48, 49). That word has been channeled within the gospel delivered by inspired men. "But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Pet. 1:25). There is no way to escape it, for our Lord promised: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Mt. 24:35). All who scorn, refuse and repudiate His word now will still have to face them in the judgment! Is this unfair? No, rather we are told with the last word from our Lord: "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." (Rev. 22:14). This is a foretaste of the judgment, where the good and evil appear! "Let God be found true, but every man a liar!" You will have no arguments there!

### How Can Salvation Be Obtained?

Paul reminds us: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." (1 Thes. 5:24). You can have implicit faith and trust in what God has said; but the words and doctrines of men can destroy! It was God (in His word) who said: "But without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6). Yes, I realize many contend that the heathen who have never heard the gospel will be saved, also. But where did God say that? Jesus said, "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (Jno. 8:24). Now, whom do you trust? God or man? Then we also hear: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13:3, 5). Paul preached: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). Modern infidels may claim impenitents will be saved, due to their benevolent works and show of compassion. But what does God say? "Let God be found true!"

### Do You Heed Man or God?

It has become fashionable for radio pulpiteers and religious racketeers to deride teachings on baptism; but what saith God? Jesus, speaking for the Father, said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16). Who shall be saved? Read it again; God spake plainly through His Son! "Let God be found true!" To this Peter agreed: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Later Peter preached to the Gentiles; "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48). Why? Notice the reason: "For as many of you as

*have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" (Gal. 3:27). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17). To be in Christ is to inherit God's spiritual blessings! (Gal. 3:27-29).

Friend do you believe God's word given in this study? I didn't ask if you LIKE IT! But do you trust God's word enough to accept it? Just how obedient are you to God's immutable word? Is Jesus Christ your example? "*Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*" (Heb. 5:8-9). To follow Christ, you must also be obedient to God! If you love and trust Him enough to obey His terms of pardon, then heaven will be your home! But you must remember that God is no respecter of persons, and punishment awaits all who refuse to obey, for "*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (2 Thes. 1:7-8). God speaks plainly of both heaven and hell! "*Let God be found true, but every man a liar!*"

## **Christian Living**

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

There is no way to answer the riddle of our earthly sojourn apart from Christianity. We have all wondered, at times, as to why we are here and where we are going. James tell us that our life is but "*a vapor that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away*" (Jas. 4:14). Peter informs us that those who would love life and see good days must "*refrain their tongues from evil*" (1 Pet. 3:10). Paul clearly stated, "*For me to live is Christ*" (Phil. 1:21). The real purpose of living is to live for Jesus. Our Saviour beautifully expressed this thought in Jno. 10:10, "*I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.*"

The word "*purpose*" suggests dedication, decision, conviction and planning. The religion of our Lord provides all of these items: it gives substance to living. Just as Daniel "*purposed in his heart not to defile himself*" (Dan. 1:8), so does Christianity cause us to cleave to the Lord "*with purpose of heart*" (Acts 11:23). A statement from Moses is appropriate at this point in our study: "*It is your life to set your heart*

*upon all my law and to teach your children to observe all my commandments" (Deut. 32:46). We shall not take out of this life any of our accumulated wealth or fame, but only the influence of a righteous life. When we stand before our Maker in the last day, it will be of the highest import HOW we lived while upon this earth. If you are not a Christian, you lack real incentive for living! "But they that would be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6:9).*

Christianity alone gives one true purpose in life. What a friend we have in Jesus! He is "*all the world to me!*" We have a personal, powerful and precious Savior. Paul expressed our exact sentiments in 2 Tim. 1:12, "*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" If Christ lives within us (Gal. 2:20), we have the exuberant hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The very One who bore our sins in His own body on the cross is vitally interested in our every need. In times of sorrow, illness, bereavement and disappointment, He is our loving Shepherd. Are you a Christian?

## **An Attitude**

**PEGGY T. CRUMP**

Gladstone said: "Duty is a power that rises with us in the morning and goes to rest with us at night."

One of the most common practices among professed Christians of our day is to see how little one can do and still be regarded as a "Christian." It makes little difference what a person knows about the Bible if he does not practice what he knows is required of him. It is interesting to note that the very first thing the newly organized church did was put into practice the things they had been taught (Acts 2:42).

Love of one another, as Christians, is one basic thought taught throughout the New Testament. The first act of love is seen when the believer is converted to Christ and is set apart from the world (Matthew 16:24). He is then sanctified in God's sight (Hebrews 10:10; Ephesians 1:11-14; 1 Peter 2:9). Then as he grows spiritually, he dies more and more to sin and self, and lives more and more for Christ. This love and Christianity are a way of life which first begins in the mind (Romans 7:25). The more we know of the will of God, but do it not, then the

greater our punishment will be (Luke 12:47-48). It does not require any effort to be lost! A simple neglect of the essential measures which Christ commands is all that is needed. With every opportunity we must do our best, and thus know we are pleasing our Master. We are not merely told to perform certain deeds, but rather must do our best (James 4:17; note also Ecclesiastes 9:10). It will be our works and faithfulness (Matthew 16:27; Revelation 20:12), rather than great deeds, which will count in the last day. But then works and accomplishments depend on our love for Christ and the word of God.

The early church began its existence on loving God and one another (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Loving one another is the badge of Christian discipleship as stated by Jesus: "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). John later shows LOVE'S supreme importance (I John 2:9-11; 3:14-16; 4:20-21).

If we expect to dwell with Christ in eternity, we must love one another. When Jesus named the greatest commandments of the law, he said the first relates to God (Matthew 22:37), while the second requires that we love our neighbours "as ourselves" (v. 39). We must make others aware of this love by showing it.

It is not necessary that one perform great deeds (as the world measures greatness) in order for his life to be great and successful in God's sight. Jesus makes it very plain that "he that is faithful in very little is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). God didn't tell us to be successful—just be faithful (Revelation 2:10).

This principle is illustrated by the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Too many people have the idea that intelligence, authority, power, etc., are necessary ingredients of greatness and success. But anyone who understands the teaching of Jesus, knows these are not the marks of true greatness. Like the apostle Paul, we should always be willing to "spend and be spent" for the good of others, along with having the attitude which was first and foremost to the teachings of Christ. His determination to be faithful to God and his Son Jesus Christ, are qualities of greatness in the Lord's eyes (II Corinthians 5:9-10).

The reason those who serve as Christ directs are great, is because they are engaged in the work for which he gave his life, inasmuch as the souls of people are more valuable than even the entire world (Matthew 16:26).

It then follows that those who serve are engaged in life's greatest

work, are more like Christ himself. Jesus did not come to earth to have men serve him, but that he himself might serve (Matthew 20:28).

This is a lesson we need today: serve one another, not ourselves. The devil must laugh when he can occupy our time and energy with a concern for our own interests to the neglect of the love of Christ and his teaching.

When people are willing to listen to the Lord, and will do that which he commands, the blessings which he will bestow upon us are unlimited (Luke 6:28). The life of Christians can be beautiful, if we have the spirit of love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, faithfulness, self-control, and meekness (Galatians 5:22-23), because all these put God first in our lives.

Love of brethren in the New Testament is NOT OPTIONAL with God's people! It is commanded (John 15:17; I John 4:21)! This command exists because of God's concern for his people. No child of God, with the love of his Father in his heart can live to himself. He must share this love and seek its object, the greatest good (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8). John, the apostle whom Jesus loved, uses the word "love" twenty-five times in the book of I John.

Remember, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Proper attitude is never the product of ignorance, but is a cultivated habit. Anything done in the name of Christ is "vain" unless done for the right reason, the right motive, and with the right attitude. Brotherly love is an element of character (II Peter 1:7). Christianity with the right attitude is a way of life which begins in the heart. Attitude is the heart and soul of a person. All that a Christian feels and does should be the result of his having the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).

Let us make up our minds that we want to enjoy the blessings that come by loving; and then may we discipline ourselves to have such love. Think of the love of God and what he has done. Think of the price of this love, this that a man lay down his life for his will find the fruits of a loving life.

Can we not then say with Gladstone: "An attitude of love is a power that should rise with us in the morning and go to rest with us at night?"



# *Saving Our Young People*

JOE E. GALLOWAY

"Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). They come into this world completely innocent and pure. To a large degree they will become what they are taught to become, both by word and by example. All parents want the best for their children. Since Christian parents already have access to the best life through the gospel, we might conclude that their children will certainly grow up to be obedient and faithful to God. But, often such is not the case at all!

Many times we have read or heard that we are losing half of our young people by the time they leave home. Accurate figures would be impossible to come by, but in some congregations I am sure the figure would be even higher than this. And some whom we think we have "kept" are probably with us in name only. Their names remain on our rolls as they attend services spasmodically; but their attitudes and actions belie our assumption that they are faithful Christians.

## **Whom To Blame?**

Often the church is claimed as the culprit! It is said that the church does not have an adequate program for the young people—that we have let them down. Sometimes the elders more specifically are accused of not providing enough activities to hold our young people; or the preacher is said to not relate to the young people adequately; or perhaps the Bible class teachers are not doing their part to draw, hold their interest, and adequately teach our children. We acknowledge that we ALL have an obligation to help ALL other Christians onward toward becoming what God wants them to be. But we suggest that attaching the blame to the church for losing our young people is actually "passing the buck."

## **Parental Responsibility**

God has given parents the primary obligation of seeing that their children are brought up properly. The Bible pronounced that it is "right" for children to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). Fathers are given the obligation concerning their children to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). It has been this writer's observation through the years that when parents prayerfully fulfill this

obligation to their children, the result will usually be children who are faithful Christians when they are grown up, even where little special emphasis is given to youth in the local church. On the other hand, when parents do not fulfil their obligation, the children often go astray regardless of how much emphasis was placed on youth activities by the congregation.

### **Parents have the Responsibility of Teaching their Children**

They should teach them the facts of God's word, but their teaching must go far beyond this. Children must be taught how to determine right from wrong, and how to resist temptations. They need to be taught proper manners, respect for authority, to show appreciation, to accept responsibility, to establish proper values, and to cultivate reverence for God and his word. While some teaching is done in Bible classes at church, it is extremely unrealistic to think that all these things can be adequately taught in less than one-and-one-half hours per week, even in the best of Bible school programs. Often, with a rapid turnover of Bible teachers, with poor classroom discipline, and with little planning or system in topic selection, the actual good instruction the child receives is minimal.

**Parents must show what it means to be a Christian by proper example.** It will not be difficult to get a child to accept what is taught verbally when he sees Daddy and Mommy putting God and his will first in their lives. On the other hand: Why would we expect a child to like to attend services, if he sees a parent letting nearly anything and everything keep him away from services? why expect a child to be honest, when he hears Mommy tell a "white" lie on the phone? why are we surprised that a child uses dirty words, when Daddy's speech is often filled with them? can we expect our children to love the Lord and his church above all else, when we are so tied up in material pursuits that we have neither time nor money for spiritual things?.

**Parents owe their children proper discipline.** It is still true that "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" [or, "when it is needed," J.E.G.] (Proverbs 13:24). Loving, consistent discipline will reinforce proper instruction, resulting in a child's learning to almost "automatically" choose the proper action in daily living. It will result in better acceptance of the child by society, so less embarrassment for the parents. Better yet, it will help assure the child's growing into a well-behaved, responsible adult.

**Parents should provide proper entertainment and social**

**activities.** This area has become the source of much present-day complaining regarding the church and young people. Nearly any place we travel among churches, some are heard to complain that their congregation does not have enough social activities (entertainment) for the young people. None seem to stop and ask, "Where in the scriptures is the CHURCH given this responsibility?" Two things would usually help this problem: (1) Christian parents should help their children plan wholesome activities that will involve other young people in their age group. (2) Parents should encourage their children to participate in such activities which are planned by others. We often see such opportunities (both within the congregation, and among young people of other congregations) ignored, while the complaining continues that "our young people are being neglected."

We live in a busy society. Often both parents work outside the home. The non-Christian majority nearly lets their children rear themselves, with the help of baby-sitters, child-care centers, and the public school system. But such parent-substitutes cannot bring our children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!" Christian parents are needed for this important task, and this task cannot be done without their devoting much time to it! We need parents who are willing to sacrifice material things in order to properly train the most precious things we possess—the souls of our children! "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

## *Leadership*

**M.L. SEXTON**

Someone has said, "As the pulpit goes, so goes the church." The preacher is an intrinsic part of the church, and his leadership can build, or can destroy, the church. The elders are the spiritual overseers of the local church and must "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." We will deal with the ELDERS and their responsibilities as leaders in the future; but we must not overlook the PREACHER and his responsibility in leadership. The Lord thought the work of the preacher is so important that he has three books of the New Testament devoted to inform preachers of their responsibility. Some of

the responsibilities of the preacher and elders will overlap. Let us notice some of the essentials necessary for a preacher in exercising good leadership.

### **Study the Bible**

The Lord said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . ." (Hosea 4:6). The apostle Paul had a desire that the Colossian brethren ". . . be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing . . ." (Colossians 1:9-10). There are those among us who love to think of themselves as 'intellectuals.' They base their intellectualism on man's philosophy and concept of what the Bible teaches, and not on the Bible itself. They have become "wise in their own conceit" (Romans 12:16; 11:24-25). The first two chapters of I Corinthians give a good picture of what God thinks of such reasoning. We must not be spoiled through "man's philosophy and vain conceit," "traditions of men," and the "rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:7-8). Many have become so obsessed with the idea of impressing the world with their "intellectual" standing that each has become "wise in his own conceit" (Proverbs 26:12). Such will profess "themselves to be wise, they become fools" (Romans 1:22). These preachers are conceited, arrogant, lovers of themselves, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Timothy 3:1-7).

We must approach the Bible with the spirit of humility and a sincere desire to know what God's message is to us. Paul said, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (II Timothy 2:15). We have professed a "Good profession" (I Timothy 6:12), and we must not be ashamed of it. We must "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Hebrews 10:23; 4:14). Our commitment to Christ must be decisive and preemptory.

### **Set the Example**

Preachers cannot be good leaders in the church unless they set the proper example before others. In fact, each preacher is commanded to be "an example of the believers in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12, A.S.V.). If our lives are not consistent with the word of God, then we are not good leaders. We are the servants of Jesus Christ, but by love we must "serve one another" (Philippians 1:1; Galatians 5:13).

## **Make Full Proof of Ministry**

The word **ministry**, as it is in the original, means service of any kind. It carries with it the responsibility to serve. In order for us to carry out this command, we must love people and be interested in mankind. We must not grow high-minded in our work but "condescend to men of low estate" (Romans 12:16). The preacher should serve the poor as well as the rich, the weak as well as the strong. He must do all things without partiality (I Timothy 5:21; James 3:17). This may not be easy to do; however, if we do not follow these instructions we are no better than those of the world (Matthew 5:43-48). We must be honest, fair and diligent in all of our activities as ministers (I Thessalonians 4:5; II Corinthians 8:21).

## **Work of an Evangelist**

In the original, an evangelist is "one who announces good tidings." In the New Testament it refers to those who preach salvation through Christ. The apostles were evangelists; however, only those evangelists who were appointed by Christ to serve as apostles were designated as such (Matthew 10:16; 15-20). There are no living apostles today (Ephesians 4:11-16). Those of us who preach the gospel today are not inspired as were the apostles; but we must preach the same inspired word (II Timothy 3:14-17; 4:1-5). We are charged before God and the Lord Jesus Christ to "preach the word" Remember that the charge is before God, and not before man! God is our judge, and not man. In preaching the word we must declare the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The work of an evangelist is to preach the gospel to those who are Christians, as well as to those who are non-Christians (I Peter 1:25; Romans 1:16). The work of elders is confined to the local church, while the work of the evangelist goes beyond the local church in preaching the gospel to the world as well as to the local church (Acts chapter 8, etc.). The evangelist is exercising leadership when he strengthens Christians and leads people to Christ. There is no greater work. The evangelist must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). If he fails to do this he will receive the curse of God (Galatians 1:6-12). He must be firm, and yet present his message in the spirit of love and compassion (I Corinthians 13:1-8).

# **The Inspiration Of The Bible**

**ROY J. HEARN**

Attention is again called to Job 26:7: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Over forty years ago the beloved W. Claude Hall, professor of English and Bible at Freed-Hardeman College, told of a young astronomer's sweeping his telescope about the heavens, when suddenly he could see NOTHING. He had discovered a void in the north, not hitherto known. He contacted older astronomers, who likewise viewed the phenomenon with amazement, because in any other direction, myriads of stars and planets were visible. In the **Memphis Commercial Appeal**, December 31, 1981, appeared an article, "Large Cosmic Hole Puzzling to Scientists" (page E-2). Four astronomers had found a great cosmic hole so far from earth "that light takes more than 360 million years to bridge the gulf." The area is said to be 300 million light-years (roughly 18 quadrillion miles) in diameter, and 180 million light-years deep. (A light-year is the distance light travels in a year's time at the rate of 186,200 miles per second, or about 5 trillion, 883 billion, 603 million, 200 thousand miles)! Multiply that by 18 million, and you get the size of the hole! Job did not have even a pair of EYEGLASSES! So, how could he have known what men would discover with highpowered telescopes nearly 4,000 years later??? Are the skeptics ready to give up "coincidence" and admit inspiration??

When one stands upon the seashore, the ocean looks round piled up. Ships can be seen to disappear over the horizon. Suppose the ocean suddenly flattened out? Would not the land be covered? Read Job 38-8-11 and see why not. God likens the seas to a newborn baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a crib or cradle, and said: "Now you stay there." He shut up the sea with doors, and said: "Hitherto shall thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Even with great hurricane force the waves are limited. HOW the oceans are contained, no man knows; but the Bible tells us: "He upholds all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3).

Job 38:12-14 reveals the rotation of the earth before the sun: "It is turned as clay to the seal." This writer once worked for Railway Express Agency and handled valuable packages. When picked up the packages were sealed. Brown wax was melted upon certain portions of the

package and a metal "seal" rolled in the wax to make an impression to guarantee safe deliverance of the item. The tomb of Jesus was "sealed" with clay (or like substance) and Pilate's ring was rolled in it and the clay allowed to harden. Job speaks of the same, and shows the earth rolls before the sun.

Although we sometimes would like to command the morning to come, we must wait.

Job (38:16) asks: "Hast thou entered the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" Man has now dived deep into the sea; but he has not been to the lowest depth; the pressure is so great no instrument has been made to endure it.

What about "springs?" In the great salty oceans, streams of FRESH water have been found; but their sources are unknown. Some think they come from rivers; others great artesian wells; but so far as this writer has learned, nobody has determined their sources. "Well, job, how did you find out, since you never waded across an ocean? was it accident? or coincidence?" Job answers, "No; the God of heaven made it known through supernatural means."

"Job, hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?" (Verse 22). Sometimes prior to 1942 Dr. Franklin T. Shutt, Dominion chemist of the Canadian Department of Agriculture set forth the result of seventeen years of research in the value of snowfall. He found that snow accumulated from the atmosphere four kinds of chemical fertilizers: free ammonia, nitrates, nitrites, and albuminoid ammonia. These chemicals are in a form that they can be used by plant life. It was estimated that the value was \$14.08 per acre. (Now in the days of inflation it could be ten times that)! On the western peninsula of Michigan, which juts out into Lake Superior, a winter's snowfall has reached as much as twenty-four feet (288 inches)! (Memphis cannot handle ten inches; what would we do with our 200 inches)? How did Job know there is value in snowfall? Yet, he wrote it!

Somewhat disgusted with his false, pseudo-intellectual friends, Job said, "No doubt ye are the people, and wisdom will die with you" (12:2). Sarcastically Job spoke; and such language can be applied to those today who scoff at the Bible!

# **“Character Is What You Are In The Dark”**

**EDSEL BURLESON**

D.L. Moody said, “Character is what you are in the dark. If you take care of your character, your reputation will take care of itself.”

Many folk are far more concerned about the impressions they make on men than those they make on God. Reputation is what others think us to be, while character is what God knows us to be. What we are in this life determines where we will go when we leave this world.

The apostle Paul sums to the traits God desires in the lives of his children in Colossians 3:12-13: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and for-giving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Here, delicately woven, are the beautiful strands of Christian character.

A poor boy in a Pennsylvania town was struggling for an education. He studied and toiled until he finally got through. Hearing of a vacancy in a Chicago bank, he decided to try for it. His mother objected, and his friends laughed at him, telling him there would be many applications in a big city like Chicago, and there would be no chance for him. But he went. He met the bank president, who touched a button. The bank's detective stepped in, looked at the boy, and went out. The president said, “Come back in a week.”

When he came back, the president said, “there were forty-three applicants we were considering for this position. All have been watched for a week. Only two boys passed the character examination, which touched particularly the points of extravagance, vice, where evenings are spent, and the Lord, Day. All this is strictly business, and not at all an inquisition into private character. This bank must take an account of these things for its own sake. Of the two, you have the best qualifications, and the place is yours.”

Would you be ashamed for your companion, or your parents, or your children, or a prospective employer, or the elders, to see a record of your actions for an entire week? REMEMBER: the Father of us all has an accounting, not only of our actions, but of our thoughts as well, for every week of our lives! “A person's character is like a fence: all the whitewash in the world won't strengthen it.”