

THE

VOLUME TWO \$4.95

VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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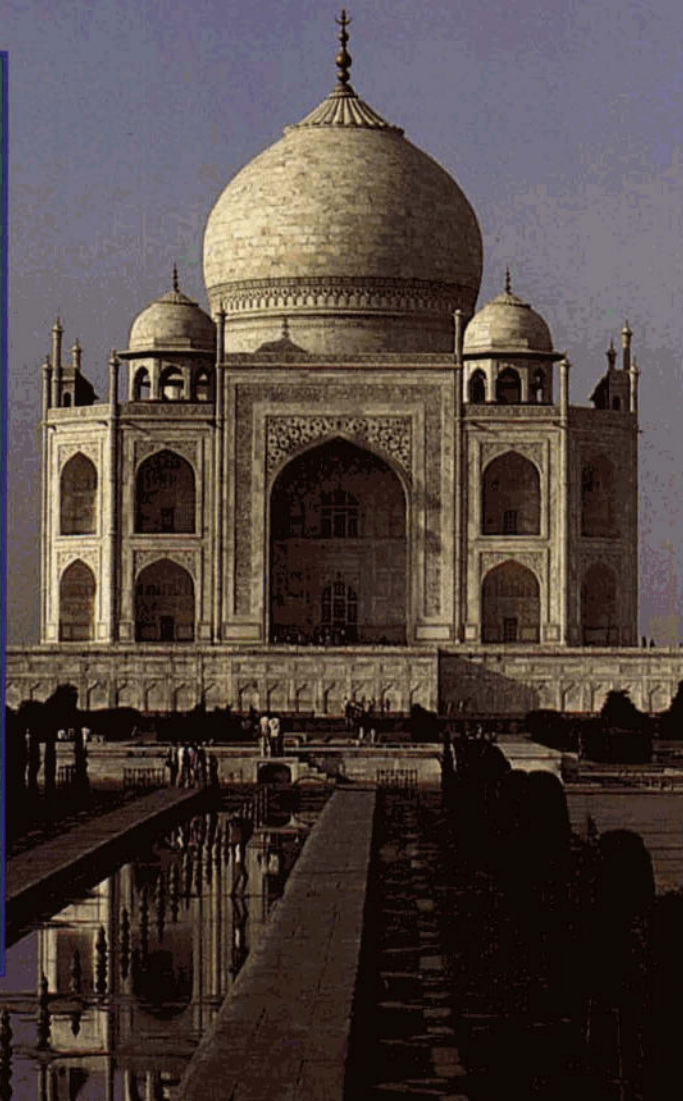
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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A WORD...

How easy it is to drift through life, allowing the days to slide by each other, with very little sense of urgency about their passing. Often it is only as dramatic changes are on the brink of being made that we realize, with the impact of a physical blow, just how urgent this matter of "life" really is.

We have a few short years to learn God's truth and then to develop as children in His family for our own spiritual and physical welfare.

Sadly, we have even less time to understand and mold and shape the children God has given into our hands. Looking from the vantage point of the birth of a baby, the road to its independence seems long and filled with opportunities to instill values and truth in his/her heart. But a few breaths later, parents are waving goodbye to a newly married son or daughter, while realizing that the opportunity to seriously form that child has come and gone.

The haunting question, then, will be an eternal one: Did we pass on to that soul — dearest to us — a living faith in God, a strength and conviction which will weather every challenge, every storm?

Living — and teaching our children to live — can be done only once. God help us not to fail.



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The Word of Truth, Telugu, Kakinada, India
The Way of Truth, Tamil, Bangalore, India
The Voice of Truth, Tamil, Erode, India
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Readers' requests for articles on particular subjects will be considered. Comments and suggestions regarding the content and appearance of the magazine will be appreciated. Our goal is to strive for excellence.



WHAT A JOY!

J.C. CHOATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What a joy it is to know that there is one true and living God, the creator of the universe and all things therein, and that He still reigns and is in charge of all things! What a joy to know that Christ is the Son of God and that He was willing to die on the cross that we might be saved! What a joy to

be able to read and study the Bible and to know that it is the inspired word of God, revealing the Lord's will to us!

What a joy to have the gospel and to be able to obey its commands for the remission of our sins! What a joy it is to be a Christian, to be a child of God, to be able to wear the Lord's name, and to represent Him! What a joy it is to be a member of the Lord's family, the church, the greatest institution in all the world! What a joy it is to worship Him each first day of the week in spirit and in truth, engaging in those acts of adoration He has specified in His word!

What a joy to be able to preach and teach the gospel and to take it to every creature under heaven! What a joy it is to live the Christian life, to know it is the superior way of life and brings blessings and hope to all who are a part of it!

God is the creator, dealing with His creation. God is all-wise, but man is not always so wise. The Lord is perfect and without sin, but we are not perfect and we do have sin. In spite of our imperfections, God loves us. He thinks in our interest, and wants to save us and bless us, but He does these things on His terms, not ours. Who are we to tell Him what He must do or must not do? We can only thank Him that He has revealed His will to us, has made it plain and simple, and that we can know the truth and obey it in order to be saved. Why shouldn't that be enough?

How sad it is that most people of the world choose every way but the right way. They follow every voice but the Lord's. They reject the only one

who *can* save them.

Even in the church, there are those who grow bored with the Lord's way, deciding it is too narrow and strict. They mock it and belittle it, and want to liberalize and change it. Like Israel of old who wanted a king as the nations around her, some Christians want to be like their religious neighbors, preaching what they preach, worshipping as they worship, desiring to be accepted by them.

God told Israel the great price she would have to pay if she rejected Him. Those of our day who reject the Lord will likewise have to pay with the loss of their souls, and the loss of the souls of their children for perhaps generations to come.

What we must realize is that *the Lord is the way*, that there is but *one* way, and that His people must be a peculiar people, different from the world and different even from the religious world. Those who find no joy in that way will turn aside to follow human reasoning, to their own destruction.

The Lord's way is perfect and cannot be improved on. Certainly, as humans we have our failures, our weaknesses, and our needs, but we should not blame these short-comings on the Lord. And we must not seek to change the pattern of His truth simply because we find ourselves not properly living up to His standard. We are the ones who need to change: *change from our way and the ways of men to the way of the Lord, change from sin to righteousness, change from disobedience to obedience, change from mockery to reverence, and change from unfaithfulness to faithfulness.* Furthermore, as God's people, *we need to change from inactivity to work and service, from methods that are ineffective to those that will bear fruit (based on God's teaching, of course), from sitting to going, from being negative to being positive, and from unbelief to a life of faith.*

How sad it is when insignificant men become dissatisfied with the Lord and His way, and *actually set about to correct God!* Such heresy will cause us to miss all He has in store for us in this life, and in heaven itself. We need to repent, set our eyes on the Lord, and go forward to do all of those things He wants us to do. When we busy ourselves in His cause we will find joy and satisfaction, which will allow us no time for negative attitudes.

Why should we ever question the Lord and His way? Certainly, we are not to be blind and gullible, but *truth is truth, and it does not change, even as God does not change.* What a joy to belong to God and to be faithful to Him that we may be saved in this world and in the world to come! There is no *better* way. There is no *other* way.

†



OUR APPROACH

Byron Nichols
Managing Editor

The early response to the first issue of this new publication has truly been gratifying. Words of commendation and encouragement have come from a wide array of sources, all of which serves to reinforce our conviction that **THE VOICE OF TRUTH**

INTERNATIONAL is a much-needed tool.

We are the first to realize and acknowledge that the first volume reveals the human involvement — yes, there are some errors. Hopefully there were no errors with respect to what was being taught. Your patience with us as we work out some of the flaws in our operation is anticipated and will most definitely be appreciated.

Many have expressed appreciation for the biblical emphasis of the contents, the brevity of the articles, the wide variety of subjects dealt with, the fact that the articles are not difficult to read and understand, and that the size, quality, and overall appearance of the magazine are appealing to you. These are the kinds of things that we need very much to know if we are to succeed in producing a magazine that is going to fill a significant need.

We are engaged in a very difficult task as we try to present material which will meet the needs of our readers. Our reading audience is exceedingly diverse. Our readers come from many different religious backgrounds, from different countries, varying cultures, contrasting educational backgrounds, a wide variety of interests and needs, and very different levels of spiritual maturity and understanding. All of this means that we will never be able to produce an issue of the magazine with every article being what is most suitable for any individual. However, with each issue containing so many articles and with as much variety as ours will have, we believe and earnestly desire that there will always be several articles each time that will be profitable for everyone.

†

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APOLOGY

WE APPRECIATE THE MANY GOOD COMMENTS READERS HAVE MADE CONCERNING THE CONTENTS OF THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL. HOWEVER WE HAVE HAD A FEW REPORTS OF FAULTY GLUE ON THE BINDING. WE ASK THAT YOU PLEASE INFORM US IF YOUR COPY COMES APART SO THAT WE CAN REPLACE IT. JCC

Glory

I walked along my path today,
in the quiet,
in the woods.

I saw the spangled gown of fall,
Heard the warbler's farewell call
Where the trees in glory stood,
leaves of crimson,
gold and brown
falling gently to the ground.

They look to me a living fire
burned by frost,
aglow with sun.

But how can glory such as this
Be so quickly done,
be so quickly laid to rest
in winter's snow
and quiet death?

Is not "living" like a tree,
green at first
and small of strength?

But life should grow to majesty,
Lifted high and reaching out,
Bringing good to all about,
Reaching then crescendo's peak,
falling into winter's sleep,
Soon to wake in heaven's spring
Where eternal breezes sing.

— Betty Burton Choate

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

The book of Amos provides a curious statement. A portion of the book is directed to Israel in the form of a rebuke. If any people on earth should have been well acquainted with God, it should have been Judah and Israel. Yet, to Israel God spoke, "*Prepare to meet your God, O Israel*" (Amos 4:12).

An examination of the contents of the book of Amos clearly shows that Israel did not truly understand who God is. In fact, though it was He who made them a nation and delivered them again and again from their enemies, he had been pushed so far back in the recesses of their extravagances He rarely was a part of their thoughts at all.

When the book of Amos was written the people of Israel were enjoying great prosperity. Yet, within thirty-three years Assyria would attack and destroy them.

The shallowness of their per-

ception of God led them to shallow ritualism in their worship.

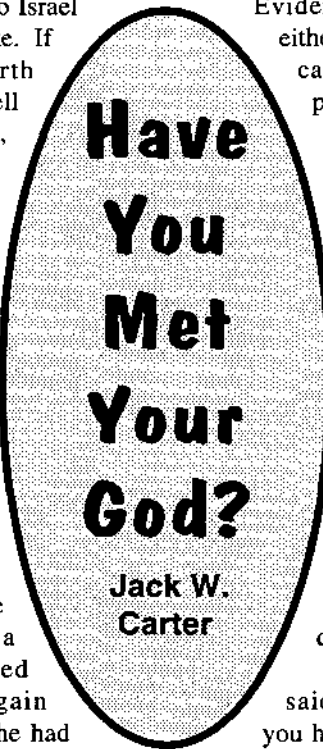
Evidently assuming that He either did not see or did not care, they oppressed the poor with a kind of cruelty that only expressed callousness. They openly practiced idolatry, and arrogantly and wilfully disobeyed the statutes of God as though He really didn't count.

Whatever they might have thought of God, whatever their conceptions of His attributes and His interest in their activities might have been, God had something specific in mind for them.

Essentially He said to them, "You think you have an understanding of who and what I am. Allow Me to introduce Myself for what I really am."

In all of your notions about who and what God really is, is it possible that you have never really truly met Him? †

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



Have You Met Your God?

Jack W.
Carter

ESSENCE OF THE GODHEAD

Sunny David

In the Hebrew language, the language in which most of the Old Testament of the Bible was written originally, God is called Elohim, a name which is a plural of the Majesty. That, however, does not mean that there is more than one true God. There is but one God, the Bible clearly teaches (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4). Nevertheless, the nature of the Godhead (Elohim) is such that there coexists in it a distinction of persons with absolute unity of essence.

When Christ was on earth He taught His disciples to pray to God calling Him "our Father" (Matthew 6:9). Christ Himself spoke of God often as the Father (Matthew 11:25-27; John 6:27). The Father, who in the beginning created heaven and the earth, is God (Genesis 1:1). God so loved the world that He sent the Son, who through His propitiatory death on the cross became the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 4:10).

The Son, the Bible teaches, is also God. Not a second God, but another personality in the Godhead. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. He was in the beginning with God. All things

were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1- 3 & 14). Notice, it says, the Word who "became flesh" — a man — was God, and that all things were made through Him. The first verse of the Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Teaching Christians to put on humility as was in Christ Jesus, the apostle Paul said, "Who being in the form of God, did not consider it to be robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men . . . " (Philippians 2:6,7). Again, speaking of Christ in Romans 9:5 the inspired scribe wrote, ". . . Christ came, who is over all, eternally blessed God. Amen." In Matthew 16:18 Christ, the Son, had promised to build His church, which He did as we read from Acts 2:37- 47.

When Paul, the apostle, came to Ephesus he met with the leaders of the Lord's church, and this is what he told them: "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock,

GOD

among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is ponderable that Christ had said that He would build His church; and He was the one who gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25); who had shed His blood on the cross for the remission of sins. Yet, the inspired apostle exhorted the elders to shepherd the church of God, which He (God) purchased with His own blood.

And, notice too that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers to shepherd the church. Here we are introduced to the third personality in the Godhead. The church is the house of God (I Timothy 3:15). God is the head of His house. He has the authority to appoint anyone in His house. The elders were appointed by the Holy Spirit to shepherd the church of God, because the Holy Spirit is also God.

God sent the Word upon earth to become a man, but He was conceived in Mary, a virgin at that time, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The beautiful and amazing story of the birth of the Son of God is found in Matthew chapters 1 and 2 and in Luke chapter 2, where we see all the three personalities of the Godhead working together for providing the plan of salvation to mankind. The Father sent the Word,

and virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to the Son of God, the Savior of humanity. Thus we see a complete and absolute unity in the three persons of the Godhead.

Later, at the occasion of the baptism of Christ which took place when he was about 30 years old, just before the beginning of His public ministry, all three persons of the Godhead are dramatically exhibited together. As Jesus, the Son, came up from the water, "... the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16, 17).

God — the Father, Word, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is also called the Helper (John 14:26; 16:7) — the three persons of the Godhead are one true God, the Elohim, who created the heavens and the earth and together provided the means by which men can be saved. Of course, in accomplishing the work of salvation there is implied a certain relative subordination in the modes of operation of different persons, by which it is the Father who sent the Word or the Son to be 'the propitiation for the sins of the world;' and the Son, when He, after His death, burial

and resurrection, returned to the Father for the glory which He had with God before the world was, sent the Spirit to apply His redemption to men (John 14:25, 26; John 16:55-15; Acts 1:1- 8; Acts 2:1- 4).

Yet, the three persons of the Godhead are alike: God over all. Knowledge of this fact helps us to understand why Christ commanded His disciples in the beginning concerning the gospel: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **IN THE NAME** [not *names*, SD] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:18,19).

The apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost commanded the multitude to, "Repent, and let every one 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." He wasn't contradicting Christ, for what we do in the name of Christ that we also do in the name of the Father and in the name of the Holy Spirit, or by the authority of all.

When Ananias had kept back a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the possessions which he with his wife had promised to give that to the Lord's work, the inspired Peter said to him: "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to

the Holy Spirit and keep back the part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3,4).

Notice the fact that Peter said, "You have lied to the Holy Spirit," and then he said, "You have lied to God." That is, in lying to the Holy Spirit Ananias had also lied to God, because the Holy Spirit is God.

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, Christ said: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). Some 800 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah wrote in his book, in Isaiah 44:6, "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God."

There is only one God, who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. When we do what the Son says it is also the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit. When we hear and obey one, we hear and obey all three; and when we refuse to do what one of them says we are refusing to do what God has said. †

Sunny David works with the Lord's church in New Delhi, India.

The Incarnation

Steve Williams



"The incarnation" is the term which describes Christ leaving heaven, where He was in the form of God, and coming to earth, where He was a man. John 1:14 is the best-known biblical declaration of the incarnation: *"And the Word (logos) became flesh and dwelt among us . . ."* The doctrine of the incarnation is a fundamental Christian doctrine. It is

a test of fellowship. If someone does not adhere to the doctrine of the incarnation,

that one simply cannot be called a Christian. After denoting anyone who does not *"acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh"* as *"the antichrist,"* John refuses Christian approval or fellowship to those people (2 John 7-11).

Sometimes the incarnation is strongly implied by a passage of Scripture. Through the interpretive tool of necessary inference, the incarnation doctrine is established in such passages. For example, Paul wrote, *"When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman . . ."* (Galatians 4:4). Since Jesus was born of a human being, a woman, the inference is that He was a human being.

Humans give birth to humans; thus, Jesus was human. But this Jesus who was a human was the eternal, pre-existent Son of God. Thus, Jesus Christ was not simply another human being, but was God's Son, who became (was incarnated) as a human being. Similarly, the fact that Jesus possessed a human body or flesh implies that an incarnation had taken place (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 1:22; Romans 8:3; 1 Peter 3:18; 4:1).

The following are further scriptural allusions to the incarnation:

"Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same nature" (Hebrews 2:14).

"... He was manifested in the flesh..." (1 Timothy 3:16).

"... Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 4:2).

The most lengthy explanation of the incarnation is found in Philippians 2:6-8, with which we

conclude our study: *"Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."* †

Steve Williams teaches Bible at International Bible College in Florence, Alabama, U. S. A.

How Well Do You Know God's Word?

It takes 70 hours and 40 minutes to read the Bible at pulpit rate. It takes 52 hours and 20 minutes to read the Old Testament. It takes 18 hours and 20 minutes to read the New Testament.

It takes 4 hours and 28 minutes to read the longest section in the Old Testament, Psalms. It takes 2 hours and 43 minutes to read the longest book in the New Testament, Luke.

It takes 2 months and 10 days to read the entire Bible at the rate of 1 hour a day. It takes 1 year to read the Bible 5 times and be one-third of the way through the 6th time.

Do you really have some better way to spend your time than with the written word of God?



On The Cross

Gary Moore

I'm persuaded that if you want to see the terrible nature of sin and God's attitude toward it, you'll not find it in His judgment upon the wicked, but in His judgment upon the innocent.

God's hatred for sin is not so much seen at Sodom and Gomorrah or a thousand Sodoms and Gomorrah's, as it is seen at Calvary. And this is actually the "glory" of the cross: that God hated sin so much that He allowed His "only begotten" Son to come and be crucified in order to deal with sin once and for all.

I am persuaded that you'll see the matchless love of God, not so much in His daily provisions for us, as you'll see it at Calvary where the Innocent died for the guilty.

On the cross, the prayer that Jesus offered three times in the Garden of Gethsemane was



answered in the negative — He would have to drink the cup. But His prayer was also answered in the positive, for it was the will of God that He drink the cup and, therefore, He was given by God the ability to drink the cup.

So, in the garden Jesus made peace with the cup. He made peace with the burden He was to bear; and, in the angels ministering to Him, He found the strength to bear it.

The most glorious scene from the cross, the most glorious point of time in the history of the world, is when Jesus, in all of His agony and

pain, looked down upon an ungodly and unbelieving mob and cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." †

Gary Moore is the preacher for the church in Loveland, Colorado, U. S. A.

Such A Savior!

Betty Burton Choate

I think it is an interesting commentary on the religions of the world that all of them are willing to admit that Christ *can* be followed as a spiritual leader but, at the same time, the broad statement is made that anything, everything in religion is all right as long as it is covered by the canopy of "love" or "sincerity" or "honesty."

So, while other leaders teach their own religious doctrines, they lack the courage to completely deny the right and authority of Christ in the spiritual realm. There has been only one man who has ever walked the face of the earth who has allowed room for no other authority and who has had the audacity to make the claim, "*I am the way, the truth, the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" That is a claim that every human being *must* deal with. A man may choose to live in ignorance of it; he may ignore it after he knows of it; he may ridicule it; or he may find peace and security in it — but every man has to face that claim and react to it in some way.

For myself, I have faced it and accepted it as truth, because I cannot deny the mountainous evidence that supports it.

For yourself . . . you can ignore His claim and hold yourself in willful ignorance of its veracity. Nobody can *make* you do otherwise. And all of the desire, in the heart of someone who loves you, for you to make spiritual decisions knowledgeably will accomplish nothing for you until you have the desire yourself . . .

. . . *but the claim is still there.* Christ is still looking in defiance at every man who has ever taught *any other form of religion*, and He is still saying, "*I am the way . . .*" And He backed His claim with the resurrection. Unbelievers from the first century down to today have tried to discredit the resurrection, but the proofs are there and the honest person who investigates *has* to be convinced by them. No other man has broken the bonds of death, holding out firm assurance to all those who sleep . . . †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate of Winona, Mississippi, U.S.A.

The Wisdom of Men Versus The Wisdom of God

Hollis Miller

Long before the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians that the world's wisdom is foolishness to God, the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed that God's thoughts are not men's thoughts, nor His ways men's ways. *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,"* said the prophet, *"so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8f). God's thoughts and ways are flawless, while man's thoughts and ways are filled with weakness and error. God's wisdom defies finite fallacies,

for, as Paul informed Titus, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When the wisdom of men collides with the wisdom of God, God must always be found true, though every man be found false (Romans 3:4).

The context of 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, as well as the entire New Testament, reveals that the human wisdom Paul labels foolishness is man's efforts to govern his soul

apart from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle declared that the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). The philosophers of the world who have sought to lay aside the wisdom of God have never been successful in their efforts. The course of history is speckled with philosophies of all descriptions that have cast their momentary "light" across the path

of mankind, only to have it flicker and die as another "light" replaced it. When men, and sometimes even Christians,

The philosophers of the world who have sought to lay aside the wisdom of God have never been successful in their efforts.

are captured by their own wisdom, other words of Paul come to one's mind as the tragic sadness of the circumstances are contemplated. *"O, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified . . . are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now becoming perfected in the flesh?"* (Galatians 3:1,3).

Had Jesus never lived, none could debate the nature of His person. Had the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the grave not been the power of apostolic preaching, none would have sought to redefine it. Had the church never been established, none could wish for it a permanent resting place in the archives of forgotten events. Had the New Testament never been written, none could have attempted to demythologize it. Had heaven not been the hope of the first Christians, none would have spoken of eternal life as the hope of foolish and ignorant men. It is surely apparent to all that the great doctrines of Christian faith precede all efforts to discredit them.

The question has been asked before, and is worthy of repetition: "Why do men oppose Jesus Christ and the work He came into the world to accomplish?" None has provided a better reply to the question than Jesus Himself. *"And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed"* (John 3:19f). The cross of Jesus is itself a memorial to the ongoing conflict between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God.

Is there reason to abandon the

wisdom of God in favor of the wisdom of men? It has been argued that with changing times must come new ways of viewing old traditions. But does that argument not depend on what traditions are under consideration? Shall truth become falsehood and falsehood become truth because times are changing? Why should changing times dictate that the truths of Christian faith be abandoned? The truths of Christian faith are firmly established in history, and they are no more the subject of change than any other historical event.

The wisdom of God does not fluctuate with the changing moods and values of men. Therefore, when God's wisdom is rejected, those who reject it are necessarily delivered to the wisdom of men. Of human wisdom, separated from God, Paul wrote: *"For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools . . ."* (Romans 1:21f). For this reason the apostle warned Christians against falling prey to the vain speculations of men (see Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:20; James 4:4). †

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The Impotency of Unbelief

Wayne Jackson

In Galatians 4:9 the apostle Paul describes the former unregenerate state of the Galatian Christians as "*weak and beggarly*." The meaning suggested is this — their pagan lives had been void of power and thus impoverished. Unbelief, whether of ancient or modern vintage, simply has no strength, and it is without that rich depository of treasures for which the human spirit throbs. Let us reflect upon the following.

(1) **Origin** — Man is inquisitive by nature. He is the only living creature on earth that is interested in where he came from. He is ever searching for his "roots." Unbelief, however, simply cannot provide any answer. It knows nothing of the origin of matter or the organized universe. It frustratingly attempts, without success, to explain the mystery of life. Its theories of the origin of man are hopelessly contradictory, and in conflict with known scientific data. Unbelief knows absolutely

nothing of origins!

(2) **Purpose** — Exactly what is man's purpose upon this planet? Unbelief argues that there is no purpose to human existence. Man's function is simply to reproduce his species, and so, hopefully, for some unknown reason, to advance along the evolutionary scale. But why? What is the goal? There is none, humanists dismally reply. The Biblical record, however, reveals that mankind's ultimate goal is to serve the Creator (Isaiah 43:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

(3) **Human Conduct** — What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive! If there is no God, why shouldn't men live lives that are devoted strictly to their own selfish interests? In His parable of the unjust judge, the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and hence, no regard for man (Luke 18:2,4). Moreover,

EVIDENCES

after describing the wickedness characteristic of the ancient world, Paul focuses upon the real problem when he writes: "*There is no fear of God before their eyes*" (Romans 3:18). If there is no God, and so no judgment reckoning at which all men will ultimately give an account of their conduct, then there is no final value to choosing a good life over a bad one!

(4) Mental Tranquility —

What mental satisfaction does the man have who considers his existence to be nothing more than a meaningless moment in an endless panorama of passing history? The infidel philosopher David Hume expressed the feeling of many an unbeliever when he depressingly wrote: "Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition do I return? . . . I am confounded with all these quotations, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty." Perhaps the unbeliever John Stuart Mill said it most pointedly when he selected these words as the epitaph for his tombstone, "Most Unhappy."

(5) Future Hope — What is the hope of those who are without knowledge of the Creator? There is no hope in a mere grave! I am

reminded of the conversation that Alexander Campbell once had with the skeptic Robert Owen. As they walked past the family cemetery on Campbell's farm one day, Owen remarked: "There is one advantage I have over the Christian; I am not afraid to die." Campbell responded: "Have you any hope in death?" After a solemn pause, Owen replied, "No." "Then," rejoined Mr. Campbell (pointing to an ox standing near), "you are on a level with that brute . . . he has neither fear nor hope in death!" Owen smiled and evinced some confusion, but there was no denying the force of Campbell's inference. †

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

Out of Nothing

. . . from
the tiniest speck
to the greatest galaxy,
infinite space and time.

. . . then
the Spirit of God moves,
and out of nothingness
comes everything.

In the beginning
God was — and is.

— Brunice C. Cole, Jr.

WHICH FAITH WILL YOU CHOOSE?

Ancil Jenkins



No time in history has benefited more from scientific knowledge than ours. Huge advances have been made in just the past ten years in electronics, medicine, and even cookware. This progress has led some to regard science as all-powerful and all-knowing.

This reliance and reverence of scientific learning has led some to assume that our faith in God is mistaken and even unnecessary. Yet science has not and cannot demonstrate the nonexistence of God. Both science and the Bible teach the origin of man. Since neither view can be verified by experimentation and observation, they both can only be accepted on the basis of faith.

One factor that affects belief is the reliability and credibility of both parties. Does science or the Bible present the better case? Does sci-

ence or the Bible have the credentials that promote the most believability? To the honest searcher God and the Bible will appear more reliable and credible. This is not to say that scientists are frauds or charlatans. Yet, the record of science is inconsistent and raises some questions.

As stated, science has by no means answered all the questions of our world. Scientists, for example, long ago discovered that lightning is caused by clouds becoming electrically charged. Today, however, they still cannot agree how the charges are generated. Although evolution is assumed by most scientists to be true, there are many difficulties with it. For example, there is no fossil evidence to link insects to anything else in an evolutionary process.

Too often, science has gone beyond proposing theories based on observable facts. Instead, it demands belief based on a system that claims that only the known and tested can be true and rational. This is self-contradicting, since this statement itself cannot meet this criteria. Often this produces an attitude similar to the fisherman who stated there was nothing in the ocean less than two inches long. This came from his use of a certain net over a period of time. Someone pointed out there were many creatures less than two inches and they were simply escaping his net. He haughtily replied, "What my net can't catch, isn't fish." Many truths cannot be scientifically verified. This does not mean they are not true.

Science has not yet produced a consistent theory for the origin of either the earth or mankind. Instead, we are asked to accept the theories on the basis of faith. Such theories often become an orthodoxy that allows no deviation. Forrest Mims III, for example, claims he was denied a writing position with the esteemed *Scientific American* magazine. Mims believes this was because of his stated belief that God created the heavens and the earth. †

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

Teen Prayer

God in Heaven, I am young and don't understand what it is like to be a parent, but it must be very hard because so many people are failing at it these days.

I pray for Mom and Dad, O God, that You will help them to be good parents — strong in the ways You want them to be, so I can look up to them with admiration and feel confident that their instruction is right.

Help me, dear Lord, to understand my parents. Remind me that when I don't get my way, it is because they love me and not because they want to be mean or deprive me of a good time.

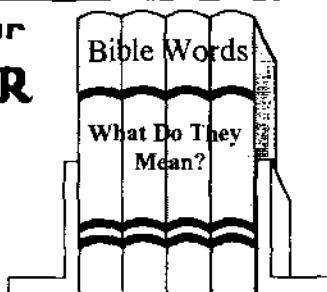
Help me, God, when I become stubborn and refuse to listen, to accept the fact that they have wisdom and experience because they were once teenagers, but I have never been a parent.

Put in my heart the respect and consideration they deserve for their years of hard work and sacrifice. They raised me as best they could. Let me not repay them with grief or shame, rather help me to give obedience, respect, forgiveness and love. Most of all, God, while I still have my parents here on earth, help me to appreciate them and let them know that I do.

Selected

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 beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1-12. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

- blessed** *adj.*—A: a prayer or benediction. B: to make holy or hallowed. C: happy. D: Sacred.
- poor** *adj.*—A: having difficulty paying bills. B: destitute. C: owning no home. D: Without a job
- spirit** *n.*—A: breath or wind. B: angel. C: vivacious. D: ghost or apparition.
- mourn** *v.*—A: hopeless. B: sob or weep. C: sympathy. D: deep sorrow over personal sins.
- kingdom of heaven** *n.*—A: God's rule in the heart. B: Christ's rule in Jerusalem. C: God's rule over the angels. D: The Garden of Eden.
- comforted** *v.*—A: to be strengthened or braced B: to remove all pain. C: to have your prayer answered. D: tranquilized in soul.
- meek** *adj.*—A: timid. B: under control. C: quiet. D: cowardly.
- hungering and thirsting** *v.*—A: slightly desiring a snack break. B: desiring a piece of bread and a cup of tea. C: avid desire for the whole meal. D: experiencing a fast
- righteousness** *n.*—A: being religious. B: doing good deeds. C: being right with man. D: being right with God.
- be filled** *v.*—A: to close cracks or crevasses. B: to be inflated. C: being sufficiently supplied. D: to want no more.
- merciful** *adj.*—A: part of an expression or byword. B: utter a kind word. C: help a friend in need. D: to forgive those who sin against you.
- pure** *adj.*—A: Uncontaminated. B: pious. C: true. D: penitent.
- heart** *n.*—A: the center or seat of all emotions. B: the muscle that circulates the blood. C: the center of any thing. D: a figure on a valentine.
- peacemakers** *n.*—A: live and let live. B: love the quiet. C: carry a gun. D: actively promoting harmony.
- persecuted** *v.*—A: be talked about. B: be disloyal to. C: to pursue for the purpose of hurt. D: to be arrested by the police.



"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"

1. **blessed** (Gk. makarios) C: happy. A joy that endures suffering (Cp. John 16:22).
2. **poor** (Gk. ptochos) absolute poverty. D: destitute, therefore placing oneself completely in God's hands.
3. **spirit** (Gk. pneumatē) wind; breath (of life); hence, life's rational emotions. A: breath or wind; ("poor in spirit" as opposite to pride, therefore one whose spirit is humbly open to God's instruction).
4. **mourn** (Gk. pentho) D: deep sorrow; penitently grieve over personal sins and regret sadly the sins of the world).
5. **Kingdom of heaven** (Gk. basileia) A: God's rule in the heart. (See Lu., 17:20); dominion or rule; i.e., as God rules in heaven, even so on earth in the territory of the believer's heart under Jesus the King.
6. **Comforted** (Gk. parakaleo) A: to be strengthened or braced; to summon to one's side for assistance in time of need (as an attorney), Jesus as an advocate (I John 2:1) will come to our aid against the accusations of Satan.
7. **meek** (Gk. praus) B: under control, one who has surrendered his will to God, e.g. to break an untamed animal for a master's service.
8. **hunger and thirst** (Gk. peinao, dipsao) C: an avid desire for the whole meal (in the context, a craving to feast upon all the righteousness of God. The Greek tense of the sentence indicates a desire for the whole of righteousness. Nothing short of all God's spiritual bread will suffice.
9. **righteousness** (Gk. dikaiosune) D: being right with God; state obtained through obedient faith as Abraham in Gen. 15:6. (See also Romans 5:1)
10. **be filled** (Gk. chortazo) C: being sufficiently supplied; to supply bountifully, as one would fatten a stalled animal; to eat until fully satisfied.
11. **merciful** (Gk. 'eleos) D: to ease pain by forgiveness when one is hurting at having sinned against you; to place oneself in a suffering person's shoes and extend help because you share his pain.
12. **pure** (Gk. katharos) A: uncontaminated; to have all impurities removed as dross from precious metals, hence, to remove all sin from the heart, to harbor no uncleanness and thereby be acceptable to come into the presence of God in worship and service.
13. **heart** (Gk. kardia) A: the center or seat of all emotions; not in this context the physical heart, here it is the center of the mental powers where decisions are made—all from a basis of right motives.
14. **peacemakers** (Gk. eireneuo) D: actively promoting harmony; not just peacelovers, but to actively pursue accord where there is discord.
15. **Persecute** (Gk. diako) C: to pursue for the purpose of hurt; to burn (with desire to harm).

Vocabulary Scale

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

Attitude in Bible Study

Don W. Walker

"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart and put the stumblingblock of iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?" (Ezekiel 14:3).

Motive, emphasis, and attitude are three of the key words of New Testament Christianity. When we consider Bible study we must realize that our attitude plays a very important role in our understanding of God's Word. Jesus said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear" (Luke 8:11). We will get out of Bible study exactly what we want to get out of it.

In Ezekiel's day the people approached the prophet to hear God's counsel. However, they had their minds made up already. Their attitude was all wrong. Rather than seeking the truth so that they might be set free (John 8:32), they were seeking justification for that which they had already determined.

Now, how does this apply to us today? We have noted that God has provided His Word, and expects man to respect it. That is, man is to believe it and follow it, but is to be very careful not to alter it in any way. This principle is known as the "Silence of the Scriptures." Yet,



there are other points to consider.

Notice James 1:21,22. *"...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* Our attitude must be one of respect and also of action. A simple intellectual knowledge of Scripture is of no value. We must also determine to fulfill what God reveals through His Word. This is what is meant when Jesus said, *"If ye abide in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"* (John 8:31).

Conclusion

The Word of God is profitable for all men and women if they follow through with a proper attitude. To alter or ignore it is folly indeed. With this in mind, let's maintain proper attitudes as we each study our Bibles much, much more. †

Don W. Walker preaches for the Hillcrest church in Stephenville, Texas, U.S. A.

“God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It”

David Wade

Perhaps you have seen or heard this declaration of faith in God's Word. As good as it may sound, it falls short of what ought to be said. **“God said it. That settles it, whether I believe it or not”** more accurately describes the true nature of God's Word and the faith we are to have in it.

The Psalmist declared, *“For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven . . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever . . . My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness”* (Psalm 119:89,160,172).

Each time we study the Bible we should realize that we have access to *“the mind of Christ”* through *“words . . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth”* (1 Corinthians 2:13,16). *“For the prophecy came*

not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). Since God inspired the speakers and writers of His Word, Peter could affirm that *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy: where unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn . . .”* (2 Peter 1:19).

When we are inclined to disagree with any part of God's Word, we need to remember that *“the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). When Paul resisted the Word and railed against the church, he was hurting himself (Acts 9:5; 1 Timothy 1:13). To resist the truth is folly (2 Timothy 3:8-9). If we refuse to do the will of the Father, Jesus will say in judgment, *“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matthew 7:21-23).

God's spiritual blessings are pronounced only upon those who hear, believe, and obey His Word (Matthew 7:21). **God said it, and that settles it. Period.** †

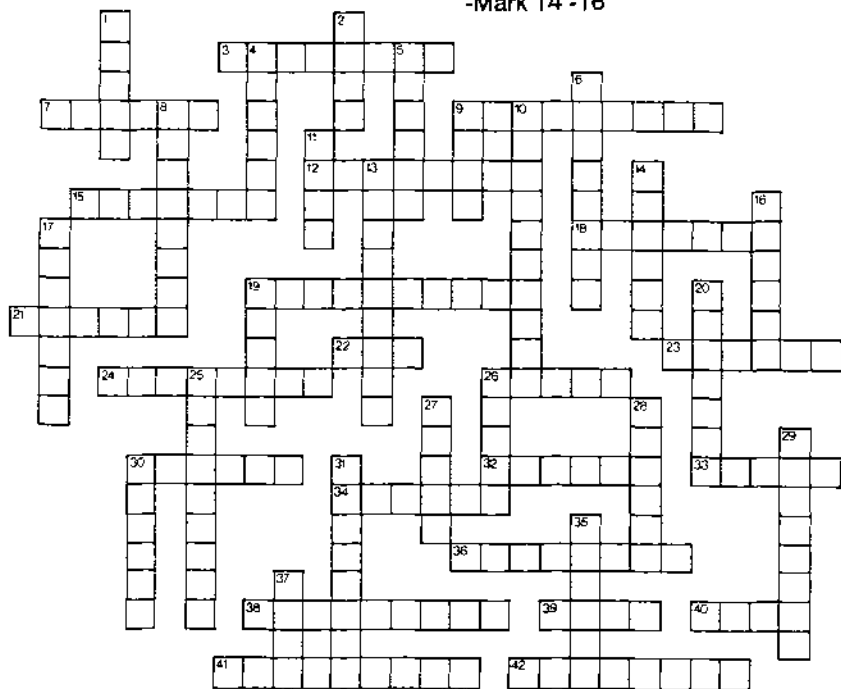
David Wade is the preacher for the Slicer Street congregation in Kennett, Missouri, U. S. A.



I saw the sun today, imprisoned,
looking out a million sparkling windows of a crystal mountain stream. B.B.C.

The Book of Mark for adults

-Mark 14 -16



DOWN

1. Opposite of man
2. _____ the Baptist
4. Thief
5. Elisha's master
6. Criminal released by Pilate
8. Follower of Jesus
9. Female servant
10. Garden of _____
11. Queen's husband
13. Where Peter denied Christ
14. Opposite of mother
16. Simon's city (who carried cross)
17. City where Christ went after resurrection
19. Disciple named Simon

20. Copiers of scripture
25. Joseph of _____
26. Brother of John
27. Opposite of free
28. Owner of slaves
29. Army men
30. Number of disciples
31. The mountain called the skull
35. Jesus _____
37. King of the _____

19. Palace
21. Pontius _____
22. Son of _____
23. High _____
24. Person from Jesus' home town
26. Who was crucified
30. Place of worship
32. Leaders of the church
33. Carried cross for Jesus

ACROSS

3. Captive
7. Protectors
9. Mary _____
12. Judas _____
15. Instructor
18. City of Simon the leper

34. Mount of _____
36. Guardian of sheep
38. Leader of 100 soldiers
39. Opposite of low
40. Not rich
41. Onlooker
42. Traitor

The Peace that Passes

All Understanding

Ray Hawk

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

What is this "Peace . . . which passeth all understanding"? If it is impossible to understand, how will we know whether we have it or not? If we do not know what it is, how can something we do not know or understand "keep" or "guard" our hearts and minds?

The first time the word "peace" is found with reference to this is in Luke 2:14. Here the angels proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

God did not announce that the birth of His Son would bring about an end to all wars. In fact, thirty-three years later, Jesus said, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6). The kind of peace Paul and the angels spoke of comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples, "I have told you

these things, so that in me you may have peace" (John 16:33). When man sinned, he lost his standing before God. He needed to be reconciled to God. Without that reconciliation, he was " . . . without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

When Peter spoke to the house of Cornelius, he said, "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ . . ." (Acts 10:36). When an individual obeys the Gospel of Christ, Paul states, " . . . we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Again, Ephesians 2:14-15 says that Jesus Himself is our peace.

When a person becomes a

Christian, he has a peace that those who are outside the body of Christ do not have.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since, as members of one body, you were called to peace" (Colossians 3:15).

I made my peace with God when I obeyed the Gospel nearly thirty-six years ago. Everyone who would like to have that peace must obey the Gospel of Christ. †

Ray Hawk preaches for the Campbell Street church in Jackson, Tennessee, U. S. A.



Born Into Poverty

When a child is born into poverty,
Illiteracy,
Starvation,
The consuming goal of a lifetime
Is to escape such existence:
And if he succeeds
He reaches out in turn,
Grasping opportunities,
To help the ones he loves.

When a child is born into a religion
Of poverty,
Illiteracy,
Starvation,
Often — too often —
He refuses to lift his eyes
To see what could be his,
What God would give
To opened, out-stretched hands,
But, duty-bound,
He clings his whole life through
To death,
And never sees.

— Betty Burton Choate

HUMAN CREEDS SHOULD BE ABANDONED

G. F. Raines

Many years ago I came to the conviction that all man-devised human religious creeds and confessions of faith should be abandoned as tests of fellowship, and that over-head ecclesiastical organizations are inadequate guarantees of Christian unity, and are totally unscriptural.

I advocate a complete acceptance of the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the simple Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in our pulpits and wherever the Christian religion is professedly taught.

I intend to remain free from all human ecclesiastical laws and unscriptural organizations, and thus *"stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free . . ."* (Galatians 5:1).

I plead for the unity of all God's people on the simple basis of "the Bible alone as an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice."

John Wesley said: "Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet, read His Holy Word, imbibe His Spirit and transcribe His life into our own." †

G. F. Raines writes and preaches in Newton, Mississippi, U. S. A.

It is true that many good people do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation, but the final word on any religious matter is the Holy Bible. Baptism is a New Testament ordinance. In understanding baptism we need to see its relationship to other things. In English, the part of speech that shows that relationship is a preposition. A preposition "denotes the relation of an object to an action or things." In this article we wish to study the various prepositions that are used in connection with baptism.

First, there is the preposition "in." John the Baptizer said, "*I indeed baptize you in water*" (Matthew 3:11). In

Acts 8 the Ethiopian nobleman was baptized in water. In Acts 10:47-48 we find Peter saying, "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not*

be baptized . . ." In the New Testament we read of various baptisms, such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, etc., but today there is only "*one baptism*" (Ephesians 4:5). That one



Baptism And Its Relationships

Roy Beasley, Jr.

baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission. Jesus said, "*Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .*" (Matthew 28:19-20). This baptism was to be practiced "*even to the end of the world*" and was to be performed by men. This was the baptism in water.

Baptism is also in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38). To be baptized in the name of Christ means to be baptized by His authority. It

also suggests that we are doing it for His glory and honor. Furthermore, there is the idea of obeying Christ and depending upon His merit,

depending upon Him for the results, and realizing that we have no merit of our own.

Then, there is the preposition "by." I Corinthians 12:13 says, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . .*" What is the meaning of the expression, "*by one Spirit*"? Is this expression used elsewhere in Paul's writings? If so, in what sense is it used? This should give us a clue as to its meaning in this passage. Back up to verse three of the same chapter and read: "*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*" Here the meaning is plain. It means **in accordance with the teachings** of the Holy Ghost. In verse 13 the expression means the same. To be baptized **by** the Spirit means to be baptized in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Just before His death Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the apostles and other inspired men in their preaching and teaching. These men spoke and wrote as they were guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. We no longer have inspired men, but we do have an inspired book, the Bible. It is through this written Word that the Holy Spirit teaches us today, and this Word tells us to be baptized.

When we follow the teaching of the New Testament concerning baptism, we are doing it **by** the Holy Spirit.

"**For**" is another preposition we find in connection with Bible teaching concerning baptism. In Acts 2:38 we read that we are to be baptized **for the remission of sins**. There is much confusion in the religious world concerning the meaning of the word "for." Some contend that it means "because of" or "on account of" the remission of sins, and that we are to be baptized because we have already received the remission of sins and have been saved. It is true that the English preposition "for" does sometimes mean "because of" in the English language, but the New Testament was originally written in Greek, not English. The Greek preposition is **EIS**, and it did not have that meaning.

The American Standard Version of the Bible has rendered this word "**unto**" instead of "**for**," showing that these translators recognized that these people were being commanded to be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins. This same expression is found in Matthew 26:28, where Jesus was instituting the Lord's Supper. He took the cup and said, "*Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many*

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

for the remission of sins." Surely He was not saying that He shed His blood because of remission of sins, but in order for them to receive the remission of sins. And that is the meaning of this expression in Acts 2:38. The word "for" means "unto." We are to be baptized in order to receive the remission of past sins. This also harmonizes with what the preacher told Saul to do in Acts 22:16, when he said, *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*

"**Into**" is also used several times in connection with baptism. We are considering this preposition separately, although it is the same Greek word **EIS**. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we are told that we are baptized **into the one body**. The one body is the church (Ephesians 1:22). Baptism is necessary in order to get **into the body of Christ, the church**.

Furthermore, baptism is also **into the name of the Father, Son,**

and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Here we have the three persons of the Godhead named. We are baptized into a saving relationship with the Sacred Three.

In Romans 6:3 we are told that we are baptized **into the death of Christ**. Paul makes the point that those who are dead to sins should not continue to live therein. Then he tells us that we died to sin when we were baptized **into the death of Christ**. Again, in Galatians 3:27 we learn that we are baptized **into Christ**.

Every responsible soul should ask himself/herself these questions: Have I been baptized **in water? in the name of Christ? by the one Spirit for or unto the remission of sins? into the one body? into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? into the death of Christ? and into Christ?** If your answer is no, why do you wait to do so? †

Roy Beasley, Jr. works with Restoration Radio Network in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

NO MAN IS SIMPLY WHAT YOU SEE. In walking form he is the composite of all the knowledge, history, experiences, spirituality, beauty, inspiration, brushing of elbows, emotional garnuts, of a lifetime. When you stand before a person who has lived fully, you are in the presence of immeasurable wealth.

— BBC

"I Cannot See The Purpose In Baptism"

Demar Elam

Multitudes of people are honest and sincere when they make this statement, "I cannot see the purpose in baptism!" Some have said, "I'd be happy to be baptized, if I could see some significance or true purpose in baptism." The purpose of this article is to allow God, through His Word, to show us the purpose of baptism.

Space will not allow us to deal with all the verses on baptism, but in this article we will consider enough verses to establish what the purpose of baptism is to man.

Romans 6:3 says that baptism puts one **into** Christ. We are baptized **into** Christ. The purpose of baptism is to get **into** Christ. Have you done that?

Baptism provides a **newness of life**. Romans 6:4 states that "... we also should walk in newness of life." The purpose of baptism is to provide newness of life. Do you want newness of life? Without baptism, it is impossible to have newness of life!

Baptism is in the **likeness of His death**. The assurance is given that if we are baptized in the likeness of His death, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection!

Finally, the purpose of baptism is so clearly stated in 1 Peter 3:21, "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" Please notice that the significance placed on baptism in this verse is salvation. Baptism **saves!** If God were going to tell you that the purpose of baptism is to save you, how would He state it any differently than, "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . .*"?

Please let us know if we can assist you in your obedience to Christ. †

Demar Elam heads the Missions Department at Alabama Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama, and leads mission group efforts in Russia.

GIVING WORTHILY

Bill Nicks

Some of the saints in Sardis will walk with Christ in white garments, *"for they are worthy"* (Revelation 3:4). Whatever we do for the Lord must be done worthily, that is, in a worthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27). Our walk must be commensurate with our vocation (Ephesians 4:1). This is especially true with reference to our giving back to the Lord a liberal portion of that with which he has blessed us materially. It is imperative that we consider this a priority, inas-

much as many of the parables, such as the parable of the unrighteous steward, the rich man and Lazarus, the rich fool, and many other teachings of the Lord and the apostles, place great emphasis on our responsibility to make proper use of them.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, Paul gives five reasons why we should give worthily. They are just as applicable in our 20th century life as to those in the first century. It is in our interest to avoid covetous-

ness, from a Greek word that is never used in a good sense in the New Testament. This illicit desire for more will so warp the disposition that one can be led to steal, to lie, to commit adultery, and even to kill in order to obtain worldly gain. Except by the grace of God through Christ, all of us would be covetous. Christianity endows one with a

heart of generosity, which leads to sharing with the poor and needy, and in turn makes one happy. We are too selfish to make ourselves joyous, but when we share what

we have with others, it comes back to us with an even disposition of love and joy and peace. Otherwise, we become miserly and selfish.

(1) **The first reason Paul assigns for giving worthily is the example of others.** Paul stirs up the Corinthians in the Province of Achaia, with the example of the saints in Macedonia, who had been generous in spite of poverty and affliction. Someone has said, "It is the poor who help the poor."

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

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Perhaps this is because they know more about what poverty is like and can empathize. It was the common people, those who were poor, who heard the Lord gladly. Most of the rich elite rejected Him. It has ever been true that *"not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"* (1 Corinthians 1:26). Riches can be a curse or a blessing, depending on one's use of them. It is not wrong to have wealth; it is wrong not to share it! Note the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. He had some wealth, but used it to help the man fallen among thieves. If you observe that others are using their God-given means to bless the church and their fellowman, you can follow

their good example. Good examples inspire others. Paul knew this and used the Macedonians as a means of inspiring the Corinthians.

(2) *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). Giving began in heaven, not on earth. *"God so loved the world that he gave . . ."*

(John 3:16). And the gift He gave was *"his only begotten Son."* Jesus voluntarily laid down His life (John 10:18). He could have called down from heaven *"twelve legions of angels"* to prevent it (Matthew 26:53), but He was in love with lost, ruined man, and knew this was God's only plan to save them (Romans 5:8ff). Our Lord's wonderful example of compassion and liberality should stir us to new heights in giving worthily. We can save the lost sinners of the world only to the extent the church is

awakened to give till it hurts, then keep on giving till it doesn't hurt, because by then we have grown in Christian spirit to love giving. It costs to send missionaries, to conduct meetings, and

to go out to the vast areas of the world who have not heard the story of Jesus and His love. A dying church may be one having spent millions on finely structured, cathedral-like buildings, but the box marked for missions has cobwebs surrounding it. It is not wrong to have nice buildings, but it can be wrong if we, in building them, have forgotten the one grand mission of the church, that of saving souls.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you (Luke 6:38).

And this is costly, demanding sacrificial giving.

(3) The past record of the Corinthian church was another means Paul used to stir them to faithful and worthy giving. They had *"made a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but to will also"* (2 Corinthians 8:10). It was imperative they finish what they had started. Many good plans fail because we leave them unfinished. It is right for all to remember this adage: "Never fall below your very best." It is never right to rest on the laurels of the past; our present negligence cancels out good deeds of the past.

(4) It is necessary to put good feelings into action. Paul commended them for having *"a readiness to desire it,"* but reminded them that they needed to *"complete out of your ability"* (2 Corinthians 8:11). God will judge us according to our own opportunities and abilities, for it is *"acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not"* (verse 12). Edgar Guest said in the famous poem, "Sermons We See":

**The best of all the preachers
Are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action
is what everybody needs.**

(5) Life has a way of evening things up. The Gentiles, said Paul, are now helping the Jews in carnal things. The Jews had first received

the Gospel and had shared it with the Gentiles, Paul being one of those Jews. The abundance of the Gentiles in European Greece evidenced that they were prospering, but Jews were in a famine, and many were being persecuted because they had left their own religion of Judaism and had become Christians. Now, it would even things up *"by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, 'He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack'"* (2 Corinthians 8:14ff).

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). This is Solomon's way of saying what Jesus said, *"Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, running over, shall they give into your bosom. for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again"* (Luke 6:38).

It does not necessarily impoverish one to give, for he reaps what he sows. Through God's providence, man is blessed richly (Psalms 37:25; Romans 8:28; Galatians 6:7ff). †

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Of all bad things, sin is the worst. If I could wish for just one thing as a gospel preacher, I would wish for the ability to adequately describe sin. Some think that the devil is a fallen angel; he may be (1 Timothy 3:16). If he is, sin is worse than the devil, for sin made him the devil.

The Bible was written on the subject of sin. If one says: "But I thought it was written on the subject of the scheme of redemption," I would ask: "Redemption from what?" The answer would have to be: "Redemption from sin."

Sin is real. No Bible writer was skeptical of its reality. Jesus did not try to prove that sin was real with philosophical arguments. In fact, He did not try thus to prove anything He said. He was the divine dogmatist! He just told men that they were sinners, and there was no argument about it (John 8:7, 21,24,44). Those Jesus called sinners were religious people; they were religiously wrong. Some of the worst sins that Jesus rebuked were sins of religious error. When

people do things in their religion that are a violation of God's standard as revealed in His Word, they sin!

No amount of sincerity, conscientiousness, and honesty makes such sin any better. Perhaps one of

the greatest sins in the sight of God is the sin of substituting traditions, senti-

ments, and the commandments of men

for God's Word. It is a sin to substitute sincerity and honesty for God's Word. One must be sincere and honest if he is a member of God's family, which is His church, but one can be honest and sincere, and still be wrong religiously. And when one is shown that he is wrong according to the plain teaching of God's immutable counsel, His Word, and that one refuses to do anything about it because he has been sincere and honest, then he substitutes sincerity and honesty for God's Word. The Bible is our only guide to heaven, and when we substitute anything for it, we sin grievously! Paul was honest, sincere, and thought he was right while he persecuted Christ and the church of



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Christ, but he was wrong (Acts 22:3,4; 23:1; 26:9-11)! When Paul realized he was wrong, he quit the wrong.

Men sin when they do that which God tells them not to do. *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law"* (1 John 3:4). Transgression of any of God's laws is sin. Many people who believe this seem to forget something else that the Bible teaches on the subject of sin. When one fails to do that which God requires of him, he sins. *"Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17).

The Bible teaches men to believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son; it teaches men to repent of their sins, and upon a confession of their faith, to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 17:30). When people thus obey the Gospel they become members of the church that we can all read about in the Bible. It does not matter with God how "good" a man may be otherwise, if he does not do that which God tells him to do, he sins.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

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A More Interesting Bible

I read somewhere about a mother who was trying to persuade her eight-year-old daughter to study her Sunday Bible class lesson. Mother took her Bible down from the shelf, dusted it off, and called her daughter to her side. "Now, I want you to read your Bible lesson before you go out to play."

"All right, Mother," the little girl said, "but let's study out of Grandmother's Bible. It's more interesting than yours."

"Why, what makes you say that, Sweetie? My Bible is exactly like Grandmother's."

"Oh, no, Mother," the observant little lady insisted. "I'm sure Grandmother's Bible must be more interesting than yours because she reads hers so much more often than you do!"

It is hard to teach what we ourselves refuse to learn! Actions speak louder than words. It will be hard for others to accept our counsel on the importance of Bible study if they do not see us doing it ourselves. May God help us to live the truth which we claim to believe!

— Copied — Bobby Dockery

Homosexuality has become a major issue these days. Many seem to forget that it was an even more common matter in antiquity, greatly practiced and frequently discussed.

In 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 Paul writes, "Do you not know the

unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God, and such were some of you."

Paul is not making a special sin out of homosexuality. He simply handles it in the same way as theft, abuse, drunkenness, and fornication. He says that it is wrong!

In Genesis 1:27 the image of God is said to reside jointly in the male and female. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Sex is given either for the marriage of one man and one woman, or else for celibacy. This is the hard teaching of the Bible. Adultery, fornication, sodomy, polygamy, bestiality, and homosex-

uality are all found in the Bible, but are all repudiated. This is not what God intended sex to be. All break the one-flesh unity of man and woman

in which God's image is found.

Accordingly, it is no surprise to find that every reference in the Bible

to homosexuality condemns it (Genesis 19; Judges 19:22ff.; Leviticus 18:22,20:13; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; 2 Peter 2:6-10; Jude 7; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Homosexual behavior is a sin.

If this seems very hard, particularly for those with a predisposition toward their own sex, Paul has some good news. Homosexuality can be changed. "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). That verse speaks volumes. It shows the weaknesses to which they were prone, from which they had turned away, for which they had been forgiven.

It is simply not true to say that homosexuality cannot be changed. Each individual has the freedom to choose obedience to God. †

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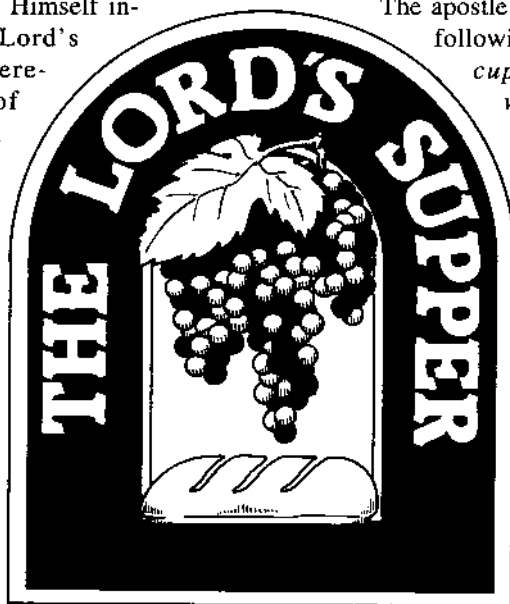
HOMOSEXUALITY
Tom Kelton

The Lord's Supper is a part of our worship, to be observed on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day is the first day of the week. Christ Himself instituted the Lord's Supper. Therefore, it is of divine origin, and it constituted the central part of the worship of Christians. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took

the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28). The "bread" and the "cup" are witnesses to the sacrifice on Calvary where Christ gave His life for the sins of the world. In consequence, every time Christians

partake of the Lord's Supper they bring back to their memory Christ's sublime deed for the remission of our sins.

The apostle Paul wrote the following text: *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partak-*



Hans J. Dederscheck

ers of that one bread." The Lord's Supper is a communion.

Again Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29: *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink*

of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." The mere act of partaking of the Lord's Supper does not mean much. Real communion with Christ is demonstrated only if the Christian submits himself to a self-examination, that is, the heart of the worshipper must be right. The Christian must be in reverence and deep meditation; otherwise, it is in vain that we eat the bread and drink the cup. The Lord's Supper is, therefore, also a self-examination.

Since the Lord's Supper is taken in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, His church, Christians, the members of the kingdom of Christ, have the privilege of communion at the Lord's table. Listen to Jesus: *"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom..."* (Luke 22:29-30). *"The saints and faithful brethren in Christ"* were in the church, the kingdom (Colossians 1:2,13). Christians partake of the Lord's Supper because it is Christ *"in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7).

The doctrine of transubstantia-

tion has nothing to do with the teaching of Christ. Transubstantiation is simply the invention of theology. It was declared as part of the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent. The text says: "In the Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently, the whole Christ." In addition, we read, "The whole substance of the bread is converted into the body and the whole substance of the wine into the blood." However, God's Word does not teach such an idea. The Lord's Supper is a spiritual feast to spiritually-minded Christians (1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

According to the New Testament, the first-century Christians met each first day of the week, the Lord's Day, and observed the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Our worship today must be done by precept and example of the New Testament teaching.

Finally, when Christians partake of the Lord's Supper they *"proclaim the Lord's death till he comes"* (1 Corinthians 11:26). Indeed, the Lord's Supper is the central act of a sincere and honest worship service, a weekly celebration of victory in Christ. †

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Pictures of Faith

O. P. Baird

People hold different views of how faith brings the blessings of God, but all agree that one must have faith to be a Christian. A chapter in the New Testament, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, tells what faith is and gives examples showing how faith worked in the lives of many people to bring blessings from God.

What faith is: *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is necessary: *"And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

From this we see that faith in God is believing that God is real and that He can and will reward those who seek Him. The spiritual rewards of God cannot be seen with



the natural eye, and the rewards beyond this life are greater than our minds can comprehend. Those who have faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ live in hope of receiving those eternal blessings, and faith gives them assurance of the reality of those blessings and conviction that they will receive them.

In the rest of the chapter we have examples which may be called

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"pictures of faith." These examples describe how people of God obtained various blessings. In every case the blessing was received by faith, "*For therein the elders had witness borne to them*" (Hebrews 11:2).

One of the most striking of these "pictures" is given in Hebrews 11:30, "*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.*" The account of the walls falling is given in the Old Testament book of Joshua, chapter six. When Joshua led the Israelites into the land God had promised them, the first city they came to was Jericho. The city was protected by a great wall around it. "*And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor*" (Joshua 6:2). God gave them the city. Therefore, they received it by God's grace.

God told Joshua and the Israelites to march around the city once each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day, then for the priests to sound the horns and for the people to shout. God promised the wall would fall when they did this. They obeyed and the wall fell, and the people went in and took the city (verse 20). They had to obey the commands of God, but that did not keep it from being by

grace that they received it. Also, it did not keep it from being by **faith** (Hebrews 11:30). If Joshua and the Israelites had thought like many people today they probably would have said, "There is no power in marching to cause the walls of a city to fall. If we had to do anything we would be receiving the city by works instead of faith." But Hebrews 11:30 shows that to be false reasoning. The only reason Joshua and the Israelites marched around the wall was that God commanded it and promised to give them the city when they obeyed. That made it purely an act of faith. They took God at His word and acted upon His promise. If they had said, "We will just believe and let the walls fall," that would have indicated a **lack of faith**.

Let us compare this with receiving salvation from sin. We are saved by God's grace, and through faith, "*For by grace have ye been saved through faith . . .*" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

We receive salvation by the grace of God (as a gift), and we get into (have access into) the benefits of His grace through faith, "*Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*"

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(Romans 5:1-2).

Does God give any commands for the sinner to obey before receiving forgiveness of his sins? The first example of people being saved by faith after the resurrection of Jesus is found in the book of Acts, chapter two. The apostle Peter preached a great sermon on the day of Pentecost. He and all the apostles testified that they had seen Jesus alive after His resurrection. He said to the people, *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him"* (Acts 2:36-39). *"They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls"* (Acts 2:41).

At the city of Jericho God gave commands and promised a blessing. When the commands were obeyed the blessing was received. It was

received **by faith**. On the day of Pentecost God gave commands and promised a blessing. When the commands were obeyed the blessing was received. It was received **by faith**.

Joshua and the Israelites lived under the old covenant, and Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was preaching the message of the new covenant. Commands differed under the two covenants, but faith is the same under the new covenant as it was under the old covenant, and it works in the same way to bring the blessings of God. When God wanted to show new-covenant people what faith is like, He used old-covenant **pictures of faith** to do it. Therefore, the nature of faith is the same under both covenants.

There are other examples in the book of Acts of people being saved. In all the examples, faith brought the blessing of God in the same way, as those people were moved by their faith to obey God.

Dear reader, if you have faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ, but have not acted upon your faith by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, Christ waits in love to receive you, if you will come to Him **"by faith."** †

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The few Who Diligently Seek God

Don L. Norwood



When a person is careful to consider what our Lord Jesus Christ said about obtaining eternal life with God, it is indeed sobering in thought. In Matthew 7:14 He said: *"For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it."* The writer of the Hebrews epistle also said: *"... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him"* (Hebrews 11:6). Peter wrote: *"Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure..."* (2 Peter 1:10).

The few as opposed to the many will enter the narrow gate and walk the straitened way. It is a narrow gate because it requires that a person empty himself of himself and become totally devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is a straitened way because it requires that one walk by the teachings of the Gospel of Christ to the end of one's life (Romans 8:1; Hebrews 3:12-14). God will reward only those who sincerely seek after Him. Jesus said that to know God and to know Him whom God sent (Christ) is to have eternal life (John 17:3). John wrote: *"And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments"* (1 John 2:3).

Diligence requires carefulness and earnest interest in what we are doing. Paul wrote these words to Christians at Ephesus: *"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Ephesians 5:15-17). Jesus said, *"Not every one that 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). He also said, *"... My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me"* (John 7:16).

Will you be one of the few who diligently seeks God?

†

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

WHAT GOD WANTS

Kenneth Davis

If most of us were asked, we would say that we want to do what God wants us to do. Perhaps, though, it would be good to ask ourselves if we really do want what God wants. A Christian is one who desires to do what God wants him to do. If we aren't doing what God wants us to do, how may we say that we are truly Christians?

What does God want in the church? Christ wants a church that is truly dedicated to Him, one that is preaching the Word, edifying the saved, and providing for those who are in need. A church which stands for the truth under all circumstances is a church that pleases God.

What does the Lord want for my home? The Lord wants a home where His name is magnified and where He is given first place in their hearts. He wants parents to train their children to love and obey Him.

What does the Lord want from your life? He wants a truly converted person who loves the lost and is willing to do something to help them to be saved. The Lord wants a steadfast and faithful person, not just one who is dedicated today and then becomes friends with the world tomorrow.

†

Who is Jesus?

Was Jesus Christ only 'a good man'? Was He only a prophet? Was He one of the many so-called 'incarnations' of God?

The **voice of God** from heaven proclaimed Him, "This is *My beloved Son....*" (Matthew 3:17)

Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?...You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." (John 9:35,37) He also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" (John 14:6)

Was Jesus a liar? If so, He was not a *good* man. But if He spoke the *truth*, he was not merely a prophet, nor did He share His Lordship with others, for He declared in plain terms that our only avenue to the Father in heaven is through Himself.

Jesus' empty tomb speaks of Him alone: "...I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for *He is risen...*" (Matthew 28:5,6) No other human has conquered death.

Next: Could God have a son?

THE CHURCH

THE LORD'S ARDENT DESIRE FOR THE CHURCH

Gary C. Hampton

Jesus purchased the church with His shed blood (Acts 20:28). The church is also the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:24). It is, therefore, logical that the church should seek to learn the Lord's will.

A WORLD VISION

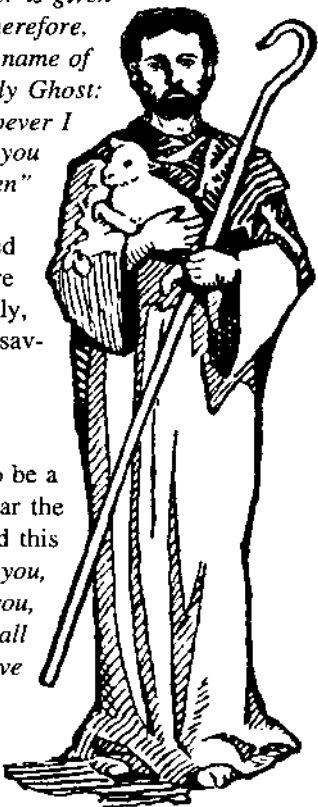
Jesus ardently desired that the church have a world vision. *"And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Matthew 28:18-20).

It should be observed that He expected them to begin where they were. They were then to go out to the surrounding area. Finally, they were to reach the whole world with the saving Gospel (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8).

OVERFLOWING WITH BROTHERLY LOVE

The Lord ardently desired the church to be a body overflowing with brotherly love. Near the end of His life on earth Jesus clearly stated this desire. *"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).

Peter stressed the need for such love. *"And above all things have fervent charity [love] among yourselves: for charity*



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[love] shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). James explained how that could happen. *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins"* (James 5:19-20).

A BRIDE HE CAN TAKE

HOME

In Ephesians 5 Paul uses the relationship of husband and wife to explain the church's relationship to Christ. *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of 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" (verses 25-27). Clearly, he wants her prepared to take home to meet God.

He urged the church at Smyrna to remain faithful, even if it meant death. Then, He would give them a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Paul said the Lord has a crown of righteousness awaiting all those who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

CONCLUSION

Our greatest desire, as members of the Lord's church, should be to fulfill His desire. Thus, we should cultivate a world vision. We ought to stoke the fires of brotherly love. Ultimately, we should do all in our power to be the type of people He can take home to the Father, as His loving, faithful, prepared bride. †

Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Pleasant Valley congregation in Mobile, Alabama, U. S. A.

Concerning the Relationship Between Christ and the Church

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2)

That you may be married to another, even to Him Who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (Romans 7:4)

WHY THE EARLY CHURCH WAS SUCCESSFUL

Jerry Jenkins

Even prejudiced historians are amazed with the marvelous spread of the first century church. Luke records this phenomenal growth: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls**" (Acts 2:41). "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was **about five thousand**" (Acts 4:4). Luke later states, "**multitudes** both of men and women" (Acts 5:14), "the disciples were **multiplied**" (Acts 6:1), "the number of disciples **multiplied in Jerusalem greatly**" (Acts 6:7). The lowest estimate of Christians this writer has ever seen, just prior to their dispersion, was 25,000. What was the secret for their success? Why did a small band of 120 fearful disciples launch such a successful evangelistic thrust? Perhaps there are many reasons, but certainly the following would be included:

THEY STOOD IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

It had been less than two months since they had seen their

close friend and leader executed. From a distance and in disbelief they had watched as He received wound after wound, insult after insult, and finally yielded up His spirit from the cross. With such commitment, devotion, and affection fresh on their hearts, they aggressively and unashamedly told the story of His life.

THEY WERE STEADFAST IN WORSHIP

As the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8), these first century Christians were fully aware of the uplifting, inspiring experience of worshipping God in His appointed way. With great enthusiasm they sang, prayed, gave of their money, studied, and communed with God. Those who may have been spasmodic, irregular, indifferent to the "*assembling of themselves together*," just as in the twentieth century, did not stay when persecution loomed on the horizon. The text simply states: "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42).

THEY WERE PURE IN THEIR LIVES

The disciplinary action which befell Ananias and Sapphira caused reverential respect on the disciples (Acts 5:11) and "*multitudes of men and women*" from outside the fellowship were "*added to the Lord.*" While some today tend to minimize the power of godly living and give emphasis to doctrinal soundness, these early Christians believed the two qualities should walk hand in hand. Purity of life was one of the outstanding attributes of the early church.

THEY RESPECTED THE POWER OF THE WORD

None believed it was their own effort that made this growth possible. They came from persecution with joy and spoke, not of their personal sacrifices, but the **Word of God** with great boldness (Acts 4:31, 5:41). Indeed, it appears that the flame of determination glowed brightest when the opposition mounted their most intensive efforts. The men and women had a **dream**. They knew the fields were white, and *they envisioned themselves as co-laborers with God! What an example for Christians of this century to follow!* †

Jerry Jenkins preaches for the Roebuck Parkway congregation in Birmingham, AL, U.S. A.

The Strength of Love

Love would seem so fragile, an intangible thing between two hearts, without measured strength; vulnerable to neglect and thoughtless words; a gentle thing, easily wounded, easily killed

But deceptive strength lies hidden in the gentleness, for within are bands like twisted steel, spanning time and space, absorbing hurts and anger, enduring, believing, trusting, growing, living, in spite of all

For pure love,
I think,
is anchored deep in the
strength of eternity

Betty Burton Choate
— A World Apart

RESTORING

New Testament Christianity

Frank Chesser

When Jesus first made His entrance into the world of humanity, He found it divided into various factions and religious parties. These various groups were more concerned with their traditions, peculiarities, and man-made laws than they were the commands of God. Jesus knew if His followers divided into parties, sects, and factions, they would be doomed from the start.

Therefore, throughout the New Testament one finds such warnings as, *"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand"* (Matthew 12:25). *"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up"* (Matthew 15:13). According to this passage, the destiny of every religious institution founded in humanity rather than divinity is "destruction."

However, in spite of these and other warnings, denominationalism is one of the major problems of our day. It stands in opposition to every basic principle in Christianity. It is the devil's tool, utilized effectively

in blinding the minds of men to the simplicity of God's way and the one church of the Bible.

One of the many biblical terms used to designate the church is the term "kingdom." In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus uses the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably. Having obeyed the Gospel, the Christians in Colossae had been *"translated into the kingdom"* or church (Colossians 1:13).

The Word of God is the "seed" of the kingdom (Luke 8:10-11). God's law of reproduction demands that every seed bring forth after its kind (Genesis 1:11). No one expects apple seeds to produce pears, or human seed to produce apes. This same law of reproduction is also applicable to the spiritual kingdom. When the pure seed, God's Word, is planted in the fertile soil of honest hearts, the results are Christians only and only Christians, members of Christ's one New Testament church. This divine truth is aptly illustrated by the status of Christianity in the first century.

On the first Pentecost following

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the resurrection of Christ, a huge crowd assembled in Jerusalem to hear the first gospel sermon to be preached under the worldwide commission (Acts 2). The apostles endeavored to plant the pure seed of the Gospel in the hearts of those present. About three thousand hearts proved to be fertile soil, resulting in the beginning of New Testament Christianity. The prayer of Christ for uniformity in religion (John 17) was certainly answered in this instance, for they were united in faith and practice (Acts 2:41-47).

The following chapter (Acts 3) records another great sermon by the apostle Peter, resulting in the obedience of a great multitude (Acts 4:4). The same gospel seed was planted, the same obedience required, and the same result was forthcoming. In striking terms the inspired penman describes their unity as being of "*one heart and of one soul*" (Acts 4:32). Acts 8 records the first proclamation of the Gospel outside Jerusalem. Though the location had changed, the same gospel seed was planted with no change in results.

Contrary to the thinking of many, it **does** make a difference as to what religion one embraces. This truth is verified in the conversion of Saul. Though a very devout Jew and a faithful member of the Pharisaic religion, he found it necessary to obey the same Gospel as was required of all others desiring

to be Christians (Acts 9).

Soon after his conversion, the apostle Paul (formerly Saul) became one of the central figures in the establishment of New Testament Christianity. As a result of his work, congregations of the Lord's church were established in Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth, and many other places.

Did these congregations constitute different denominational groups, divided in name, doctrine, and practice? God forbid! One just as well claim that Paul changed gospels every time he changed locations. In every instance the same gospel seed was planted, and every seed brings forth after its kind. Speaking of these congregations, united in faith and practice, the inspired text says, "*the churches of Christ salute you*" (Romans 16:16).

What the world needs is a **restoration** of New Testament Christianity. Let us return to the divine blueprint of the church Jesus *promised* to build (Matthew 16:18), *did* build (Acts 2), and for which He *died* (Ephesians 5:25). Let us speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. *This is non-denominational, New Testament Christianity.* †

Frank Chesser is a gospel preacher in Jacksonville, Florida, U. S. A.

Some Clarification About Church Membership

Mack Lyon

One of our television viewers has written me saying, "One thing I know, God is not going to ask us if we were members of 'such and such denomination' when we stand before Him. He is going to look to see if the Image of His dear Son is dwelling in us by means of the spiritual re-birth."

Of course, he's right. But that doesn't mean that God is not going to be concerned about our being in His church, because all the saved are in His church (Acts 2:47).

One of the problems we have in our generation with church membership as it relates to salvation is our confusion of the words "church" and "denomination." "Church" appears 112 times in the King

James Version of the New Testament. Therefore, it is not a bad word, but a biblical one.

Seventy-six times it appears in the singular form, the singular number (church), as in Matthew 16:18 and Acts 20:28. Christ built and purchased only one church.

Twenty-six times it is plural (churches), as in Galatians 1:2 and 22, where reference is made to congregations of the Lord's people in

the regions of Galatia and Judea respectively. Never in the Scriptures, whether in the singular or plural form, does it refer to a "denomination," but the called, redeemed, saved people of the Lord (Acts 2:47; 20:28).

"Denomination" does not

Before we can be undenominational, we must clear our minds of these denominational perceptions, and it isn't easy in a world filled with denominations. That is good reason for striving diligently not to be a denomination, but in fact the church of Jesus Christ.

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appear in the New Testament at all; not even once. To be denominational is "to divide and name." Our Lord does not want us to divide into warring sects and wear different names to distinguish one group from the other. He prayed that His people would all be one (John 17:20-23). He died that we might all be reconciled to God in one body, whether Jew or Greek, American, Asian, or African, bond or free, male or female. What a grand concept — the unity of all believers in Jesus in one body, church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-4).

When we say Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16:18), we are not referring to any denominational

group. We are simply using the word "church" the way the Bible uses it. If, when we use it that way, someone thinks we are speaking of a denomination, he is sure to be confused and very often becomes angry.

Before we can be undenominational, we must clear our minds of these denominational perceptions, and it isn't easy in a world filled with denominations. That is good reason for striving diligently not to be a denomination, but in fact the church of Jesus Christ. †

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



We have the honor of representing God's Family in the world. In human families, to each of us our individual name is of particular importance. "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches."

Think of the name of God! Think of the perfection, the goodness, the purity it has stood for from eternity! Never, through an act of God, has there been one blemish on His name, not one mark against it.

Think of the tremendous thing He did in taking that spotless name and allowing us — humans, sinners, but new creatures in Him, born as His children — to wear it as though it were inherently our right!

How grateful we should be for this honor! How jealously we should guard the purity of the name "Christian", being unwilling for our actions to bring one blot of shame upon it.

— Betty Burton Choate

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ON BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

Maxie B. Boren

The church is "the called out" of Christ. That is what the Greek word translated by the English word "church" means — "the called out." The Bible teaches us that people are "called" by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Thus, when one hears the Gospel, believes it, and renders an obedient response to the commands contained therein, he indeed has been "called" by it.

The Gospel means "good news." The good news is the message of God's wonderful love, mercy, and grace offered to humankind through His Son Jesus Christ and the GREAT sacrifice that Christ made for us on the cross. The apostle Paul defines it quite clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. This message is God's designated power to save those who believe it, and who will obey the Christ. Read Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18-23, and Hebrews 5:8-9.

The New Testament teaches that the process by which a person is saved from sin is the same process by which that person becomes a member of the Lord's church. Acts 2:22-41,47 is very clear on this. Those people in Jerusalem on the Jewish feast day called Pentecost, who believed the

Gospel that they heard, inquired what they must do. They were told, ". . . Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . ." The record then tells us, "*They then that received his word were baptized . . .*" And these were "added" to God's family. Thus, verse 47 informs us that "*the Lord added to the church daily*" those that were being saved.

Baptism (which is immersion in water of a penitent believer, unto the remission of sins) is the culminating act of obedience that puts a person **into** Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-27 and Romans 6:3-5,17-18 make this very plain. The Bible also teaches us that baptism is "*into one body*" (1 Corinthians 12:13). The "*one body*" is the church (Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18,24). Thus, entrance "*into Christ*" is the same as entrance into "*the one body*," which is the church. **The church is the spiritual body of Christ!**

To be "in Christ" is the same as being "a member of His church," which is the same as being "a Christian." †

Maxie B. Boren is a gospel preacher living in Bedford, Texas, U. S. A.

Recognizing the Children of God

Bill McFarland

John knew that the Father has bestowed an unearthly love upon us in calling us His children (1 John 3:1). But he also knew that our lives must be the evidence that we have been "begotten of God." How are children of God to be known?

1. They do righteousness.

"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (1 John 2:29).

2. They do not live in sin.

"Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (1 John 3:9). A child of God will not make sin a way of life.

3. They love each other.

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). God is love, and His children must love each other.

4. They are committed to Christ.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 John 5:1). They



"I will give them one heart, and one way...for the good of them, and of their children after them."

Jeremiah 32:39

believe that Jesus is worthy of trust and obedience.

5. They overcome evil. *"For whosoever is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).*

6. They keep themselves true to God. *"We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).*

John didn't write to tell us how to become God's children. That happens when we are begotten by the Word and thus obey the truth (1 Peter 1:22,23). But what John wrote does remind us that when we have been born of God our lives must show it. †

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

THE CHURCH AND SALVATION

Ron Bryant

The salvation of the souls of men is the vital subject of the Scriptures. The question that flows from the thoughtful person is voiced by the psalmist: "*What is man that thou art mindful of him?*" (Psalms 8:4). Dealing honestly and faithfully with this question is one of continual challenge. But that the God of heaven is mindful of man is the centerpiece in the matter of salvation. Being mindful of man, God has provided a Savior, a Gospel, and a Church. The Savior is His Son, the Gospel belongs exclusively to Jesus the Christ, and the Church is also His.

The salvation of the souls of men stands firmly established in the love and the eternal purpose of God. And the church of Jesus the Christ also stands firmly established in the love and purpose of God. The pivotal role the church plays in God's scheme of things is set forth most eloquently in the book of Ephesians. There we are told that through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known. It is in the church, the body of the redeemed over which Christ is head, that God and His purpose are glorified (Ephesians 3:10-11; 3:21). The love of Christ

and the death of Christ are revealed as being for the church (Ephesians 5:25). It is the body to which all the saved — the reconciled — are added (Ephesians 2:15ff). One cannot properly understand the past or the present work of Jesus without a clear understanding of the church, for the church is the body of Christ, and He is head over all things to it (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23ff). To attempt to separate Christ from the concept of the church would be to *dismember* Him, to separate the Head — Himself — from His body — the church.

The challenge we face is in seeing the church in all of its biblical simplicity and beauty. In it believers have communion with God. In it believers share life and hope, love and peace. In it are vested the plans of God in the proclamation of the Gospel. To it He adds all the redeemed, and through it He calls all men to be reconciled to heaven (1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:47; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Salvation and the church are impossible to separate.

Christianity is viewed variously. It is viewed religiously and it is viewed philosophically. The bibli-

cal view presents not "Christianity," but "the church." The way of Christ is community-oriented. The believers, added together, are the church. The disciples of the first century were added to the church, and they are the church. They are members of the body, the church.

All the Christians belonged to the body of Christ. They lived and moved and had their being through the blood of Christ and the grace of God. They all walked by the same rule and lived as brothers and sisters in the household of God, the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15). Christianity is the people that belong to God through Christ, and these people are the church. †

Ron Bryant preaches the Gospel in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A.

The Clock

The clock of life is wound
But once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when
The hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
To lose one's wealth
Is sad indeed,
To lose one's health
Is more;
To lose one's soul
Is such a loss
That no man can restore.

— Unknown

Portrait of One Winning Others to Christ

Their Ears are open to the cries for help from a lost and dying world.

Their Eyes are ever searching for a receptive heart in which to plant the word of God.

Their Lips are always ready and willing to proclaim the glory of God.

Their Hands are always turning the pages of God's word, seeking His will.

Their Feet are on the move to carry out the words of Christ in preaching the gospel to every creature.

Their Hearts are breaking with the urgency to reach the lost before it is too late.

Their Heads are bowed in prayer to the Father in heaven, seeking wisdom.

Their Faces glow with the hope that lives in them.

Their Lives are like the light of a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

They are the Light of the world. In Christ they live and move and have their being.

— Selected

To Which Mission Do You Belong?

Gordon Hogan

Matthew 15:13

Late in 1960 my family and a fellow-missionary family were traveling overland from Germany to Pakistan. We encountered an interesting experience when crossing the border into the country of Lebanon. During the usual routine of clearing our passports we were asked what our jobs were. We replied

that we were preachers of the gospel of Christ. The officials then asked to which mission we belonged, Catholic

or Protestant? When we replied neither, but that we were simply Christians, a long discussion began, for these men had been trained in the language and religious thought of the world. It seemed impossible to them that someone could be simply a Christian, rather than a "Catholic Christian" or a "Protestant Christian."

During the thirty-two years of

our work in Asia, the question, "To which mission do you belong?" has been asked over and over again. Let us observe some of the things that this question implies.

Where did such thinking originate? The idea of different,

distinct missions did not originate with God. The apostle Paul, writing to Christians in the city of Ephesus,

points out clearly, "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*" (Ephesians 4:4). However, in Paul's farewell message to the elders of the church in Ephesus he warns, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous*

Jesus said, "...I will
build my church..."
(Matthew 16:18).

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wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:28-29). This warning from Paul became a reality in about A. D. 300. This apostasy took place because of a departure from the Word of God and exalting the opinions and traditions of men.

In the sixteenth century certain religious leaders, tiring of the oppression and wickedness of the Roman Catholic organization, revolted. From this movement have come the Protestant denominations, or *missions*, as we know them today.

The common conception persists that in Christendom a person must be either Catholic or Protestant. The Bible speaks no such language.

Men plant the seeds of denominational doctrine. Honest men and women will carefully examine the doctrines of the "mission" to which they belong. Did man or God plant the teachings of your "mission?" Many religious groups teach that infants inherit the sin of Adam and therefore must be baptized. Is this the teaching of God? If so, we should be able to read it from the Bible. Search as you may, such a doctrine is just not in the Word of God. On the contrary, this concept is condemned. The Bible clearly teaches that sin **cannot be inherited** (Ezekiel 18:20). The New Testament

declares that individuals must hear the gospel and believe it *before* they are fit subjects for baptism (Mark 16:15,16). An infant is not capable of meeting these requirements.

Many teach that **baptism is not essential to salvation**. God and His Son declare that it is. Read carefully Mark 16:15,16 and Acts 2:38. The apostle Peter, by inspiration, writes, "**baptism doth also now save us**" (1 Peter 3:21).

Does the "mission" to which you belong consider the Lord's Supper an act of worship to be participated in every Sunday, or possibly once or twice each month, or maybe only once or twice in a year? The Bible gives us a clear example of the disciples of Christ partaking of this great memorial on the first day of the week, and indicating that such participation is a necessary part of our worship **every Sunday** (Acts 20:7).

CONCLUSION

To which mission do you belong? I belong to **none**. But I do belong to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ **which has a mission**, the salvation of the souls of men. Jesus tells us, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:31,32). †

Gordon Hogan is a missionary working in Singapore.

Reasons Why You Should Investigate THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ken Tyler

1. It was built by Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . .*" (Matthew 16:18).
2. It is scriptural in name. Paul said, "*. . . the churches of Christ salute you*" (Romans 16:16).
3. Christ is its only head. Paul said, "*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 1:22-23).
4. It is scripturally organized. Notice the beginning of the Philippian letter, "*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons*" (Philippians 1:1).
5. It is scriptural in worship. Lord's supper (Acts 20:7); singing (Ephesians 5:19); praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17); preaching (Acts 20:7); and giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
6. It's plan of salvation is the same preached by Christ and the first century church. Hear (Romans 10:17); believe (Mark 16:16); repent (Acts 17:30); confession of Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37); and baptism "*. . . for the remission of sins . . .*" (Acts 2:38).
7. It is not one of many denominations, because we do not read of denominations in the New Testament. Paul said, "*There is one body (church)....*" (Ephesians 4:4). See Ephesians 1:22-23 for proof the body and church are the same.

The above statements are very important aspects of the Lord's church. Each one of us must practice what the Bible teaches about the church if we expect to go to heaven. Please examine the church of Christ. I think you will like our plea to be the church Jesus built. †

Ken Tyler preaches for the church in Arab, Alabama, U. S. A., and has conducted several gospel preaching campaigns in Trinidad, West Indies.

This Lovely Earth

Anna Kelly Davis

When I behold this lovely earth
And think of its wonderful birth –
How God, by his great might and power,
Brought forth each tree, each lovely flower –
I bow in humble adoration
Before the God of creation.
My heart overflows with joy and love.
Glory to our God above!

He made the sun that shines so bright,
The moon, the stars to rule the night –
Created all things, great and small –
Our great God created them all.
Angels in heaven prostrate fall,
Humbly obedient to his call.
O Mortal Men on this old earth,
Praise Jehovah! He gave thee birth!

Our God devised redemption's plan
For every tribe, for every man.
Dear sinner, your poor soul to save,
Christ conquered death, hell, and the grave.
O come, make hallelujahs ring!
Raise your voices! His praises sing!
Praise him from whom all blessings flow!
Praise him all creatures here below!

Anna Kelly Davis is 96 years old and is a member of the Lord's church in Harrison, Arkansas, U. S. A.

The Part Of Wisdom

John Gipson

We live in a "knowledge explosion" world. If we don't know something ourselves, we know where we can find information about it. Of the making of books and computers there is no end. Knowledge is everywhere. A line from the prophet Daniel comes to mind, *"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase"* (Daniel 12:4).

But, as Byron once said, "The tree of knowledge is not that of life."

Knowledge is not happiness. Hear the preacher of old: *"... he who increases knowledge increases sorrow."*

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not opposed to knowledge. It's just that there is something else which is vital — **wisdom**.

Some people have remarkable Bible knowledge. They can quote book, chapter, and verse on almost any subject, but they do not know how to apply it. They are masters in theology and failures in living. They lack wisdom and understanding.

The apostle Paul desired that

the Colossians be "filled" with the knowledge of God's will *"in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"* (Colossians 1:9). You couple knowledge with wisdom and understanding, and you have something. Through wisdom our knowledge of God is translated into terms of our human situation. It's the power to put things together; to apply principles to our everyday living.

"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know the way to it, and it is not found in the land of the living... God understands the way to it, and he knows its place... and he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding'" (Job 28:12-28).

Look around. We have countless knowledgeable people in our churches, businesses, schools, and in government. *Knowledge* is not lacking. *Wisdom* is.

In the Lord's church, let us not be found wanting in this attribute. †

John Gipson preaches in Little Rock, Arkansas, U. S. A.

DELIVERED

TO SERVE

Cecil May, Jr.

"... we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75).

In the Spirit, Zacharias speaks of deliverance promised by the Lord, for whom his son John, also as promised, would prepare the way. God delivers us, not to do abominations (Jeremiah 7:10), not to continue in the sin from which we have been delivered (Romans 6), but to serve Him.

We are delivered to serve God without fear: *"Our God is a consuming fire,"* and we are to serve Him *"with reverence and godly fear"* (Hebrews 12:28-29), but we do not have to "be afraid" of Him. Through Christ we may *"come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16). Even when we were undeserving of His love, He loved us, and gave His Son for us. Now that, through His Son, we are His children, what is there good for

us that He would withhold (Romans 5:8-11)? Because we know Christ has secured our acceptance, we may serve without fear.

We are delivered to serve God in holiness: We are to serve in holiness because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). Holiness has two aspects: (1) separated to God; (2) separated from sin. A lamb was sanctified (made holy) when it was chosen for sacrifice to God, but in order to be sanctified, it must have been without blemish or deformity. *"God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity'"* (2 Timothy 2:19). *"This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication"* (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

We are delivered to serve God in righteousness: There is a *"righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ"* (Romans 3:22), equivalent to forgiveness of sins. If we stand before the righteous God as righteous in His sight, it is not

because we have not sinned, but because our sins are forgiven. From another biblical emphasis, though, righteousness is doing right. We are to serve God with right doing. God's servant does not continue in sin. *"If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right is born of him"* (1 John 2:29). *"He who does right is righteous, even as he is righteous"* (1 John 3:7). Nor may the servants of God choose their own path of conduct. God Himself marks out the righteous path. *"All thy commandments are righteousness"* (Psalms 119:172).

We are delivered to serve God all the days of our lives: We are to serve with perseverance, holding fast our confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:6). Let us watch, therefore, for we know not the hour the Lord may come (Matthew 24:42). Let us endure to the end that we may be saved (Matthew 24:13). †

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



Be Strong! We are not here to play, to dream, to drift; We have hard work to do, and loads to lift; Shun not the struggle — face it; 'tis God's gift.

— Maltbie Davenport Babcock

The Preaching of the Cross

Avon Malone

It is abundantly clear that Paul's purpose in preaching centered in and derived itself from the message itself. It was Paul's purpose to convey Christ and His cross. Since it is the "word of the cross" that saves (1 Corinthians 1:18), Paul sees himself sent "... to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void" (1 Corinthians 1:17). Christ's cross is the "preaching" — the message that saves (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

Paul's purpose was not simply to get folks to feel good about themselves and to get on with fulfilling their human potential. Because only the Gospel can really resolve the fundamental problem of human guilt (1 Corinthians 15:3ff; Romans 4:18,25; 5:9ff), it can greatly affect the way one feels about himself, but Paul's message concerned itself with the great spiritual realities.

Paul's purpose in preaching was to save sinful men (Romans 1:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9; 1 Corinthians 9:16,22). He was consumed with the cross. Preaching to him was not a method; it was a message! It was "Christ and Him crucified." That great act of faith, Bible baptism, is crucial because it is "unto His death" (Romans 6:3; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Whether preaching to sinners or teaching saints, Paul's message always centered in the cross. †

Avon Malone teaches Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, U.S. A.

Faithfulness

David Deffenbaugh

Faithfulness is not a word that stirs up a lot of excitement. Faithfulness is not something that starts the adrenaline to flowing. Yet, there is no more important word in our relationship with God. Something that God does demand of congregations and individuals is that they be **faithful**. Faithfulness cannot be replaced.

Faithfulness cannot be replaced by **activity**. Many times we measure the value of a congregation or the spirituality of a Christian simply by their activity. But, when Jesus addressed the seven churches of Asia Minor, He did not necessarily equate activity with strength or spirituality. For instance, to the church at Ephesus He said, *"I know your deeds, and your toil and your perseverance . . ."* But He also said there were some things He had against them, and that if they did not repent, He would remove their lampstand out of its place (Revelation 2:1-7). Their activity was not enough. The Lord demanded faithfulness.

Faithfulness cannot be replaced by **popular appeal**. The Old Testament tells of two men who preached the message of God. One had outstanding response, while the other never gained a single convert. One converted literally thousands

apparently with a single sermon, while the other preached for decades without a response. The one preacher was Jonah and the other Noah. The last we hear of Jonah he was disgruntled, discouraged, and angry with God. But Noah is remembered as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Jonah, no doubt, had more popular appeal, but Noah is remembered for his faithfulness.

Faithfulness cannot be replaced by **personal preference** or **initiative**. When Joshua was selected by God to replace Moses as leader of the Israelites, he was instructed to *"...do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go"* (Joshua 1:7). The key to Joshua's success as a leader would be his **faithfulness** to God.

While there are times when activity is important, when popular appeal has its place, and personal preference and initiative can prove helpful, they are no substitute for faithfulness. In all that we work for and try to be for God, may we, first and foremost, be **faithful** to Him. †

David Deffenbaugh is preaching for the Northside congregation in Harrison, Arkansas, U. S. A.

A vow, to put it very simply, is a solemn promise. The keeping of a vow provides the ultimate test of

any person's character. Once a person has

shown that he or she will not keep a vow, all reason to trust that one has been destroyed. However, trust can be restored where a penitent spirit meets with the spirit of forgiveness.

In the marriage of a man and a woman, vows are made which are of the most sacred nature. In most marriage ceremonies, especially in the western world, God is called upon to witness the utterance of the promises which are made. Thus, the person's fidelity to God, as well as to the chosen mate, is at stake. To forsake one's marital promise is not only to be unfaithful to one's husband or wife, but it is also an unfaithfulness before God. Hence, those who lightly regard their commitment made to their mate should realize that they are, at the same time, treating carelessly the trust of God in themselves. And, if God can no longer trust us, what shall we do?!

While the mention of vows is generally associated with marriage,

vows are made in many other relationships of life. There are those who solemnly promise to pay

back money that is loaned to them. "You'll get this back; depend on it," the borrower says. One who bears some terrible secret confides in another. The latter promises, "None will ever hear from my lips what you have told me today." A friend stands firmly by his neighbor in a time of crisis, and the latter declares, "What you have done will be rewarded; I will not forget!"

God has spoken His will regarding vows, His will for man to keep his word whenever given:

"If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth" (Numbers 30:2). †

Hershel Dyer has preached the Gospel for many years in Tulsa, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Broken Vows

Hershel Dyer

Who's Watching?

Frances Parr

A few years ago our family built a house in a rural neighborhood. One day when many workmen were busy with their jobs, our nearest neighbor, who lived a quarter mile away, came over. "I had to come and see what's going on. My binoculars aren't strong enough to make it out," he said with a smile.

You may be sure that no matter who you are, or what you are doing, someone is watching. God provided advice on how to handle ourselves so that we could influence others for good for Him.

The first incident of people-watching occurred when Satan observed Adam and Eve in the garden and waited for an opportunity to tempt them. Since that time the devil has not ceased his vigil, especially concerning people who are trying to live according to God's laws.

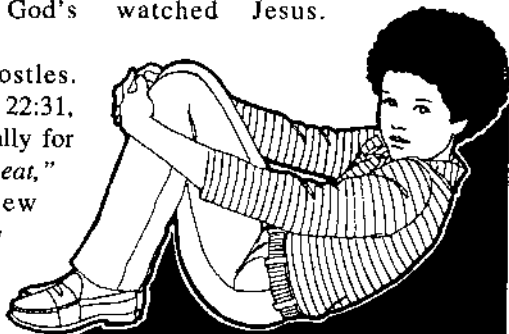
Satan watched the apostles. Jesus warned Peter, in Luke 22:31, that Satan had asked especially for him. He will "*sift you as wheat,*" Jesus said. The devil knew Judas well enough to know that he would betray the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. Is there

any reason to think Satan isn't still watching Christ's followers today?

Throughout the Bible are examples of God's people having been observed, with various results. In the story of Esther, Haman watched Mordecai and hated him, merely because he was a Jew. Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, so Haman schemed to kill Mordecai. The plan failed, and Haman died instead.

Daniel and his friends were seen as they disobeyed the king's decree to worship idols and prayed instead to the true God. Neither the lion's den nor the fiery furnace harmed them. In each case, because of the Hebrew children's example of trust in God, the kings became believers.

Everywhere He went, people watched Jesus.



Some scrutinized His every move to try and trap Him. Most folks wanted to learn more about Him, His Father, and the message He brought.

Jesus said, *"He who has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9). Jesus was gentle, kind, loving, and cared deeply for everyone. He promised a better life on earth and eternity in heaven for His followers.

After Jesus died, lived again, and ascended to heaven, His apostles continued telling about the wondrous thing He had done for mankind. The influence of their lives and teachings brought many to salvation.

Jesus expected Christians to be watched. In His "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5, He says, *"You are the light of the world."* The purpose of the Christian light is not only to be seen, but to be examined. *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,"* He said.

Peter gives advice to a wife with an unbelieving husband in 1 Peter 3:1. She may be able to convince her husband to become a

Christian by nothing more than being one herself. Because of her godly example, he may possibly be won without a word from her.

Today we hear a lot about role models. For the past several years, parents have been led to believe that being friends to

For the past several years, parents have been led to believe that being friends to their children is better than being disciplinarians. This "best pal" method of parenting is now being questioned. Parents are again realizing the great need to be good examples for their children.

their children is better than being disciplinarians. This "best pal" method of parenting is now being questioned. Parents are again realizing the great need to be good examples for their children.

Paul praised the example of Timothy's mother and grandmother. He said in 2 Timothy 1:5, *"I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded, now lives in you also."*

Even though parents may make

mistakes bringing up their children, they can still be powerful influences. The sins of King David are recorded in the Old Testament for all to see; however, the fact that he always followed the true God is remembered. His son Solomon and his descendant Jehoshaphat are commended because they followed his example. 1 Kings 9:4 and 2 Chronicles 17:3 attest to this fact.

While Jesus is the perfect role model for Christians, we all are inspired by others. By the same token, we ourselves are examples. Whether this example is inspirational or discouraging is worth careful soul-searching.

Recently I sent a note to a friend, telling her how observing her devotion and hard work for the Lord had inspired me. She was very surprised, and replied that she didn't see how she could be an inspiration to anyone. All the time she had been watching me!

" . . . Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your own hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so you will not be dependent on anybody" (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12). †

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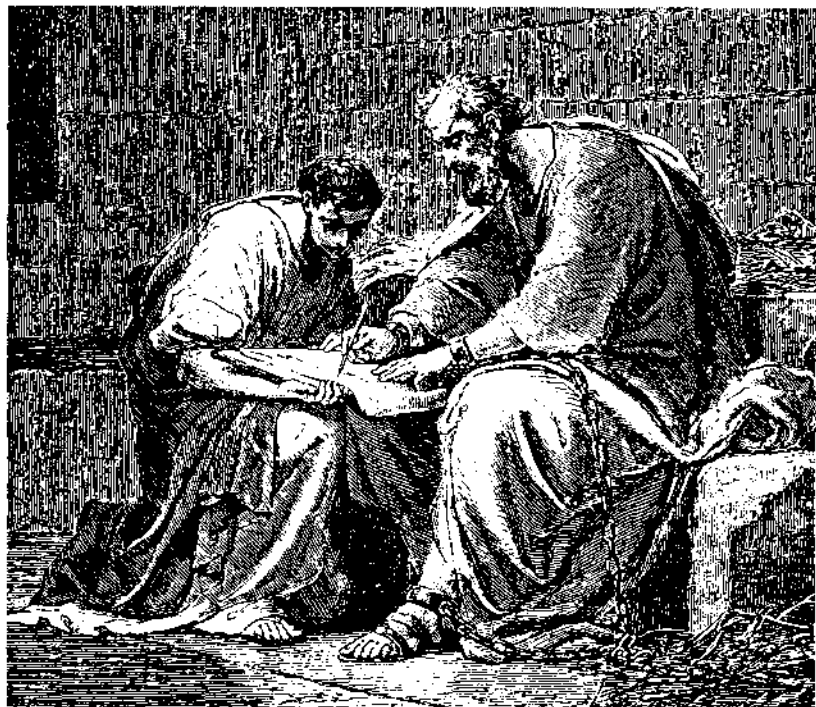
Under Observation

Sometimes, as Christians, we have difficulty sorting out the rights and wrongs of the physical world around us. Especially for those things that are a weakness to us, we find so many justifications.

Most of our indecisiveness would be removed if we made this supposition: I'll pretend I am not the family member living this role of "me". I'll pretend Christ is filling it instead. Would He make any drastic changes in my facial expressions, in my clothes, in my home, in my activities?

All day long, my physical appearance is felt somewhere. It may be a "plus" effect that I cause, or a "minus", but some effect will be there, and if I am faithful to the name I wear my presence will be a positive influence. I won't take my body to questionable places, and I won't take part in activities that would dishonor my Father.

- Bearing the Family Image by Betty Burton Choate



Do You Know Onesiphorus?

Leon Barnes

Onesiphorus is a strange name. I have met many people with names I had never heard of before, but this is not one of them. But he is a man you need to get to know. Paul wrote about him to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:16-18. He said, *"The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome,*

he eagerly searched for me, and found me — the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day — and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus."

If you were reading the Who's Who of first century Christians, this might well be the total entry about Onesiphorus. But what a great example. Not much is known of him. But these things are worthy of

imitation by all of us.

He stood by Paul, God's man, when others were going the other way. He was there often to refresh Paul. I don't know how he did it. I can imagine him bringing to the prison clean clothes and fresh food. But I can also imagine them sitting together and talking about good things and even laughing about some of the things they had seen.

Onesiphorus didn't seem to notice, or at least not to care about, the chain Paul wore. Obviously some were ashamed of it. Some brethren had stayed away, perhaps saying, "I just can't stand the sight of that chain." But he came. He showed compassion and love when others found it easier to pray from afar.

There are many like Onesiphorus in the church today. The world as a whole seldom knows them. They just serve where others stay away. God will indeed grant them mercy in the judgment. Are you one? You can be! †

Leon Barnes preaches in Maumel, Arkansas, U. S. A.



One of the best ways to get on your feet is to first get on your knees.

— Selected

Dangerous Thinking

Perry N. Hall

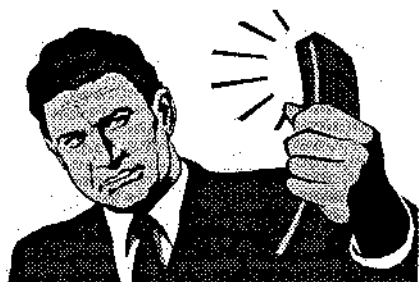
Paul thought he was doing God's will when he was rejecting Christ, persecuting Christians, and making havoc of the church (Acts 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:13). There are many today who shut out the light of God and think "within themselves," and reach the same conclusions Paul did.

There are many others who put themselves in this class of thinkers when they think that all that is necessary to be a Christian is to live a moral life, go by their own conscience, and "join the church of their choice." The way a man thinks is often his greatest hindrance. The Lord has said, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts . . .*"

Neither is sincerity a substitute for doing God's will. The way a person feels is no evidence of acceptance with God. Paul felt fine when he was helping to murder Christian men and women. Thinking he was right never made anybody right. We must be guided only by God's Word. We must obey only God's will. We must think only the thoughts of God. Only then will we be safe from dangerous thinking. †

Perry N. Hall is a preacher, writer, and editor in Austin, Texas.

UNWITTING TOOLS OF A DEMOLITION EXPERT



Garell L. Forehand

The sweetly smiling mother gave her two little children big hugs, kissed each of them lovingly on the cheek, and then tucked them snugly into their beds for the night. She put out their light, and walked back into the front of the hut, happy for the feelings of joy and contentment that she shared with her husband. She loved her family. Two weeks later her husband and children were dead. Little had she known that her very contact with them was their affliction. She was a carrier of the plague. Unknowingly, she brought the black death to the ones she loved.

How tragic! And how pitiful the woman became upon discovering her part in the destruction of her family! She remained emotionally wracked with pain the rest of her life. Yet, her responsibility for the deaths could not really be construed as accountability, regardless of her

anguished conscience. No sin attached to her actions.

Sadly, the same cannot be said for some in the church today. Many brothers and sisters, because of choices they make in words and deeds, are not only responsible for much death and destruction, but will also be held accountable by their Lord for that crime. They may not even realize their part in the demolition process — they seldom do — but they still lead to the spiritual demise of many. They are unwittingly working for an evil cause they do not recognize.

Satan is constantly seeking ways to destroy the faithful (1 Peter 5:8). He delights in the aid inadvertently offered him for that purpose by the Lord's own people. The Bible often warns us to guard ourselves against destroying those about us. Paul wrote, "*Let us not ... provoking one another*" (Galatians

5:26). The word "provoke" in this passage means "to stir up what is evil in another." God tells us that He literally hates the one *"who sows discord among brethren"* (Proverbs 6:16,19). Solomon wrote, *"A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends"* (Proverbs 16:28). The description of a carrier is vivid: *"Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross"* (Proverbs 26:20-23).

The activity of Christians is to be supportive of God's desire. He pronounces a great blessing upon *"the peacemakers"* (Matthew 5:9). The Lord calls us to *"consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"* (Hebrews 10:24). A concern for the safety of others is to be our aim. *"All things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify (build up). Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being"* (1 Corinthians 10:23-24).

We should each take a close, detailed look at ourselves. How are we speaking and acting? Are we honoring God through the building up of spiritual strength in others? Or are we the unwitting tools of a demolition expert? †

Garell L. Forehand preaches the Gospel in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.



Breath of Time

A whisp of gossamer caught in the sun,
Hangs shimmering with dew at break of day;
How tenuous, fragile! Time soon done,
A gust of wind, it's swept away.

Even such is life; we spend our youth
In laying plans as though to live for aye!
How soon we stare at Fate! And know the truth:
A breath of Time and we are swept away!

— Charles R. Brewer

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 was one of the apostles of Jesus. (Matthew 10:2-4)
 2. **90** I said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)
 3. **80** When Jesus foretold His death, I said, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (Matthew 16:22)
 4. **70** I was one of the three apostles who witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. (Matthew 17:1)
 5. **60** So strongly did I believe that Jesus was the Son of God, I told Him I would die for Him. (Matthew 26:35)
 6. **50** Instead, out of fear, I denied that I ever knew Him. (Matthew 27:69-75)
 7. **40** I was privileged to preach the first sermon, offering salvation from sin in the name of Christ. (Acts 2:14)
 8. **30** My words convinced the listeners, and I told them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)
 9. **20** I was arrested, along with the apostle John, because we preached the gospel. (Acts 4)
 10. **10** The Holy Spirit directed me to write two letters to the church, in which I said, "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Peter 3:16)

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

THE WORTH OF A WOMAN...

"I have done this."

Betty Burton Choate

In earlier years as I looked at problems in the world, I sometimes remarked, "When I get to heaven, I want to tell Eve exactly how I feel about all the wrongs she brought when she disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit!" We may feel like making that complaint. The struggles with nature, the pain of child-bearing, the aches of aging, the ravages of death — all of these are the result of that first sin.

But my true inclination is to think of Eve with pity. She probably lived a very long time, since Adam was 930 years old when he died, so she had many, many years to reflect on the consequences of that one wrong choice. Just think of how Eve must have felt as she and Adam stood hand in hand, driven

from the beautiful and safe haven of the Garden, and gazed at the angel with the flaming sword, barring the way to their home.

Surrounded by fields and jungles where the growth of thorns and thistles was already marring the productivity, Eve must have cried within her heart, "I did this to the earth!"

When they ran in fear from the animals that had become wild and dangerous, Eve must have realized, "I did this."

Sacrifices were required because of sin, and she saw Adam's pain and sorrow as he raised his knife to take the life of the innocent, wide-eyed sheep. How hot must have been her tears, flowing as the lamb's blood ran red from his throat! How she must have cried, "I did this!"



THE CHRISTIAN HOME

On the day when Adam first became ill and fear raced through her heart, with what anxiety she must have watched his pain. As she waited, day by day beside his bed, praying for his sickness to leave and for strength to be restored, how she must have agonized in tears and regret, "I did this to my beloved Adam!"

When Cain and Abel were born and grew to be young men, Eve must have grieved continually as she saw Cain's jealousy of his brother. Every word of enmity must have cut her heart with the realization, "I did this." And with what bitter anguish she must have cradled Abel's blood-soaked head when he lay dead in the field, killed by his own brother's hand. What broken cries she must have raised to God, "I did this! I brought sin into the world! The death has come first to this son I love, not to me — me, who listened to Satan! I did this! I did this!"

No, when I see Eve, I won't say a word of accusation. For many hundreds of years she must have accused herself every day, seeing all the devastation her sin continued to cause.

But if Eve had not disobeyed, someone else would have, and the door would have been opened, allowing sin with all of its consequences to flood into the world. No, we do not have the *guilt* of that first sin, as some people falsely teach, but all people, individually, commit sin day by day. Those sins in our lives bring direct and ultimate consequences, just as Eve experienced.

Yes, we live — year after year — with the *consequences* of our sins, *our* wrong decisions. If we are honest, how many times must we confess as we grieve over problems in our lives or in our children's lives, "I did this. Because I didn't seek God's way, because I didn't teach my children to love God more than all else, because I made wrong choices, these problems have developed. *I did this!*"

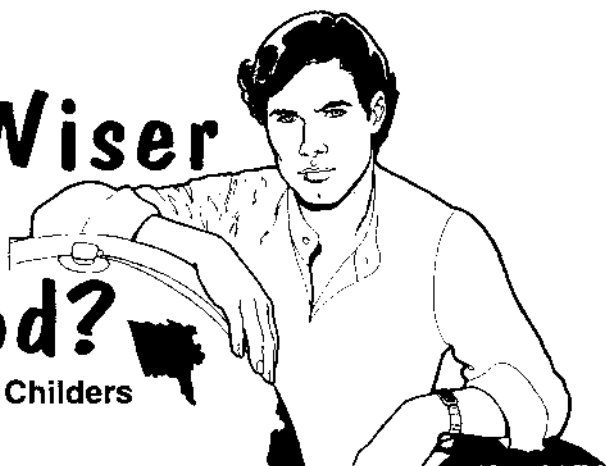
We can look at Eve and see so clearly how she could have done differently that day in the Garden, and could have avoided the terrible price she and humanity have had to pay. *Can we look at our own lives and see as clearly?* †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, Editor-in-Chief of The Voice of Truth International.

WHAT WOULD I TELL YOU? . . . I would tell you of the peace I feel when I drop off to sleep praying for you; when I wake and words for you to God are still in my heart. BBC

Are We Wiser Than God?

Tom L. Childers



“And Jesus said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living” (Luke 15:11-12).

Have you ever wondered why the father in the parable gave his son his portion of goods and allowed him to leave, when he probably knew all the time that he was going to waste it?

The father in this parable represents God, and God respects the free will of all human beings. He tries to guide and teach and warn and beg and plead with people to do what is right, but the final decision is left up to the individual.

In the same way parents must respect the free will of their children. During their formative years, parents should teach, set the proper

example, warn, beg, threaten, discipline, and nurture their children in the way of righteousness. However, there comes a time that the child, like a young bird, is allowed to leave the nest, and responsibility is now accepted by the child.

This period of time is not easy. Some parents, as well as some children, want to postpone the pain and responsibility as long as possible. Some never make this decision, and their lives are miserable. Why? The Bible says: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”* (Genesis

2:24).

God never intended that parents should be responsible for and make the decisions for their children forever. Parents who continue to "baby" their children do them a great injustice. They do not allow them to learn to make their own decisions. And if a child never learns responsibility, he or she will not be able to survive in society.

Sure, parents are wiser and usually know what is best for the child — much better than the child does. In the same way, God is much, much wiser than we are, but He still gives us the precious privilege of freedom of choice.

One of the major moral and social problems that is facing us today is getting people to accept responsibility. Some will not work. Some will not support their families. Some are not faithful to their families. Too many live off their parents. Sometimes it is the fault of a lazy and shiftless adult child, but more often it is a parent that will not allow their child to grow up, and the child has not been taught or made to accept responsibility for his or her actions. The parents keep supporting the adult child, and the child keeps holding out the hand and let-

ting the parents pay the rent, buy the groceries, and clothe the child. So, what we have is frustrated parents and even more frustrated young people.

The message of the father of the parable of the prodigal son is this:

1. I am your father and I love you, but I cannot make you do what is right.

2. Here is your money; you are now responsible for it; I will no longer dictate to you what you can or cannot do with it.

3. If you make poor choices, you will have to suffer the consequences. I am here to help you, but I will not keep sending money to support your hog pen habit. Forgiveness and help are available only when you accept responsibility for your actions.

If we really love our adult children, we will respect their freedom of choice, even if that choice is a poor one, and one that breaks our hearts.

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



The way we are facing has a lot to do with our destination . . .

LESSONS

from

THE SONS OF ELI

Max Patterson

Eli was the fourteenth of fifteen Judges. The second and third chapters of 1 Samuel reveal to us the nature of the sons of Eli. These sons are said to be "*sons of Belial*" (worthlessness). There are at least three reasons stated as to why these sons were worthless, the result of which made their works contemptible.

First, the sons of Eli knew not the Lord (2:12). One can hardly know the Lord and follow after His ways without the will to do so (John 7:17). It is parents' responsibility to instill this will to know (Proverbs 22:6). If one does not know the truth, how can he be made free? (See John 8:31,32.) Eli's sons committed grievous sins because they did not know the Lord.

Second, the sons of Eli treated the Lord's sacrifice with contempt (2:13-17). Others in the Bible also took lightly the worship of God: Cain, in Genesis 4, and Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 11. When one does not know God or His will, he often "*does what is right in his own eyes*" (Judges 17:6).

Third, the sons of Eli were

immoral (2:22). Evidently they knew nothing of self-control. They gave in to lusts, and indulged in vices. Some believe these sons participated in the gross immorality connected with idol worship. Evidently these sons completely forgot about the ten commandments. Our world today is being influenced by immorality on television and in the movies, pornography in our reading materials, our music, and the deification of our bodies, along with the making of pleasure our highest priority. Paul taught, "*Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals*" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

There is a reason for the vile actions of these sons. "*. . . His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not*" (3:13). It is the parents' awesome responsibility to raise the children, and among other things, that means restraining them. They cannot do and cannot have everything they desire. When we fail to raise our children in the discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), we are honoring our sons above God (2:29), and that means

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

unfaithfulness to God.

There is an urgent need in our day for parental restraint. There is a strong tendency to do evil (Jeremiah 17:9), and this is aided by so many examples of evil in our world, and by so many temptations. Parental restraint is imperative. It is our duty, not only to the children, but to God. Consider Deuteronomy 6:3-9; 21:18-21; Proverbs 19:18; 23:13,14; 29:15,16; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4. To omit parental restraint is ruinous: to children, to parents, and

to the nation (compare 1 Samuel 4:11,18,22).

Let parents exercise due restraint over children, and let children submit and give due respect to their parents. When parents raise their children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"* these same parents will have children who *"honor their father and their mother."* †

Max Patterson preaches for the Hillcrest church in Neosho, Missouri.

It is parents who make their children loved or dreaded, simply by whether or not they have taught them restraint . . .

True Lessons From a Peach Tree Limb

My father's words were very few,
He never raised his voice to chide,
But told me why it was my due
Before he switched my youthful hide.

He taught respect, and right from wrong;
And if my lips uttered a slur,
It did not take him very long
To teach me how to say, "Yes sir!"

He never heard of Dr. Spock,
He believed discipline was Heaven's rule.
In this proverb he took great stock,
"Correction's rod will cure a fool."

Now my grandson gets by with that
Which good ole Dad would not abide.
Perhaps he wouldn't be such a brat
If Dad were here to switch his hide.

— John H. Erwin

Some Help For Parents

Joe Rowe

It is not easy to instill in our children's hearts God's Word, a little every day, until their characters are formed into Christ's image, but, with God's help, parents must find a way to do it.

** It isn't easy to take the time from the busy life we all live to pray together that God will have His way with each member of the family. Parents who love their family will schedule some time for it. It isn't easy to take every family decision to the throne of God in prayer for guidance that His will be done through us, but Christians will be sure it is done.*

** It isn't easy, when all around us homes are being disrupted by disloyalty, disunity, and divorce, to develop an ever-increasing bond of love and loyalty under God's unifying presence, but parents must be certain that it is done. It isn't easy, when the world beckons from many corners to many kinds of low living, to courageously say, "In our home we will choose the Lord's way," but remember, only the Lord's way leads to Heaven.*

** It isn't easy for us to create togetherness in the home, at work, at play, and in worship, and in every activity to know love and joy abounding, but the rewards exceed the effort required to do it!*

** It isn't easy to set aside a time each day in which all members of the family are called together for family worship (read Scriptures, sing, and pray), but it is part of the training which is required to form the image of Christ in your child's character.*

Parents have the first and primary responsibility in the teaching and training of their children. The responsibility is awesome! Most everyone can use (and should welcome) all available help, but parents often overlook some priceless help which is available.

As parents are prayerfully using all their skills in teaching and training of the children, their efforts can be doubled by making sure the child participates in any available Bible class and other youth activities which are made possible in the Lord's church. The parents' teaching will be established and

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

strengthened when the children hear the Bible teacher repeat the things which are taught at home.

Parents, please think seriously and prayerfully, because we are teaching and training our children to prepare for an eternal life! †

Joe Rowe is an elder in the Nettleton congregation in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

A CHILD is mine.

God gave it to my hands,
A soft, impressionable bit of dust,
Untouched, and waiting to be formed —
A bit of dust, frailly mortal,
But radiant, too, with a living spark
Of immortality —
A gift from God that never dies.

This child, this life, is mine.
What it does,
What it becomes,
Where it lives, both now and throughout
The aeons of eternity
Depends on me.

With love and care these hands and heart of mine
Can grace its form with beauty —
Can nourish goodness and a pure heart —
Can make it one to love,
 one to cherish, one to bless mankind.
But easier still,
 Through failure and neglect
 I can make this life
 A bitter cup of sorrow,
 Of despair and loss and death.

It takes a strength to impart a strength to others;
It takes a will and love
That perhaps I do not have.
But there is One —

 He is strength and love and purity of will;
 He it was who gave this gift to me —
And I can turn to Him for all I need
And, with His help,
These hands can shape a soul
For immortality!

— Betty Burton Choate



Verses Search

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

1. This important event in the life of Jesus took place in the city of _____ in the province of _____. (V. 1)
2. What was the occasion? (V. 1)
3. _____, the _____ of Jesus was one of the guests. (V. 1)
4. "Now both _____ and _____ were invited to the _____." (V. 2)
5. Why was it a crucial factor that the disciples witness Jesus' miracles? (Acts 1:21,22)
6. What was the problem at the wedding supper? (V. 3)
7. List six participants in the account.
1. _____ (v. 3) 2. _____ (v. 3)
3. _____ (v. 5) 4. _____ (v. 9)
5. _____ (v. 9) 6. _____ (v. 11)
8. This miracle showed that Jesus was the Lord of nature.
(True) (False)
9. This was the first (), second (), third () miracle Jesus performed. (V. 11)
10. A miracle is (1) a magic trick. (2) the setting aside of the laws of nature to perform an act instantaneously. (3) a delusion.
11. Why did Jesus drive the money changers from the temple? (V. 16)
12. When asked for a proof of His authority to do such a thing, Jesus said, "Destroy _____, and in _____ will _____ it up again." (V. 19)
13. He was speaking prophetically of His own _____ and of His _____ from the dead. (V. 21, 22)

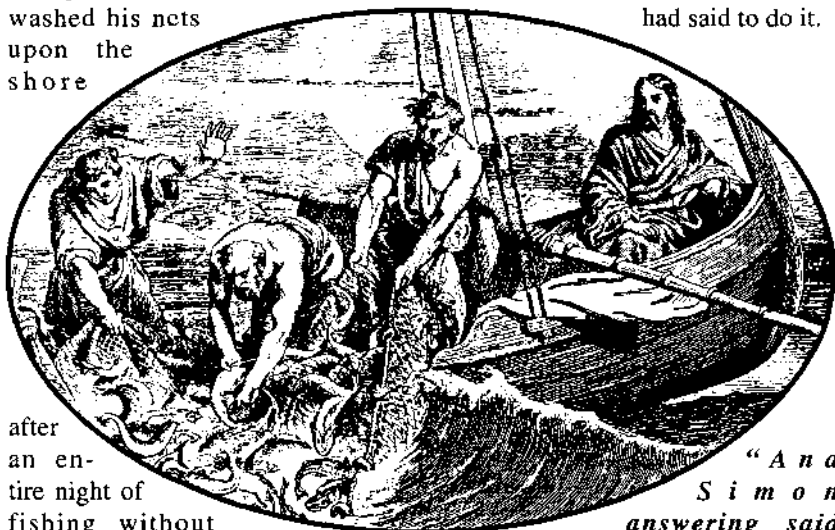
[See inside of back cover for answers.]

LET DOWN YOUR NETS

Tim Nichols

In the fifth chapter of Luke we read a challenging account of the testing of Peter's faith. Peter was likely exhausted as he washed his nets upon the shore

After pointing this out to our Lord, he finally complied for the same reason that all men of faith have been moved to act: the Lord had said to do it.



after an entire night of fishing without success. Jesus came along and invited Peter to get back into the boat with Him and thrust it out a little from the land so He could teach the people assembled on the shore. After teaching the people, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "*Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.*" Peter hesitated. He, an experienced fisherman, had been working hard at his trade all night without taking a single fish.

"And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

The result was amazing! They caught so many fish that their net started breaking. They called to their partners in another boat for help and pulled in so many fish that, when both boats were filled, they began to sink! Peter was so astonished that he fell at Jesus' feet and

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

confessed that he was unworthy to be in His presence. Jesus simply replied, "*Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" After getting their catch to the shore, Peter and his partners "*forsook all and followed him.*"

Although Peter vacillated and acted on impulse on several occasions in his life following this event, he was able to draw upon the lesson he had learned in the boat when he later went fishing for men. Luke records Peter's sermon (Acts 2) to the multitudes assembled in Jerusalem on Pentecost. God had, in effect, told Peter and the other apostles to let down the gospel net. Peter could have argued that this was not the most reasonable time and place. After all, this was the place where Jesus had recently been condemned to death, and these were the very people who had crucified our Lord with wicked hands! Not very good prospects? But under God's instructions he let down the gospel net, and it was filled with about three thousand souls.

In Acts 10 we read the account of Peter being directed to let down the gospel net among the Gentiles. He was shown in a symbolic vision that it was time to begin doing so. He let it down and it was filled with the household of the devout Cornelius.

The gospel net that Peter let down nearly two thousand years ago is just as strong as ever (Romans 1:16). In his later years a gray-haired and seasoned Peter wrote these words: "*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*" (1 Peter 1:24,25).

The net, the ancient Gospel, ought to be what is in your hand. Let it down! When? "*In season and out of season*" (2 Timothy 4:2). Where? To whom? "*To every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people*" (Revelation 14:6). Faithless men will object. They will tell you that the ancient Gospel will not work in the modern world. They will say that there are too many cultural barriers between modern man and the ancient Gospel. They will encourage you to modify the net. But the ancient Gospel was made in heaven. It endures forever. Our Lord simply requires you to let it down and to leave the results to Him. At His word, what will you do? †

Tim Nichols preaches the gospel in Burlington, West Virginia, U. S. A

That the church depicted upon the pages of the New Testament was evangelistic is evident even to the casual reader. The thrust of the lives and work of the early Christians changed cities, nations, and the world. In just a short time after the church began, Luke reports they filled Jerusalem with their teaching. A few years later they had the reputation of

"turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Their evangelistic fervor is not defined so much by collective action, but in individual and personal terms.

In this article, our purpose is not to describe a **program of evangelism**, but advance the **principles** that emerge as one carefully looks at the evangelism set out in the book of Acts.

Principles of Evangelism

1. First, they saw evangelism, not as an option, but as their reason for being. It was not merely a function, but a fellowship. They

were committed to it, and even when persecution arose and they were scattered, *"they went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). When threatenings came, their

prayer was, *"grant unto thy servants, that with boldness they may speak thy word"* (Acts 4:29-31). The body was one, and each was committed to filling his function in that body (Ephesians 4:16).

EVANGELISM: GOSPEL or Gimmicks?

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

We will never restore the evangelism they practiced until we see what they saw and become what they were.

2. Second, the church existed because of a distinctive message — and for that message. It was a unique message, namely *"God hath made Him both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). They continued in that teaching (Acts 2:42), ceasing not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42). Philip understood that to preach Christ entailed preaching His kingdom, name, and commandments (Acts 8:5,12). Later, Philip is designated *"the evangelist"* (Acts 21). He clearly shows the key to

effective evangelism in Acts 8:26-39. There was an **open mouth** (Philip's); an **open book** (the Bible), and an **open heart** (the eunuch's).

3. Third, there was a spirit of joy and excitement in sharing their faith. Theirs was a caring, loving faith to be shared; not a self-ish faith to be kept. They were privileged to participate in the spiritual body of Christ and to communicate the message of grace by life and lip. Paul expressed that spirit when he addressed the Thessalonians whom he had taught. He said, *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

4. Fourth, they began where they were. Jesus had said, *"and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). The strategy for outreach followed that procedure in Acts. The Gospel was first preached in Jerusalem, and ultimately to Rome. They began at home, but they did not remain there.

Because of the nature of that message, their daily emphasis was upon teaching. There was a compulsion to *"speak the things we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:20). Daily they taught and preached

Jesus (Acts 5:42). The Word was taught to individuals, cities, and nations (Acts 18:11). They sincerely believed that the power to save resided in the message, not the messenger. However, they understood that the manner in which the message was received depended greatly upon the adornment of it as seen in those who brought it. For that reason Paul urged the Colossians, *"walk in wisdom toward those who are without . . . let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt"* (Colossians 4:5,6).

Godly living is essential to evangelism, but it is not enough — there must be bold confrontation. Unbelief must be challenged, man's need explained, and the answer communicated.

A church can get caught up in many things that are good, yet totally lose sight of her very reason for being. It appears from a study of Acts that certain regions were targeted from which the message could radiate more effectively in an area. Ephesus became a hub from which the Gospel spread throughout Asia. The church at Colossae resulted from Paul's work at Ephesus. Epaphras came under Paul's influence, then went home to Colossae to plant the church.

5. Fifth, they practiced follow-up and confirmation. Paul's practice was to follow-up on

the works he had begun. Following his first extended preaching tour, he returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to "confirm the souls of the disciples and exhort them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). Later, he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches (Acts 15:41). No campaign at home or abroad is any better than its follow-up.

6. Sixth, they began where the people were and painstakingly brought them to Christ. The assembly on Pentecost were Jews who believed in God, while the audience in Athens were Gentiles who were idolatrous. The message had a different beginning point in both sermons, but the conclusion was the same: man's (both Jew and Gentile) need for Christ.

7. Seventh, there was no feeling of competition among preachers or congregations. Every gift was ministered as a steward of the grace of God. The ultimate objective was to glorify God through Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 4:10,11). Paul was not jealous of Apollos' oratory or Barnabas' generous spirit. They possessed a servant's heart!

Ours is a team. We have things in common: Faith, salvation, and message. We are brethren. Let us rejoice when another does well, and weep when one falls. We are com-

plimenters, not competitors. Let us lovingly watch for each other's souls and uphold each other's work.

Short-Cuts and Gimmickry

There are no short-cuts to effective evangelism. Though God has given His people a great amount of flexibility in doing His work, sometimes some are tempted to resort to clever gimmicks. A gimmick has been defined as "anything artful or tricky; any cunning or secretive device." It is beneath the dignity of the cause we represent to use tricky, cunning, or secretive means to communicate Christ.

Any **manipulative program** with an ulterior motive would appear to be a gimmick. The entertainment syndrome, which seeks to *win* people by that means, will find that even more clever tactics will have to be used to *keep* them.

To build a work around a **charismatic person** is gimmickry. The only church fit to exist is the one built upon Christ and by Him. God does not depend upon the genius of men, the charisma of preachers, the affluence of its members, or the spaciousness of our facilities to build the church itself. It is the commitment of the company of believers called out by God that counts. We are privileged to be

"workers together with Him" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Summary

Evangelism is not just an isolated work, but the sum of what the church is about. It is not just a night of calling, but the daily penetration of Christians in their community.

The task of leadership is not to promote programs, but to equip the saints for ministry. When such occurs, evangelism results.

Evangelism has no locked-in

method. We may easily retard the progress of the Gospel by insisting on old, worn-out, traditional methods. The Gospel is for all, and it never changes. It transcends culture. Our methods, while people-oriented, must adapt to changing times. God is counting on us to use our heads and hearts to effectively communicate His unchanging message to a changing world. †

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. preaches the gospel of Christ in Dickson, Tennessee, U. S. A.

How to Live Happily

Bobby Dockery

I ran across these suggestions for finding happiness in an article in my files:

1. Live the spiritual life. Keep your priorities in proper order.

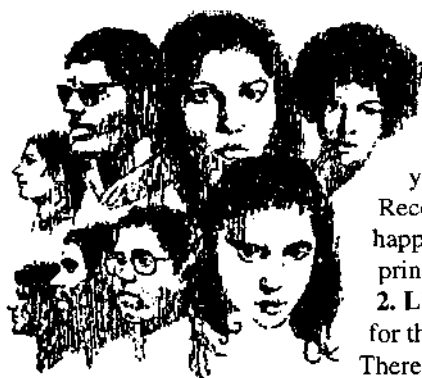
Recognize that "things" do not lead to happiness and that living by the pleasure principle is self-defeating.

2. Live one day at a time. Thank God for the joys and opportunities of each day. There are trials in each day but God will supply strength for those trials. Also, remember

that most of our fears never materialize.

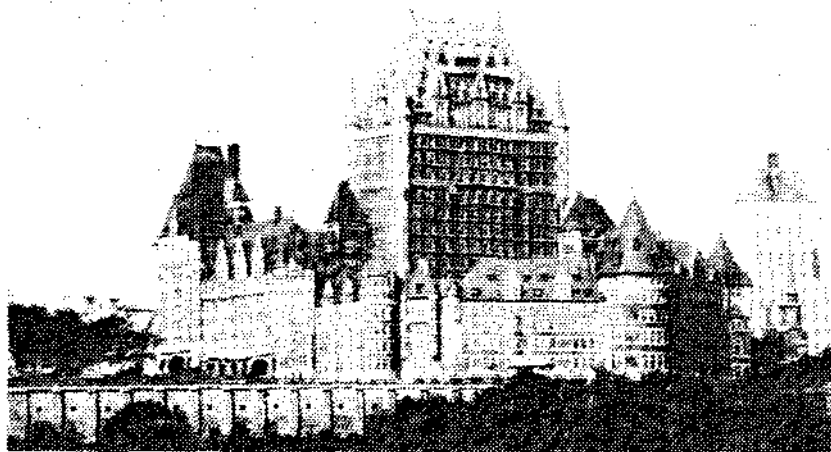
3. Do not violate your conscience. The way to lay down our burden of guilt is to accept the grace of God and daily depend on the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Keep your account current with the Father concerning your guilt and lie down at night in the rest of forgiveness.

4. Purge your life of past failures, guilts and disappointments. God has forgiven you if you have become His child. †



MAKE MY MANSION A CHÂTEAU!

Connie Lee Krute



Le Château Frontenac in Québec

Québec City is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. Referred to as "La Ville de Québec" in French, it overlooks the mighty Saint Lawrence River, and it is the only walled city in North America. Everywhere you look throughout this splendid Canadian municipality there are tributes to the past — in its monuments, museums, the battlefield park, and in its lovely old buildings.

Standing as a sort of centerpiece, towering over the wall, is a

very imposing structure — the Château Frontenac — a grand hotel which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Dignitaries from all over the world have enjoyed the gracious hospitality offered at this magnificent palace. Many appreciate it so much that they keep suites of rooms as permanent residences. I had the privilege of having tea in one of its elegant restaurants. Oh, to live in such a marvelous place!

Sometimes when pondering the loveliness of heaven and the many

mansions located there as described in John 14, I think back to my brief visit to Château Frontenac. Then I let my imagination contemplate the following questions:

What if the size of each individual's heavenly mansion was based on the number of souls they have influenced over the years so they would have room to entertain them all. And if this were the case, would I be given an extra small efficiency apartment only big enough for me, or would I be placed in a mansion the size of Château Frontenac?

When I get to that point I

become very aware of the fact that there are a lot of souls out there that I have yet to touch. Perhaps this is just a theory, but it wouldn't hurt to let as many people as possible know that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) and that no one comes to the Father except through Him.

I love people and as far as I am concerned "the more the merrier" is the number of souls I want to see in heaven. So if I have anything to do with it, make my mansion a château! †

Connie Lee Krute is a Christian and a writer from Sand Springs, Oklahoma, U.S. A.



Early Glory

The sky is God's canvas,
He paints with cloud and sun.
Early, He shows the glory of heaven,
Just as day has begun.

This is the time I go to Him
In thought and prayer and song,
With petition for His guidance
All the day long.

With humble feelings of awe and praise,
To Him in song my voice I raise,
Expressing my joy in having His love,
Daily I prepare for my home above.

— Dorothy E. Bowman

THE FIRST THING HE DID WAS TO FIND HIS BROTHER

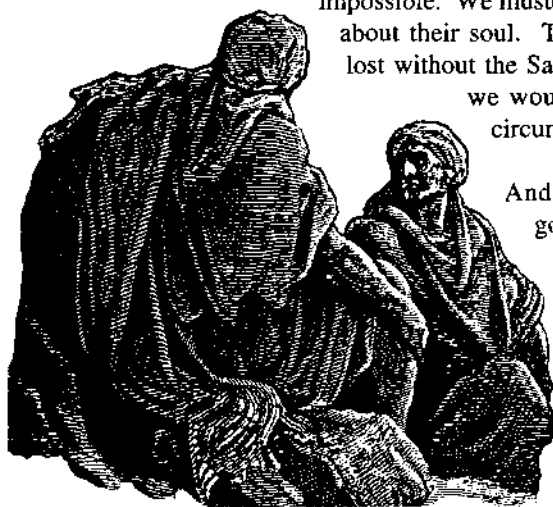
Harvey Porter

John's Gospel tells of John the Baptist saying to his disciples as he saw Jesus passing by, "*Look, the Lamb of God!*" Two of them immediately followed Jesus. In fact, they spent the day with Him. John then recorded, "*Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ)*" (John 1:35-41).

Jesus did not say, "Go find your brother and bring him to Me." The initiative was Andrew's. He was confident that he had found the Messiah, and he loved his brother, Simon Peter, and wanted him to be with Jesus.

This realization of what Jesus can do for the human family prompts us to bring souls to Him. If we truly believe that He is the Savior of the whole world and that everyone is lost without Him, we bring souls to Him. Actually, we must include another ingredient here. Andrew loved his brother, and when he himself found the Savior he immediately thought about his own brother. Love crosses all boundaries. It is not timid or shy. It does the

impossible. We muster courage to talk to others about their soul. The realization that all are lost without the Savior pushes us to do what we would not do under ordinary circumstances.



It is interesting that Andrew did not ask Jesus to go and talk to his brother. I wonder if Andrew thought that Peter knew him best and would trust what he had to say. I wonder if he thought that Peter might refuse to listen to an absolute stranger, even if the

stranger were Jesus Himself. So, he took no chances on Peter refusing to come to Jesus. He did the job himself. Love works that way.

Most of the Lord's people today never bring anyone to Christ. We console ourselves by saying, "I'm just not cut out for that!" "I don't know what to say!" We fear rejection, or we fear that we will offend a friend. We should, however, think of what is at stake. If Jesus is the Savior of the world, and man is lost without Him, then those who are not brought to Jesus will be eternally lost. Isn't it worth taking the risk of losing a friend to do the greatest thing we can do for a human? It is indeed worth taking the chance upon losing a friend in view of eternity and the Lord's charge to us all to *"Go ye therefore and make disciples . . ."*

Some of the greatest soul winners I have known did not have a great education, did not stand before a Bible class and teach each Sunday, did not use good grammar, could not answer all the Bible questions someone could ask, but they loved Jesus and their lost friends, and they did their best to bring the two together.

How much did Andrew know after having been with Jesus just a few hours? He had been a disciple of John, and now he had changed suddenly on the same day to following an unknown. Peter could have asked a lot of questions that Andrew would have had a hard time answering. Maybe he did! But one thing we know — Andrew thought first about his own brother and went immediately to bring him to Jesus. We know he loved Peter. We know he believed in Jesus, even after only a few hours with Him. (Some of us have been in the church most of our lives and have never tried to bring one to Him.)

The early church caught the idea of soul winning. All of Jerusalem knew about Jesus and the church. They were persecuted by the authorities, but they continued. Luke wrote, *"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ."*

What a Savior! What a Gospel! What a challenge! †

Harvey Porter is a gospel preacher in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U. S. A.

I once heard somebody say you can't tell whether a parent has been a success or a failure until you find out what happens to the grandchildren. — copied

The events of Acts chapter 2 were astounding. Those dedicated to restoring first century Christianity have long understood the pivotal position of Acts 2. Those events mark the actual beginning of the Christian age. Those people were the first to receive the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. They

are the beginning of the first congregation. They mark the birth of Christian worship and Christian fellowship. Dawn rose on the new day of the Christian age in Acts 2.

Those first converts did not realize they were leading the way in a *new spiritual age*. They understood Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ sent from God. They realized they had crucified God's own Son. They knew they direly needed forgiveness. Yet, they did not see that their conversions marked the birth of a *new spiritual movement*.

Since no one attempted to preach to the Gentiles until Acts 10, obviously they did not see themselves as the beginning of a *new world-wide movement*. Evidence strongly suggests that they saw themselves as devout, spiritual-minded reformers of Judaism. They were bringing new life to Judaism,

not salvation to mankind.

Peter used Joel's prophecy to explain the day's significance. It was time for the young men to see visions, for old men to dream dreams.

There is tremendous opportunity before us

as God's people. Many are disgusted with today's godless

immorality and

squabbling churches, but they have no idea of where to turn.

We have never taught in an age like this. The majority of people have never been a student in a Bible class. They have never read a Bible. Numbers of churches today do not teach Bible classes and do not encourage Bible study. Our world has never been as illiterate in Bible knowledge as it is today.

The good news about the crucified, resurrected Jesus is a powerful, relevant message for these people. Our Christ-given mission is to share that good news. In this drastically different age, the New Testament message must not change, but our methods have to change. Once again, we desperately need **young men with vision, and old men with dreams.** †

David Chadwell preaches Christ in Oxford, Mississippi, U. S. A.

SEEING VISIONS, DREAMING DREAMS

David Chadwell

CINNAMON IS DEAD!

T. Pierce Brown

Cinnamon was our little dog who, for about sixteen years, had thought she was a part of the family. As I dug a grave for her beside an oak tree behind our house, I started crying. Frankly, that shocked me, for I take a little pride in my presumed ability to handle emotional situations in a rational way. Can you imagine a reasonably intelligent, mature, grown man crying about the loss of a dog?

I am sure that I do not know all the reasons why people cry, but these thoughts occurred to me which may be helpful to you.

First, I thought of one of God's precious little creatures suffering as she did for a while before she died, and I felt grief for her. But I wondered, "How much grief do I really feel for the millions of God's precious creatures who are going to be suffering for eternity if someone does not bring them to the Great

Physician for His cure? How many tears have I shed for the lost of the world?"

Second, I felt a personal loss of one who had loved me and needed me. So, it was a selfish kind of grief, for there would be no longer a joyous welcome of a little friend who just got pleasure from being with me — whether walking or resting. But I wondered, "How many persons of my acquaintance have I so cultivated or treated that they feel a great joy at being with me, and show a loving need for my presence? How much difference do I really make in anyone's life and happiness because of my love and care for them?"

I cannot help but wonder how many thousands of Christians (?) spend more energy and time caring for their dogs than they do in striving to save a soul. How many spend more each year for dog food than they do for preaching the Gospel to the lost? How many would be more heartbroken at the loss of their pet than at the loss of a thousand souls? †

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

**Walk with the Wise and you will know,
Seek for the Beautiful and True,
And deep in your heart you'll feel the flow —
The rising tide of the best in you.**

— Charles R. Brewer

Words have both hurting and healing power. One of the healing words of the Bible is the word "comfort." The word frequently translated "comfort" in the New Testament is a compound word in the original. The word literally means, "a calling alongside of" (2 Corinthians 1:3,4; 7:13).

There are some comforting synonyms for this concept, such as consolation, help, solace, a soothing, to be refreshed, braced up.

Most people sometime in life need comfort. Sorrow and suffering come into most lives (Job 14:1,2).

One of the blessings of experiencing real disappointment and pain in life is the way one is prepared by hurts to genuinely comfort those who hurt.

The apostle Paul stated it this way, *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation (trouble), that we*

Comfort Is Comforting

Tom Holland



may be able to comfort them which are in any

trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

God comforts us through His Word (1 Thessalonians 4:18). If we will listen, God assures us of His love (Romans 8:38,39). God promises that He will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). God

has promised to be with us (Hebrews 13:5,6). We have access to heaven's throne any hour of the day or night.

God also comforts us through His people (2 Corinthians 1:4). God's people have a genuine care and a loving concern which causes them to reach out to those who are hurt by forces of life over which they have no control, and in reaching out they reach into the heart and give consolation, solace, help, and a soothing of the soul. †

Tom Holland preaches for the Crieve Hall congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

The Ministry Of The Church

Leon Cole

The ministry of the church is clearly defined in the New Testament. It may be stated in several ways. The ministry is triple. It is **upward, inward, and outward**. To put it another way, the ministry of the church is **to God, the godly, and to the godless**.

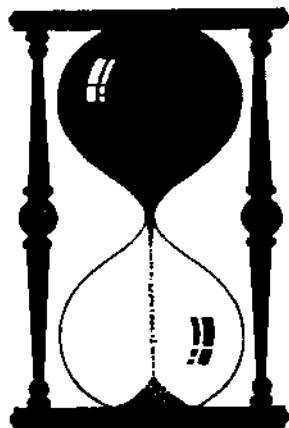
The ministry directed to God is *worship*. Worship is reverential service toward God, expressed in acts of devotion. Worship is not for the *entertainment* of would-be worshippers. It is not a light thing of "fun and games", but must be reverential and sincere if it is to be acceptable. It is not directed toward ourselves but toward God. New Testament worship was always marked by simplicity, not pomp and ceremony. The very purpose of the church's existence is *"that we should be to the praise of his glory..."* (Ephesians 1:12).

The inward ministry of the church is edification. It is *"the perfecting of the saints"* (Ephesians 4:12). We treat the sheep in the fold. There is responsibility to help

those we've converted meet their personal problems. There are so many broken lives, blasted dreams, and blighted hopes. There is widespread lack of concern about a teaching ministry for building up the saints. Let's not forget the same Lord who said *"make disciples"* said *"teach them to observe all things"* that He commanded.

Then there is the outward ministry. *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"* (Acts 5:42). We fail if we limit our ministry only to worship or ourselves. Jesus instituted the church and left it in the alien environment of the world because He had something for it to do in the world. We reach out publicly by gospel preaching. We also reach out privately. Every hearer should be a herald. Every Christian every day, everywhere, in some way should seek to tell the gospel story. This is the ministry of the church. †

Leon Cole preaches for the Pulaski Street church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, U. S. A.



There are some things that are necessary if we want to be successful soul-winners.

(1) We must first have the desire in our hearts to win lost souls for Christ. This desire must be cultivated if it is to grow and motivate us to seek lost souls. We must care so much that, even after working all day, we are willing to take the time to teach someone about Christ.

(2) Soul-winners are to confront kindly and lovingly. The difference between being successful and failing lies in our ability to con-

Time Is Running Out

Dale Grissom

front, in a non-threatening way, those who are lost. Kindness is very important; people respond to kindness. The way to confront lovingly is to confront others in the way we would want to be confronted. We must consider that those we are wanting to teach are sensitive, caring people, and must be treated with kindness and love.

(3) We must be confident, believing that people want to hear about Christ and learn more about what it means to be a Christian. We must have confidence that those with whom we study will obey the gospel. We should teach until we have answered their questions and know that they understand what they must do to be saved. When this happens they will respond — God will give the increase.

We must make the most of the time we have. People are dying everyday outside of Christ. These people need the opportunity to hear the gospel. Brethren, you and I have the responsibility to teach the gospel while there is still time. We are His servants who have been entrusted to carry His Word to a lost world. The harvest is white and the workers are so few. Won't you determine to be a soul-winner and really try to take someone to heaven? Time is running out; we must act while it is day. †

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

The Most-Obeyed Commandment

Bob Plunket

The most-obeyed commandment is found in Luke 9:21. "*And he commanded them to tell no man.*" What was this that Jesus asked them not to tell any man? That He was Christ, the Son of God. Why did Jesus make this request right after Peter's great confession? Some scholars think that Jesus said this because Peter and others did not fully understand the message of Jesus yet. There is good evidence for this in Matthew 16:22, where Peter had to be rebuked for his misunderstanding of the cross. Christ had a timetable for all things, and it was not the right moment to reveal this.

There is an alarming silence in the church today. Many do not talk about Jesus at all after they leave the church building. What they experienced in worship does not carry over to their daily life, in a desire to share it with others. They

do not talk of God with their neighbors, their children, or the people with whom they work.

"...tell no man" is the most-obeyed commandment because you don't have to get involved, or study, or answer any questions, or contend with anyone, or disagree with anybody. Many do not want to jeopardize friendships.

We must remember, however, that this command was for the apostles for a brief, limited time. We are to tell Jesus, to share Him, to take the gospel to the whole world. The growth of the early church was not only due to the great preachers, but to every member sharing Christ with his neighbor. They could not be silent. They said, "*We must speak that which we both saw and heard*" (Acts 4:20).

And so must we. †

Bob Plunket preaches the gospel in Tuscumbia, Alabama, U. S. A.

On the light side:

Two very elderly and wrinkled ladies sat side-by-side in wheel chairs in the nursing home, talking. Bemoaned one to the other, "I've been around so long, all my friends in heaven are going to think I didn't make it!"

Silence or Subjection?

Dayton Keese

"Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but let them be in subjection as also saith the law" (1 Corinthians 14:34).

Since the Word is God's power unto salvation, it is imperative that we handle that Word aright (Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 2:15). Certain textual formations seem to cause us more trouble than others. Figurative language, approved examples, and necessary inferences have stimulated concern in some quarters. Phrasing in 1 Corinthians 14:34 has made it a passage of concern relative to the place of women in the church.

Note the passage with special emphasis given to two words placed in bold print: *"Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is **not** permitted unto them to speak: **but** let them be in subjection as also saith the law."* If emphasis is placed on "silence" and prohibiting them to "speak," real problems arise, and a real disservice to women in Christ is launched. For example, they could not sing in a service, for as we do that we are to speak "one

to another" (Ephesians 5:19).

WHAT DOES THE TEXT TEACH?

Paul employed an oriental figure of speech in which the negative "not" is followed by the conjunction "but." In such a formation the negative is not to be considered in an absolute sense, but rather to emphasize what follows the conjunction. If I were to say, "I am **not** going home, **but** I am going to class," would you conclude I never would go home? Jesus said, *"Work **not** for the food which perishes, **but** for the food that abides unto eternal life"* (John 6:27). Should we conclude that Jesus meant that we **never** could work for the food that perishes? That cannot be His message (see 1 Timothy 5:8). Note this same sentence formation in other passages (Matthew 6:19f; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Peter 3:3f).

Remember that the point of emphasis in each case is what fol-

lows the conjunction "but." In 1 Corinthians 14:34 the emphasis, therefore, is on women being in subjection. Women are to be in subjection to men in general (1 Corinthians 11:3), as a wife (Ephesians 5:22), and in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34). In a church service, or at home, or on a street corner, women are called on to be in subjection.

✓ Can a woman sing in a service and be in subjection? Yes.

✓ Can a woman ask a question in a mixed Bible class and be in subjection? Yes.

✓ Could a woman answer a question when called on in a class, and teach a man sitting there? Yes. Note Acts 18:24-26.

✓ Can a woman speak up to confess her faith in Christ during the Sunday morning worship assembly, and be in subjection? Yes.

✓ Can a woman give directions while in subjection (as directing guests to be seated in the room where they need to be)? Yes.

We answer "yes" in each of the above cases, because a woman can so do and be in subjection.

Can a woman preside at the Lord's Table, over a class of men, be in charge of singing in a mixed assembly, or be an evangelist (see 2 Timothy 4:2-5; Titus 1:5)? No! Since "preside" means "to be in a position of authority: to be in charge of a meeting . . . to have control or authority," she cannot so be over men, because Paul said, ". . . *But let her be in subjection as also saith the law.*" Paul's point of emphasis was for women to be in subjection. When they are in subjection, they are free to speak, but when they break the subjection barrier, they are to be silent. Women need to recognize where the line of subjection is, and stay within that line. Then we as brethren need to recognize their freedom to speak within that area. How sad when sisters in Christ with proven ability are held back in His service because of misapplied Scripture. It is equally sad if women consider the covenant of Christ outdated, failing to maintain the subjection called for by Christ.

Keep this "not — but" construction pattern in mind as you read God's Word. It can help you avoid extremes on the one hand, and understand passages that have confused some people on the other hand.

Dayton Keesee preaches in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U. S. A

Becoming Perfect

John M. Davis

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Jesus made a shocking statement: *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48). The way I look at that statement, that sets a high standard. When you think about it, God has continually called for a high standard for the redeemed. He has always wanted His people to become **perfect**. The perfecting of the Body has been in His plan from the beginning, and throughout history God has been working out that plan.

When we speak of perfecting the Body, what do we mean? The whole point of the Christian life is to move toward perfection. Christians are to grow, to mature, to attain spiritual growth. Consider these biblical expressions: *"For the perfecting of the saints"* (Ephesians 4:12); *"Unto a perfect man"* (Ephesians 4:13); Christians are to *"be no more children"* (Ephesians 4:14); Christians are to *"grow up into Him"* (Ephesians 4:15); the Christian is to attain *"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13).

The Christian cannot attain sinlessness (Romans 3:23), but he can sin less. A Christian can become a well-rounded Christian. That should be the concern of all Christians. Babies in Christ are to grow up, mature, to be fully equipped for all good works.

"Perfecting" means "complete within itself, full-grown, filled to capacity." When we think about it, no Christian should settle for anything less than being fully equipped, complete, and grown-up.

Here is the challenge: The whole Body of Christ must be brought to full maturity (1 Corinthians 7:1). How will we do this? *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers"* (Ephesians 4:11). The result of their work is that the Body of Christ will be built up in love (Ephesians 4:16).

It is sad, but *some members of the Body will remain spiritual babes all of their lives.* †

John M. Davis is the preacher for the Ridgewood church in Beaumont, Texas, U. S. A.

The Church of Christ

John Dobbs

"All the churches of Christ send greetings . . ."
(Romans 16:16).

For years preachers have diligently striven to urge people everywhere to embrace **undenominational** Christianity. What has been meant by that phrase is that the church spoken of in the Bible was not a divided group of people consisting of diverse core doctrines, but people who are part of a universal church — or body — of Christ. The phrase "of Christ" is not a title, but a description of ownership, as if I would speak of my automobile as "the car of John."

The church belongs to Jesus and not to men. That is why we are not to do as **we** please in the church, but as **He** pleases. When Paul writes " . . . *All the churches of Christ send greetings,*" he means that everyone who belongs to Christ, everyone who is a part of the Body of Christ, sends greetings.

Any title used of the church in the Bible is scriptural (of necessity). So, when I use the term "church of Christ" to denote the idea of "the people of God," I do so in keeping with the Bible.

However, I am not a "Church of Christ" preacher — I am simply a Christian who is a preacher in the Lord's church; I am not a "Church of Christ" kind of Christian, but a Christian only.

I serve the church that is dedicated to being "of Christ." I am dedicated to the idea of *belonging to* Jesus Christ — and my devotion belongs to Him alone. Anyone who does what it takes to *become* a part of that Family and does what it takes to *stay in* that Family is *in* it — and we all are brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Undenominational Christianity is not always popular — but our allegiance is not to the whims of men or their preferences; neither is it to the "Church of Christ," but to the *church which belongs to Jesus*. May we study long and hard to determine if we are indeed in that grand company of saints about whom we are told in the Bible. †

John Dobbs preaches for the Central congregation in Pascagoula, Mississippi, U. S. A.

The Resurrection or Consequences!

IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN

Our Preaching is Vain

Acts 17:2-3; 23:6; 4:2

Your Faith is Also Vain

1 Cor. 15:2; Col. 2:12; 1 Thes. 4:14

We Are False Witnesses

Acts 1:8, 22; 4:33; 13:30-31

Ye Are Yet in Your Sins

Acts 13:37-38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 8:1

Those Asleep Are Perished

2 Cor. 4:14; Jno. 11:25; 6:39-40

We Are Most Miserable

1 Thes. 4:14ff; 1 Pet. 1:3; Eccl. 3:19

1 Cor. 15:11-22



OUR OWN
RESURRECTION

Rom. 6:16-18

Rom. 6:3-6

BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN

First Fruits of the Dead

Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thes. 4:14

Raised for Our Justification

Rom. 4:24-25; 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:18-21

Saved by His Resurrection

Rom. 5:8-10; 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:18-21

Declared to be Son of God

Rom. 1:4; 14:9; Acts 13:32-33

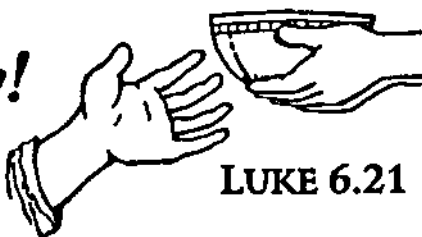
Begotten unto Lively Hope

1 Pet. 1:3; 1:21; Col. 2:12

Power to Change Our Lives

Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Col. 3:1-4

*Stay
Hungry!*



LUKE 6.21

For God ⌘

Psalm 42.1-2

**For
Right-
eousness** ⌘

Matt. 5.6

*Blessed
are you
who
hunger.*

⌘ **For
Truth**
John 8.32

⌘ **For
Heaven**
Heb. 11.8-16

STAY HUNGRY

Luke 6:24

Bobby G. Dockery

Introduction:

- I. Jesus said, "Blessed are you who hunger . . ." (Luke 6:21).
 - A. To modern ears, it sounds strange to speak of hunger as a blessing.
 - B. This is especially true of those who live with hunger as a daily, inescapable reality.
 - C. Blessedness, for most people, means plenty of food to eat today

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

and the certainty that there will still be plenty available tomorrow!

- II. But Jesus taught that our hungers can either exalt us or degrade us!
 - A. The things we hunger for in this life will determine what we are filled with in the next life!
 - B. Mankind's great problem is the hunger for the wrong things:
Eve hungered for forbidden fruit, and it became a curse to her;
Esau hungered for a mess of pottage, and it cost his birthright;
David hungered for another man's wife, and ate at the table of shame, remorse, and bitter regret!
 - C. But there is also a proper hunger. Note some things the Bible teaches us to hunger for . . .

Body:

I. Hunger For God.

- A. God has placed a hunger in each of us which only He can satisfy (Psalms 42:1-2; 34:8-9).
- B. We have an urgent need for communion with our Maker.
 - 1. Many mixed-up people are experiencing this hunger, but they don't recognize what it is.
 - 2. So, they try one futile thing after another, hoping to satisfy their hunger for God.
- C. Augustine wrote of God: "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart cannot be satisfied until it finds rest in Thee."

II. Hunger For Truth.

- A. Jesus insisted that it is the truth which sets us free (John 8:32).
- B. One of the serious spiritual problems of our time is the loss of appetite for revealed truth; that is why there is little commitment to Bible study, little hunger for the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2-3).
- C. How sad that many Christians are not interested enough in truth to attend Bible classes regularly, or to read the Bible daily (Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Timothy 2:15).

III. Hunger For Righteousness.

- A. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6).
- B. Man does not live by bread alone (Luke 4:4); there must be a higher, holy hunger for righteousness.
 - 1. Righteousness refers to doing right — right actions (1 John

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

3:7).

2. Righteousness also refers to being right—a right relationship with God (Ephesians 2:11-16).

C. We must crave both to be and to do the right thing!

IV. Hunger For Heaven.

A. Read Hebrews 11:8-16.

1. Here we have a portrait of men and women of faith, driven by a hunger for the City of God.

2. The old song we sing has it exactly right: "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passin' through . . ."

B. Tragically, many people are living as if they intend to stay here forever; their lives are so taken up with this world and its pleasures that they have no time to think of heaven.

1. But God's people can never be satisfied here.

2. They have a hunger for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

Conclusion:

I. Spiritual progress is possible only so long as we stay hungry!

II. Appetite is destiny.

A. Life is defined by our hungers.

B. The things we hunger for are a reflection of what we are.

"Blessed are you who hunger . . ."

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

Great Things

J.C. Choate

1. God — Creator (Genesis 1:1).
2. Christ — Saviour (Romans 5:8).
3. Church — Body (Ephesians 1: 22,23).
4. Gospel — Power (Romans 1:16).
5. Blood — Cleanser (Ephesians 1:7).
6. Christian — Name (1 Peter 4:16).
7. Soul — Being (Genesis 2:7).
8. Bible — Guide (2 Timothy 3:16,17).
9. Sin — Destroyer (Romans 6:23).
10. Satan — Foe (1 Peter 5:8).
11. Death — Enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26).
12. Heaven — Home (John 14:1-3).

Why One Should Be A Christian

Matthew 7:21- 24

Psalms 107:43

Thomas W. Hartle

Introduction:

1. There are many reasons why an individual should be a Christian.
2. Everyone should want to be a Christian.
3. Here are some good reasons why one should be a Christian.

Body:

I. One Should Be A Christian Because A Sinner Is Unfit To Meet God.

- A. Man is separated from God because of sin (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- B. All people have sinned (Romans 3:23).
- C. A sinner is in a lost condition (Ephesians 2:11-12).
4. Should be prepared to meet God (Hebrews 9:27).
5. No sin can enter heaven (Revelation 21:7).
6. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

II. One Should Be A Christian Because God Has Provided Salvation.

- A. Even though we are lost, God still loves us (Ephesians 2:4-).
- B. God gave His Son for a sinful world (John 3:16).
- C. The blood of Christ was necessary (Hebrews 9:22).
- D. The blood of Christ remits sin (Matthew 26:28).
- E. The blood of Christ was given to cleanse from sin (1 John 1:7).
- F. The Lord purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).

III. One Should Be A Christian Because God Offers Salvation Now.

- A. The Gospel of Christ is universal in power (Matthew 28:19-20).
- B. This great invitation is extended to all (Matthew 11:28-0; Acts 10:34-35; John 1:11-12).
- C. With a wonderful promise (Isaiah 1:18; Mark 16:15-16).
- D. Now is the time to obey God (2 Corinthians 6:2).

IV. One Should Be A Christian Because Life Is Uncertain.

- A. This life is uncertain, but hereafter it is certain. Life is compared to a vapor (James 4:13-15).
- B. Life is compared to a shadow (Job 14:1-2).
- C. Flesh is as grass and the flower (1 Peter 1:24).
- D. There is only one step between life and death (1 Samuel 20:3).
- E. We spend our years as a tale that is told (Psalm 90:9).

V. One Should Be A Christian Because Of Certain Punishment That Awaits Those Who Reject Christ.

- A. Yes, the judgment of God is certain (Hebrews 9:27).
- B. The judgment scene (Matthew 25:31-46).
- C. The righteous will scarcely be saved (1 Peter 4:17).
- D. The disobedient shall surely be punished (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- E. Yes, a fearful expectation awaits (Hebrews 10:26-27).
- F. Is this all necessary that you should be punished? Must you really wait for the fearful expectation? (John 10:10; 14:6; 6:37; Revelation 3:20; 22:14).

Conclusion:

- 1. If you are not a Christian, will you become one now?
- 2. Explain how to become a Christian.
- 3. Do not wait until it is too late!

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Things that God Has Joined Together

J.C. Choate

- 1. Old and New Testaments (2 Timothy 3: 16,17).
- 2. Husband and wife (Matthew 5:31,32).
- 3. Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:23).
- 4. The Head and the body (Colossians 1:18).
- 5. Belief and baptism (Mark 16:16).
- 6. Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).
- 7. Faith and works (James 2).
- 8. Obedience and salvation (Hebrews 5:8,9).
- 9. Worship and the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).
- 10. All spiritual blessings and Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
- 11. Faithfulness and a crown (Revelation 2:10).
- 12. Death and the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Would a woman have the right to teach or lead in the assembly if the elders gave her permission to do so?

Dalton Key

First, observe this rudimentary principle from Scripture: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God"* (1 Corinthians 11:3). Paul does not limit these words to the home — to husbands and wives only — but rather broadens his base of application to men and women in a general sense. With respect to leadership, *"the head of the woman is the man,"* just as certainly as *"the head of Christ is God."*

Next, Paul applies this divine principle to Christian gatherings by writing, *"I will that the men pray in every place . . . Let the woman learn in quietness in all subjection. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in quietness"* (1 Timothy 2:8, 11,12). From heaven's perspective, and thus from the vantage point of

truth, the matter is forever settled: in assemblies of saints, men are to lead. And to establish that Paul was not merely answering a cultural situation of his day with a temporary solution, as some commentators have suggested, notice that he bases this doctrine on truths which have been firmly in place since the beginning of time: *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"* (1 Timothy 2:13,14).

Finally, in view of the foregoing, elders have neither license nor liberty to loose that which God has bound. In Christian assemblies the men are to take the lead — period. This may not be popular with everyone, everywhere, but it is scriptural and right. †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches in Amarillo, Texas.



God made man first. He ordained that the man — the husband, the father — stand as protector, provider, and buffer between his family and the world. And when things are not right between God and man, it is the man first who will be called in question to answer to God, even as Adam was first held responsible for the sin that had been committed by his wife. Humans cannot change His order. BBC †

Can a child of God be lost?

David Tarbet

When Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians he was "*perplexed*" about their spiritual condition (Galatians 4:20). On the one hand, they had heard the Gospel message and received the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:3). On the other hand, they were now placing their souls in jeopardy. Note the following:

1. Some brothers in Christ were "*false brethren*" (Galatians 2:4).
2. Some believers were relying on works of the law to save them, and those who rely on the works of the law are "*under a curse*" (Galatians 3:10).
3. Paul expressed his fear that he had labored over them "*in vain*" (Galatians 4:11).
4. The heart of their problem was that Christ was not in them (Galatians 4:19).
5. They had "*fallen away from grace*" (Galatians 5:4).
6. Only believers who did not "*grow weary*" or "*lose heart*" were assured of reaping eternal life (Galatians 6:8-9).

If the apostle was so concerned for these Christians, should you not be concerned about your own soul? Faithfulness is very important, for eternal security is based upon the condition that one remains true to the end (Revelation 2:10). "Once saved — always saved" is not a Bible teaching. †

David Tarbet preaches for the 16th & Pile church in Clovis, New Mexico, U. S. A.



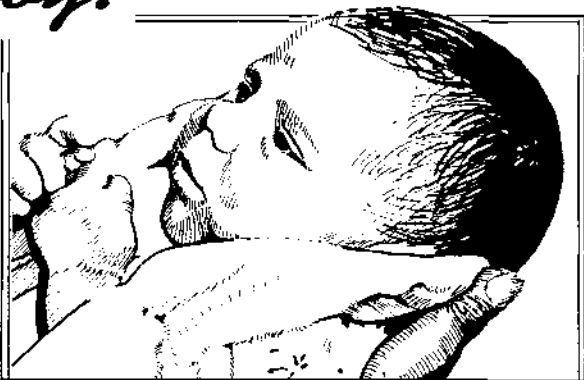
... So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? *If you do well*, will you not be accepted? And *if you do not do well*, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. . . So *now* you are cursed from the earth. . . ."

Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. . . .
(Genesis 4:6,7,11,16).

Shall we baptize our baby?

Jimmy Jividen

Infant baptism has tremendous emotional appeal. The family comes together and remembers traditions. The baptism serves to celebrate the birth of a child — how can a father or



mother refuse this opportunity? Why not mark the occasion with a religious ceremony?

Of the many emotional reasons for infant baptism, none come from God. There is no Scriptural authority. The Bible tells how Jews circumcised their babies, but there is no command or example of Christians baptizing their infants. The New Testament records only **believers** being baptized. Infant baptism came much later and was a human innovation based on false teaching. Such innovations are condemned by Jesus. He said:

"But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matthew 15:9).

Historically, the theological

basis used to justify infant baptism has been that "babies were born in sin." Men falsely taught that Adam's sin tainted the whole human race, including babies, so it was necessary to baptize babies to remove Adamic sin. They thought babies would be damned if they were not baptized. In modern times this doctrine of original sin has been modified by some and denied by others.

In recent times another theological basis has been advocated. It is suggested that infant baptism is a sacrament in which God's grace is conveyed at a point in time when no subjective response is possible. It is totally the initiative of God without concern for any human response.

Such does not fit the Scriptural evidence. In the New Testament baptism was commanded and it required an individual response (Acts 2:38;10:48;22:16). The evidence points out that baptism was for believers (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31-33).

Reason tells one that a newborn baby is not a damned sinner. He cannot sin, for he knows neither right nor wrong. Jesus said:

"Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

The Scriptures do not authorize infant baptism, and common sense shows that its theological basis is erroneous.

†

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"It must be admitted that adult baptism was the rule and infant baptism the exception in the apostolic age, and not until the fifth century, when the Church was widely established in the Roman Empire, was infant baptism general." The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia.



"Infant baptism", though wrong in itself, and based on the erroneous belief in inherent depravity, is evidence that early believers did not question the necessity of baptism or its role in salvation.

Your Name

You had it from your father,
T was the best he had to give,
And right gladly he bestowed it.
It's yours the while you live.

You may lose the watch he gave you
And another you may claim,
But remember, when you're tempted,
To be careful of his name.

It was fair the day you got it,
And a worthy name to bear,
When he took it from his father
There was no dishonor there.

Through the years he proudly wore it,
To his father he was true.
And that name was clean and spotless
When he passed it on to you.

Oh, there's much that he has given
That he values not at all;
He has watched you break your playthings
In the days when you were small.

You have lost the knife he gave you
And you've scattered many a game,
But you'll never hurt your father
If you're careful of his name.

It is yours to wear forever,
Yours to wear the while you live.
Yours, perhaps, some distant morning,
Another boy to give.

And you'll smile as did your father
With a smile that all can share,
If a clean name and a good name
You are giving him to wear.

- Copied

Why stress the importance of baptism?

William Woodson

A continuing topic of discussion is the way one becomes a child of God. The old question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), is still very new when one realizes his/her need of salvation. The answer given according to the Bible is: To be saved the individual is to **believe** in Christ as God's Son (Acts 16:10-14); **repent** of sins (Acts 17:30-31); **confess** faith that Jesus is the Christ (Romans 10:9,10); and to be **baptized** to be saved (Mark 16:16).

When these matters are discussed, a question which often arises is: Why stress the importance of baptism? This question is well answered in the following list of Bible reasons.

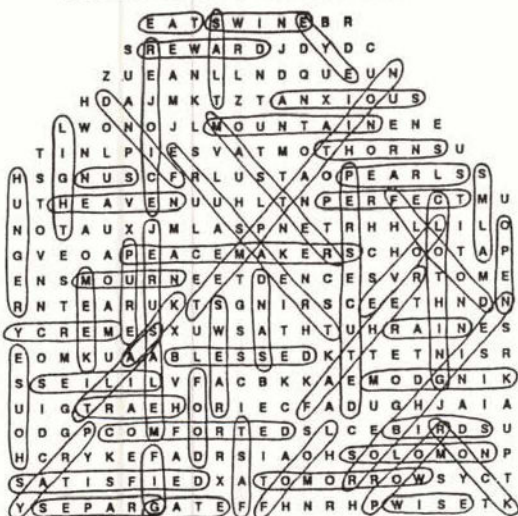
It is interesting and edifying to note that "water" . . . "baptism" . . .

- * stands between the sinner and **salvation** (Mark 16:16).
- * stands between the sinner and **remission of sins** (Acts 2:38).
- * stands between the sinner and **washing** (Acts 22:16).
- * stands between the sinner and **calling** (Acts 22:16).
- * stands between the sinner and **death of Christ** (Romans 6:3).
- * stands between the sinner and **new creature** (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- * stands between the sinner and **putting on Christ** (Galatians 3:27).
- * stands between the sinner and **cleansing** (Ephesians 5:26).
- * stands between the sinner and **sanctification** (Ephesians 5:26).
- * stands between the sinner and **putting away sins** (Col.2:11ff).
- * stands between the sinner and **new life in Christ** (Ephesians 2:6).
- * stands between the sinner and **quickened with Christ** (Eph.2:5).
- * stands between the sinner and **forgiveness** (Colossians 1:13).
- * stands between the sinner and **the kingdom** (John 3:5).
- * stands between the sinner and **blood of Christ** (John 19:34).
- * stands between the sinner and **a good conscience** (1 Peter 3:21).
- * stands between the sinner and **promise through Christ** (Acts 2:39).
- * stands between the sinner and **the body of Christ** (1 Cor.12:12).
- * stands between the sinner and **salvation** (1 Peter 3:21).
- * stands between the sinner and **sonship** (Galatians 3:26,27). †

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

The Book of Matthew for adults



Who Am I?

(from page 81)



Aquila

Verse Search (from page 90)

1. John 1:1.
2. All things; without Him; was made; was made.
3. Word; flesh; the only Begotten; Father; full; grace; truth.
4. John the Baptist.
5. The Son of God.
6. Simon; The Messiah; the Christ.
7. John 1:17; law; Moses; grace; truth; Jesus Christ.
8. Life.
9. John the Baptist; Andrew; Simon Peter; Philip; Nathanael.
10. With God; No; by Him all things were made.

The Bible

- ✱ God inspired about 40 men to pen the words of the Bible.
- ✱ They wrote during a period of about 1500 years.
- ✱ Many of these men never met each other, and did not have access to all of the other writings.
- ✱ 66 individual books or "letters" were compiled to form the entire text of Holy Scripture.
- ✱ The Bible is divided into two main portions: the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- ✱ The New Testament is the binding law for the world today.



The United States of America



Government: FEDERAL REPUBLIC

President: BILL CLINTON

Vice President: AL GORE

Secular Facts:

Location: N. American Continent,
Western Hemisphere.

Land Mass: 3,618,770 square miles

Population: 248,200,000

Cities of 1,000,000 or more:

New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta
Houston, Philadelphia, San Diego.

Ethnic Groups:

White 77%
Black 12%
Hispanic.....7%
Asian.....3%
A. Indian and other.....1%

Languages:

English.....89%
Spanish.....9%
Other.....5%

Literacy: 96%

Religion:

Protestant.....49%
Roman Catholic 30%
Christian, other 4%
Jewish 3%
Anglican.....2%
Orthodox.....2%
Muslim 2%
Mormon 1%
Atheists, other.....7%

The Church:

Congregations: 13,364

Membership: 1,275,000

Ethnic Congregations:

12,200, predominantly Caucasian
1000, predominantly Black
130, Spanish
12, American Indian
14, Korean
6, Chinese
1, Filipino-American
1, French

English-speaking, offering other languages:

42, Spanish
11, Laotian
9, Chinese
1, Russian
1, Vietnamese

Largest numbers of congregations:

	Churches:	Membership:
Texas	2325	290,039
Tennessee	1467	174,205
Alabama	907	90,820
Arkansas	785	69,970
California	749	72,252
Oklahoma	632	73,231
Kentucky	614	46,660

Schools, Universities, Children's Homes