Volume Sixteen

The Voice of Truth International

God Is a Respector of Persons!
Page 11

The Cell: *Proof of Design*
Page 15

What Could I Preach?
Page 30

Living With Difficult People
Page 31

3 Essentials for Growth
Page 34

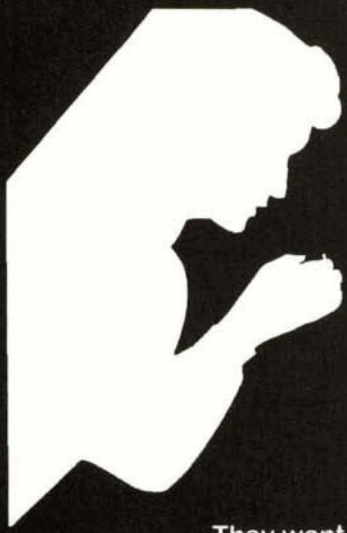
A Father's Touch
Page 55

Whatever Happened to Good Manners?
Page 58

The Battle...
Page 74

One Is Saved by Faith...
Page 76

PERU
Page 102



Prayer

Wandering, with dimmed eyes,
With body tired of the way,
I fall down, helpless, Lord,
Before Your shining majesty.
Precipices are opening in my way,
And the streak of light turns to darkness.
Kneeling, toward You I watch.
Father, please order my path.

Into my chest, fretted of wishes,
I feel the temptations digging;
They want to trouble the foundation
From which my soul is fed.
Please, take me up from the world,
And through Your wise advice,
God, straighten up my look
Toward those left behind.

Banish away my pains,
Forever defeat their call,
And teach me how to weep
For the pain in other hearts.
Not my purpose, which is the prey
To my wretched weakness,
But the mourning of the world,
Let me weep through Your tears, Lord.

In His name,
Amen.

—Florin D. Campean

(Florin D. Campean, from Sibiu, Romania, is a 17-year-old young man who has recently become a Christian.)

The Voice of Truth International

Staff:

Editor-in-Chief: J.C. Choate
Managing Editor: Byron Nichols
Layout Editors: Betty Burton Choate
Barbara A. Oliver
Art Consultant: Steven B. Choate
Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate
Promotion: Dale Grissom,
Oran Rhodes, Mark Posey,
Buck Davenport, James Warren,
Ken Willis, Don Hinds,
Roy D. Baker, Chuck Forsythe,
Alan R. Henderson

Associate Editors for Foreign Editions:
Sunny David, India
Roger Dickson, South Africa
Reuben Emperado, Philippines
Reggie Gnanasundaram, Sri Lanka
Henry Kong, Singapore
Loy Mitchell, All-Africa
Bill Nicks, Trinidad and Tobago
Stephen Randall, Australia
Keith Sisman, United Kingdom
John Thiesen, Malawi
Rod Kyle, New Zealand

Staff Writers:

George Akpabli	Ray Hawk
W.T. Allison	Gordon Hogan
O.P. Baird	Al Horne
Rex Banks	Wayne Jackson
Leon Barnes	Ancil Jenkins
Wayne Barrier	Jerry Jenkins
Roy Beasley	Jimmy Jividen
Maxie B. Boren	Dayton Keesee
T. Pierce Brown	Tom Kelton
Ron Bryant	Dalton Key
Salvador B. Cariaga	Michael L. King
Jack W. Carter	Mack Lyon
David Chadwell	Cecil May, Jr.
Frank Chesser	Bill McFarland
Betty Burton Choate	Colin McKee
Jeril Cline	Jane McWhorter
Charles E. Cobb	Hollis Miller
Glenn Colley	Kevin Moore
Willard Collins	Peter Mostert
Owen Cosgrove	Tim Nichols
Sunny David	Bill Nicks
Jerry L. Davidson	Fenter Northern
Hans Dederscheck	Don L. Norwood
David Deffenbaugh	Owen D. Olbricht
Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	Basil Overton
Roger Dickson	Frances Parr
Bill Dillon	Max Patterson
Bobby G. Dockery	Clayton Pepper
Earl Edwards	David Pharr
Demar Elam	Harvey Porter
Reuben Emperado	G.F. Haines
Allan E. Flaxman	John Thiesen
Royce Frederick	Betty Tucker
E. Claude Gardner	Ken Tyler
R. Gnanasundaram	Don W. Walker
Gary C. Hampton	Bobby Wheat
Jack Harriman	Jon Gary Williams
John Harris	Tex Williams
W. Douglass Harris	William Woodson

The Voice of Truth International is published by churches of Christ as a non-profit effort. **J.C. Choate (editor)** P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967, U.S.A.; Phone: 601-283-1192; Fax: 601-283-1191.

In lieu of a subscription rate, a gift of **$4.00** is suggested for single issues, **$12.00** for four issues. Make checks payable to **World Evangelism Foundation,** and mail to **Byron Nichols, (Managing Editor) 2148 N. National, Springfield, MO 65803;** Telephone: 417-833-5595.

Please send changes of address and articles for publication to **Byron Nichols** in Springfield, **including both old and new addresses so that our records can be corrected.**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

The churches of Christ salute you (Romans 16:16).

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

Of all the freedoms we enjoy, the freedom of religion is one of the most important. An individual or a people might have every freedom known to man, but if there is no freedom of religion all other freedoms are meaningless. Without such freedom one is a slave, held against his will, with no choice of his own. He has no opportunity to obey God to be saved. Being in ignorance of God's will, only an eternity in hell remains for such a person and for those who imposed slavery of the soul upon him.

Can we begin to imagine what it is like to be born in a part of the world where God is not allowed to reign supreme, where the name of Christ is rejected, and where the religion of Christianity cannot be practiced? Just think about the Bible being outlawed and worship not permitted! In such places the gospel is not allowed to be preached and one cannot publicly live the Christian life. What kind of people would live under these conditions? Is there such a people? Yes, such places do exist in the world today and there are governments and people who insist that every soul under their power must practice the chosen religion or no religion at all.

These are the same people who take full advantage of free-

dom of religion in other countries of the world. They send their missionaries and their holy book, they build their elaborate houses of worship, and they publicly complain if they feel that they are discriminated against in any way. The growing fundamentalists among them are fanatical and harsh in dealing with those who do not agree with them. They are also hard on their own people, making demands of them that are neither humane nor lawful. These people often pass themselves off as being very religious and moral, while portraying Christianity as permissive and immoral. The truth is, however, that they preach one manner of life but their practice is generally otherwise, making them very hypocritical.

Christians believe that there is one true and living God, one saviour, Jesus Christ, one book of God's inspired word, the Bible, and one religion, Christianity; and while we recognize that there are many false gods, saviours, books, and religions, we still believe in the right of every soul to have freedom of religion. We may disagree with one's choice, but we believe — and the Bible teaches — that every individual should be allowed to choose what he believes and the religion he wants to practice. He should have this *right* even though his *choice* may be wrong.

From creation, God has always given man a choice. Being the Creator and all-powerful, He could have forced humanity to submit to Him but what glory or satisfaction would that have brought to God? On the other hand, love and obedience from the heart of man, by his own choice, is the treasure God seeks. This is the *only* service to Him that counts.

God *invites* man to come to him (Matthew 11:28-30), and it is only when we voluntarily turn to God that He is glorified. On the other hand, we may *choose* to *reject* God. That option is certainly opened to us, but we will suffer the

consequences that follow.

In the same manner, God has not given any man or people the authority to impose spiritual choices on others. Each person must be free to learn of God and to choose Him, or to follow error if that is his preference.

Freedom is a way of life. Parents allow their children to choose to obey or to disobey. All of us may choose to be law-abiding citizens or to become outlaws. Even at market, one can choose the kind of fruit he will buy, and so on with hundreds and thousands of other things. Of course, there are consequences if we make the wrong choices, but how sad to be in a situation where there is no choice, where one is forced to do a thing even when it is against his will.

All of us are just naturally suspicious of anything that is forced on us. This is especially true of religion. Any religion or church that must have a government or a set of laws to force itself upon others, and to protect its followers from other religions, is a very weak religion. Any religion or government body that forbids people of the "state" religion or church from being converted to some other religious group is obviously a very weak religion or church. Otherwise, why would there be the necessity to use laws or force to hold on to its people? How sad that such must be.

I believe in Christianity and I believe other religions are not of God. But I believe in the freedom of religion for all people. If Christianity cannot stand on its own merits, then how can it stand at all, regardless of what is done to prop it up?

Let every soul be given the opportunity to read, study, learn and compare all religions. Then, based on the truth — the facts — let him choose which one is of God and which one he will follow. That is freedom. Anything else is slavery, and slavery of the soul is the worst slavery of all. ✞

DIGGING SPIRITUAL HOLES

BYRON NICHOLS
MANAGING EDITOR

In Matthew 25:14-30 we read the parable of the talents. You will remember that Jesus told of a certain master giving three servants different amounts of money, the amounts varying in relation to the ability of each one. One was given five talents (or portions of money), another was given two, and the third received one. If you will recall, each of the first two servants wisely handled the master's money, even to the extent of doubling it.

But then, there was that fellow who had been given the one talent. His handling of his master's money resulted in no increase whatsoever. Notice the master's rebuke: *"You wicked and slothful* (lazy) *servant . . . ."* The master later refers to this one as *"the unprofitable servant"* (verse 30).

Question: What was it that the servant had done that was so bad? Answer: Nothing — absolutely nothing. That was the problem. Instead of trying to make a profit for his master, he just went out and dug a hole in the ground and buried the master's money.

The master trusted them all; he placed his confidence in them. He was giving them an opportunity to prove themselves worthy of his faith in them. He didn't stay there and look over their shoulders to see if they were handling the situation just like he would do it. Instead, he went away and gave them the opportunity to make their own decisions.

Before leaving, the master let the servants know clearly what he expected of them. There was no lack of instruction or communication. Each one could know just as well as the others exactly what the master wanted him to do. All that was necessary was to pay attention to what the master said before he left.

It is also noteworthy in verse 19 that it was only after *"a long time"* that

the master returned and asked for an accounting by each servant. He gave them ample time to do what was expected of them. They were allotted sufficient time to start out wrong and end up right — they had plenty of time to make some mistakes and still correct their course of action and present an acceptable profit to the master upon his return.

I believe the fact that the master was gone for *"a long time"* is a definite indication that he did not expect or require significant results immediately. It seems that he understood that things require an adequate amount of time in order to be accomplished.

Even a rather casual reading of this parable shows that these servants were not in competition with each other. The master had not made a contest out of the situation. It was not a matter of who was more capable than the others, but rather it was a matter of who was faithful in following instructions and trying to do the will of the master. The servant who received two talents of money received the same praise and commendation as the one who had received five. They deserved equal recognition — they had both done the same thing, that is, they both did the best they knew how to do with what they had.

The master did not require fantastic results. Verse 27 shows that he would have been satisfied if the servant who was entrusted with the one talent had just put the money in the bank and earned the interest on it. That wouldn't be much of a return now, and it would not have been too much then either, but it would have at least been an improvement over digging a hole in the dirt and depositing the money there.

In verse 24 we read the report to the master by the servant who buried the money. He said, *"I knew you to be a hard man . . . ."* Obviously, this was only an excuse, not a fact. There is nothing in the text to indicate that the master was hard or demanding, except for the fact that he did demand obedience. There is no evidence of harshness or unfairness on his part.

Jesus wants us all to see that He is portrayed by the master in the story, and that we, as His followers, are the servants. Let's be sure to carefully read the parable with this in mind.

We can all be successful servants, stewards. Our Master is not a hard taskmaster, but He has made it clear that "digging a hole" and burying our spiritual talents will not be acceptable. He definitely is demanding that every servant of His be busy using his/her talents in an effort to increase the size of the Master's estate. May all of us rejoice in our role as His servants and do our very best to faithfully use what He has entrusted to us, and not bury it in fear of failure. He wants us to succeed, and He has promised to help us be successful. ✝

Table of Contents

God

Jesus, The Man of Vision.....9
God Is a Respector of Persons....11
Return to the Abyss 13

Evidences

Fly Away Home.....14
The Cell — Proof of Design 15

The Word of God

God's Winnowing Fan.....17
Epithets of Old Testament Books.19

Doctrine to Live By

1 Peter and the Grace of God.....23
Believing Is a Work 25
Egalitarian 26

The Church

The Foundation of God 29
What Could I Preach?.....30
Living with Difficult People 31

Church Growth

3 Essentials for Growth.....34

Worship

Glorifying God in Worship.....38
Dynamic Worship.....40
The Case for Sunday Worship.....41
Invitation to Worship 43

daily Christian Living

Happiness 45
Woman's Role in Ministering 47
The Blessings of Friends 49
Learn from a Loss 51
Coping with Aloneness 52
True Wisdom.....53

The Christian Home

A Father's Touch.....55
The Order of Creation 58
What Ever Happened . . .?.....61

Christianity in Action

Opportunities, Opportunities 63
Is the Task Too Great? 64
Fault-finding 66
The Greatest Gift of All 68

Salvation

The Greatest Treasure.....72
The Battle That Has Changed. . . 74
One Is Saved by Faith at 76
The Recompense of 78

Textual Studies

"If Christ Has Not Been Raised"...81
Lamentations 83
"Greater Works Than These"... 85
Our Most Precious Possession....88

Proverbs 17:22

Humor 89

Bible Questions

A Childish King.....91
He Turned His People Back.....93

Charts and Outlines

Establishment of God's 96
The Old Testament 97
The Great Invitation 99

Poems and Writings

Can I Be Perfect?.....10
Any living thing 16
The Devil's Beatitudes 20
Can You Say?.....27
A Little Place 32
An Ordinary Member?.....42
He Couldn't Be a Christian.....44
How Great Thou Art 50
Our Bundle 65
A Little Jam on the Bread.....69
The Father's Gifts to 70
The optimist is one who 75
Spiritual Arithmetic 79

Live Life Heroically.....87
If we are going to grow 95
What Mothers Ought to Teach.....98

Features

Bible Word Power 21
Verse Search 28
Quick Commentary 33
The Book of 2 Timothy.....54
Who Am I? 80
How do you measure up? 101
Puzzle Answers .....Back Page

From the Heart of . . .

Peru, Land of Contrasts 102
I Never Thought It Would Be.....107
The Cry of the Missionary 109

The Voice of Truth International

Others often comment about The Voice of Truth International. We want to share with you: *"In my opinion, the publication is without brotherhood equal in beauty, format, and purpose."* (Kentucky)

"As a member of the Lord's church for more than 40 years, I have searched for a worthy magazine. Finally, I have found it. The articles, quizzes, etc., are great for short Bible studies. Thank you for bringing us this excellent magazine." (Kansas)

Help us to grow! JCC

How Often in the Day?

Danger slipped away.
Death itself brushed by,
So close
the coldness could be felt,
And yet it did no harm.

Life,
Unscathed,
remains intact
And blood with quickened
beat
Pounds through my veins
To warm the hands and
feet,
grown cold with fear.

I knew the threat this time,
And thankful words
pour out to God. . .

But I wonder
how often in the day
Death brushes by
without a sound
While angel wings,
In matching silence,
Fold us gently in God's
care
Away from harm?

— Betty Burton Choate

Jesus, The Man of Vision

David Chadwell

The incredible Jesus could look at a person and see an unimaginable potential the person himself never saw. He looked at an outspoken, impetuous Peter and saw a rock capable of opening the doors to God's eternal kingdom. He looked at the demon-possessed Mary Magdalene and saw a woman capable of incredible love and commitment. He looked at the murderous Saul of Tarsus and saw a Christian spokesman whose message could redirect religious history. He looked at the adulterous Samaritan woman and saw a person who would drink the living water — and bring others to the fountain.

Jesus saw the most unlikely things in the most unlikely people. In eleven men He saw the means of informing the world about the crucified, resurrected Son of God. And what unlikely men they were! They were fishermen, a despised tax collector, a political/religious fanatic, and other equally undistinguished men from a rural area.

Jesus' vision for people did not arise from their exceptional abilities, their unique talents, or their insightful wisdom. Rarely were they people of exceptional education, experience, nor were they well-traveled. In each case, the potential Jesus saw and the vision He had arose from a single factor: *their ability to trust God.*

None of these people had to become what Jesus saw. They were quite capable of continuing lives of

fishing, demon-possession, adultery, tax-collecting, persecution, and fanaticism. Yet, they were equally capable of being powerful tools in the hand of God. Because they would respond to love and grace, because they would accept forgiveness, because they would live for eternal purposes, they became all Jesus envisioned them being.

It is unlikely any of them realized just how powerfully and extensively God was using them. When the leadership of the Jerusalem church turned on Peter for preaching to the Gentiles, when Paul sat in prison urging Timothy to continue Paul's ministry, when the apostles watched severe persecution slow their work and thin their ranks, they could not have realized God would be using their example and message 2,000 years later.

Jesus sees your potential just as clearly as He saw theirs. That potential does not rest on your incredible talents, ability, or wisdom. It rests on *your willingness to trust God and live for something beyond the here and now.* If you can believe in Jesus' vision, if you can trust His power to bring your life to its full potential, Jesus will use your life in ways which exceed imagination. But that power rests in Jesus — not in you. ✝

David Chadwell is a preacher and writer in Fort Smith, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Can I Be Perfect?

Do you know anyone who is perfect? Even after their sins have been washed away in Jesus' blood, are Christians perfect?

The Bible seems to give two answers to this question. On the one hand, Paul wrote the Christians at Colosse of the prayers on their behalf: *"...that you may stand **perfect** and complete in all the will of God"* (Colossians 4:12). Yet 1 John 1:8 declares, *"If we say that **we have no sin,** we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

So, if it is a fact that **no human can live without sin,** how can we stand **perfect before God?** 1 John 1:7 explains: *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light ... the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."*

The mystery is solved: **the Christian who is walking day-by-day in God's light is being continually cleansed by the blood of Christ, so that he stands always washed and perfected before God!**

NEXT: Who Is My Judge?

God *Is* A Respecter of Persons!

John Harris

In a gospel meeting I received a question that read: "One night you quoted Acts 10:34 that said God is no respecter of persons, and another night you mentioned that only members of the church of Christ can be saved. According to such reasoning, God is a respecter of persons if He saved only those in the church of Christ."

After thanking the audience for the letter, I announced that my subject for that night would be, "God Is a Respecter of Persons." In Acts 10:34 Peter said, *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."* Peter is teaching beyond a doubt that God is no respecter of persons. He was preaching to a Gentile audience for the first time, and he is saying that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but any man is acceptable to God, provided he fears God and works righteousness.

So God is no respecter of persons as to who a person is, whether rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, Jew or Greek (Galatians 3:26-29), but, on the other hand, God *does* respect the person who fears Him and works righteousness.

David said, *"Let my tongue sing of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness"* (Psalm 119:172). And Samuel said to Saul, *"Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever"* (1 Samuel 13:13).

Peter said, *"He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:10-12).

So the Lord respects *some* people, and some He does not respect.

Paul said, *"He became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation"* (Hebrews 5:9). Jesus is not the author of salvation to those who refuse to obey Him. In this **He does respect persons.**

Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). Paul said that God *"would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4).

Thus, it is necessary for a man to know the truth to be saved, but some men refuse to accept the truth. Even while Jesus preached to them, some closed their eyes and stopped their ears (Matthew 13:15). God therefore **respects those who will hear and obey the truth,** and **He rejects those who will not.**

Paul said to the Roman Christians that God *"will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life"* (Romans 2:6,7). Eternal life will be the reward of the Christian. *"But unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil"* (Romans 2:8,9).

In all of these Scriptures we learn that God respects *some* men, and some He *does not* respect. He respects those who fear Him and work righteousness, those who love and obey the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. But those who obey the Gospel become Christians, and these constitute the church of Christ. That is what the church is, *the saved.* The Lord adds *the saved* to *the church;* therefore all the saved are *in the church* (Acts 2:47). So God respects those who are members of His church, and He rejects those who are not members.

But, strictly speaking, God does not respect **persons,** but He does respect **character**. Every man is a creator of his own character. Some men are Christian characters and some are not, because some men obey the Gospel and live by God's Word; some do not. God no longer respects a man because he is a Jew, but He does respect the character that fears and obeys Him. ✝

John Harris is an evangelist living in Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A.

None are so empty as those who are full of themselves.
– Benjamin Whichcote

RETURN TO THE ABYSS

J. Curtis Manor

William Gladstone, four times British prime minister and acclaimed as one of the all-time greats of mankind, once gave the following evaluation of the Christian religion:

"Christianity abolished **(1)** gladiatorial shows, and other spectacles of horrid cruelty to men; **(2)** human sacrifices; **(3)** polygamy; **(4)** exposure of children; **(5)** slavery; **(6)** cannibalism. Next, Christianity drove into the shade all unnatural lusts, and, indeed, all irregular passions. But the former it effectually stamped out as infamous. Next, Christianity established **(1)** generally speaking, the moral and social equality of women; **(2)** the duty of relieving the poor, the sick and the afflicted; **(3)** peace, instead of war, as the ordinary, normal, presumptive relation between nations.

"Here is a goodly list. I speak not of what it taught. It taught the law of mutual love. It proscribed all manner of sin. But the preceding particulars refer to what, besides saying, it did; besides trying, it accomplished. And in every one of these instances, except that of cannibalism, the exhibition of what it did is in glaring contrast, not with the barbarous, but with the most highly civilized life such as it was exhibited by the Greeks and Romans, in the most famous ages of both."

It is interesting — no, horrifying — to watch the reversal of the progress that Gladstone cited, as modern leaders of thought succeed in undermining the world's respect for divine authority. Note the current resurgence and clamor for respectability of "irregular passions" and "unnatural lusts" in the rise of homosexuality and hedonism; of polygamy, now in the guise of promiscuity and casual divorce; and of war, as a normal basis for a nation's economic wealth. Given enough time and popularity, atheism would eventually succeed in restoring to mankind the full set of inhuman values that characterized the pre-Christian civilizations — including slavery and cannibalism.

And I think that not a single one of the God-hating activists who are trying so hard to restore such a world would want to live in it, if they should succeed. ✝

J. Curtis Manor is a gospel preacher in Mariposa, California, U.S.A.

A scientist reported that a manx shearwater, a sea bird, was taken by airplane from its home on the west coast of England to Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. In less than twelve days the bird was in its nest in England! It had flown 3,067 miles, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and averaged 255 miles per day!

E. F. G. Sauer experimented with a variety of warblers which migrate individually, not in flocks. The young warblers hatch in Europe, and — without any birds to lead them — they migrate to their destination in Africa to which they had never travelled! Sauer proved that these warblers navigate by the stars.

Evolutionists claim that all forms of life evolved by chance during millions of years. But chance cannot explain: (1) the marvelous design of birds, and (2) how birds are able to migrate. How could birds, by chance, learn to use the stars to calculate their position on earth and the exact direction of a destination to which they had never travelled? Men who navigate must first study mathematics, geometry, geography, astronomy, and navigation — then use tools such as a chart, map, compass, sextant, or electronic instruments. Even if a bird learned to navigate, how could that bird pass such knowledge to the next generation?

Birds and their abilities are convincing evidence of a wise and powerful Creator (Romans 1:20). *"God created...every winged bird according to its kind..."* (Genesis 1:21).

Fly Away Home

Royce Frederick

Mere chance cannot take migratory birds to their desired destination. Likewise, mere chance cannot take you or me to heaven. Our Creator gave us the Bible to guide us to heaven through Jesus (John 14:6; 8:31,32; Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 1:3). A sinner who is baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins, and remains faithful to Christ, will reach the greatest destination of all — our eternal home with God! (See John 14:1-3; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26,27; Revelation 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.)

Royce Frederick is the editor of *International Gospel Teacher* and lives in Lufkin, Texas, U.S.A.

Unlike the materialistic philosophers of classical times whose naturalistic philosophy he shared, Charles Darwin was able to peer through the microscope at a Lilliputian world possessing a complexity and order which would have astounded such nature philosophers as Anaximander (550 BC) and Empedocles (450 BC).

Darwin in turn, living in the days before the invention of the electron microscope and the development of such techniques as X-ray crystallography was simply unaware of the complexities of the cellular world — and it showed. For example, when he speculated that the first living thing may have arisen spontaneously in a "little pond of chemicals" he simply had no idea that every cellular process is controlled by molecular machines of staggering complexity.

Similarly, when the 19th century scientist, Ernst Haechel, fierce defender of Darwinism expressed the view that the cell was "a simple little lump" he did not anticipate that a century later the DNA molecule would reveal itself to be the repository of all the genetic information necessary to "spell out" the characteristics of a living organism.

If another nail was needed in the coffin of evolutionary theory, modern biochemistry has well and truly provided it by revealing that the nature of the cell is such that it simply cannot have been formed from non-living materials by the "numerous successive slight modifications" proposed by Darwinists and neo-Darwinists.

Quite simply the cell is an example of a system which is, in the words of biochemist Michael Behe, "irreducibly complex", (**Darwin's Black Box**, page 39). By this Behe means that the cell is a system "... composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, **wherein the removal of any of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning.**"

The problem for evolutionists is obvious: "Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on." In other words, nothing less sophisticated than a living cell can have functioned as a precursor to that cell, and therefore we must account for the fact that this biological system exists as a fully functional unit without having passed through a multitude of different stages. The theory of evolution simply cannot explain this fact.

Darwin himself acknowledged; "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive slight modifications my theory would absolutely break down" (**Origin Of Species**, page 154). If Darwin was alive today would he perhaps renounce Darwinism?

Moreover, had Darwin known about DNA, the essential molecular component of every form of life, he may not have been so ready to embrace a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life. Creationists Walter L. Bradley and Charles B. Thraxton have written: "The discovery that DNA conveys a genetic message gives the argument for design a new twist. Since life is at its core a chemical message system, the origin of life is the origin of information" (**The Creation Hypothesis**, page 206). They add, "If we want to speculate on how the first informational molecules came into being, the most reasonable speculation is there was some form of intelligence around at the time. We cannot identify that source any further from a scientific analysis alone. Science cannot supply a name for that intelligent cause" (page 209).

But what science cannot supply revelation can and does supply. His name is Jehovah! ✝

Rex Banks works with the Lord's church in Gisborne, New Zealand.

Any living thing can be likened to a giant factory, a factory producing chemicals, producing energy and motion, indeed reproducing itself too (which most factories cannot do!) and if one thinks of the way in which assembly lines are organized in factories, one realizes immediately that all this complexity of operations could not be accomplished unless they were somehow organized to carry out these processes in an orderly way . . ." excerpt from ***The Thread of Life****, John C. Kendrew.*

God's Winnowing Fan

Joe C. Magee

"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).

Harvest was an important event to the farmers of Christ's day. The grain with the stalks would be carried to a place prepared where it would be spread out and, either by animals treading over the harvest or by pulling a kind of sled over it, the grain would be separated from the stalks. This would be followed by using a two or three-pronged fork called a winnowing fan with which the kernel and the chaff would be separated by tossing them into the breeze. John's listeners probably had little trouble understanding the parallel. But what of us today? What spiritual significance does this offer us?

When we submit ourselves to the threshing floor of God's kingdom, the winnowing fan of the

inspired Word will separate us from:

The chaff of ignorance.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The chaff of indolence.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

The chaff of selfishness.

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1,2).

The chaff of hatred.

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen: And this commandment we have from him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:20,21).

The chaff of moral laxity.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

The chaff of hopelessness.

"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).

The chaff of fear and uncertainty.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

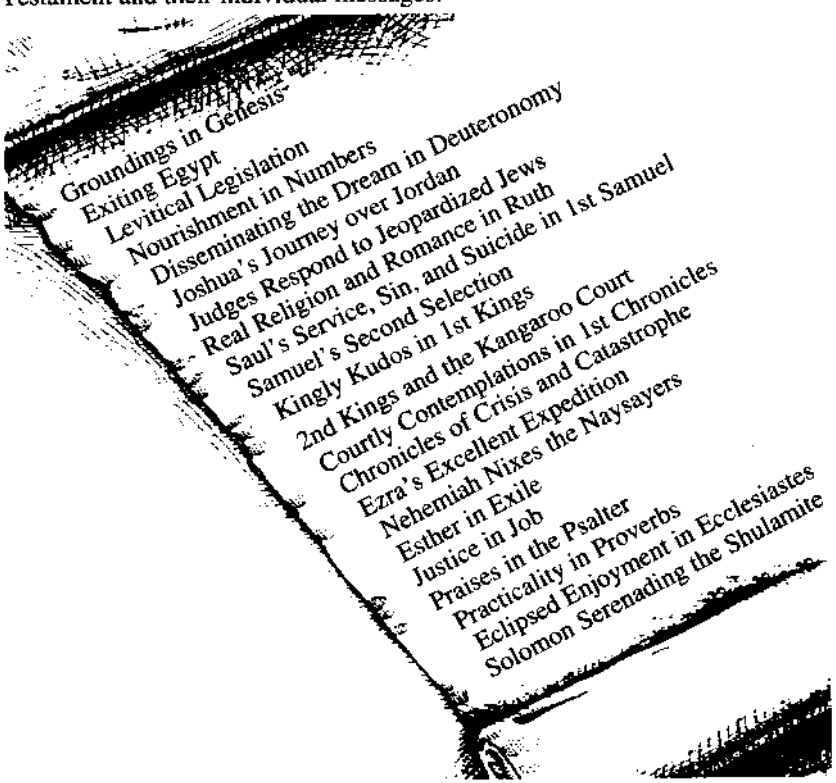
Let us use the winnowing fan of God's Word to separate the chaff while in this life, lest the Lord come and, with the winnowing fan of judgment, separate us from life in God's eternal heaven. ✞

Joe C. Magee preaches the Gospel of Christ in Berryville, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Epithets of Old Testament Books

Barry Poyner

An epithet is a characterizing word or phrase that may accompany or replace the name of a person or thing. For example, expressions like "Hagar the Horrible" or "Dennis the Menace" help us identify with certain comic strips. These biblical epithets can help us remember the books of the Old Testament and their individual messages:



THE WORD OF GOD

Isaiah's Ire and Irenic Immanuel
Jeers from Jeremiah over Jerusalem
Lyrical Laments of the Loss
Exilic Encouragement from Ezekiel
Daniel's Dreams and Deeds
Hosea and His Hussy
Joel Jars Judah
Austere Amos
Obadiah's Oracle of Edom's Obliteration
Jonah's Jolts
Micah on Malfeasance
Nahum on Nineveh
Habakkuk Beholds the Holocaust
Zephaniah on Zion's Demise
Haggai on the Holy House
Zealous Zechariah
Musing Malachi: My Maker or Making Money? ✝

Barry Poyner Is Associate Professor of Communications at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, U.S.A.

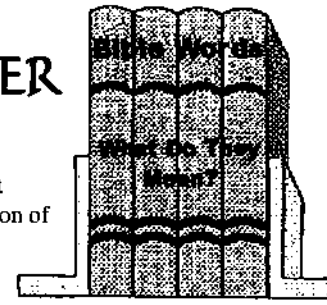
The Devil's Beatitudes

1. Blessed is the church member who expects to be invited to his own congregation: **for he is an important member to me.**
2. Blessed are they who are too tired to go to church on Sunday night: **for they are my best workers.**
3. Blessed is the minister who half-heartedly delivers an ill-prepared sermon: **for he arouseth no deep conviction and putteth the people to sleep.**
4. Blessed is the elder or deacon who infrequently attends church services: **for he setteth an example I want other members to follow.**
5. Blessed are they who are bored by the minister's mannerisms, and look only for the mistakes he makes: **for they get nothing out of the sermon.**
6. Blessed are they who receive higher incomes, but give the same amount to the church they have always given: **for they make the budget of the church harder to raise.**
7. Blessed are they who do not go to worship and studies on Sunday and Wednesday nights: **for they cause the world to say, "The church is failing."**

— Sharps Corner Beacon

It Helps to Enrich Your

BIBLE WORD POWER



By Fenter Northern

Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in 1 Peter (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

1. **ignorance** *n.* – (Gk. agnoia) A: stupidity B: want of knowledge or perception C: inability to speak D: prejudice
2. **foundation** *n.* – (Gk. katabole) A: the bottom of anything B: a source of money C: the beginning point D: a casting down, as laying a base
3. **purified** *v.* – (Gk. hagnismos) A: cleansed from defilement in order to be acceptable for divine use B: ordained C: blended D: changed
4. **unfeigned** *adj.* – (Gk. anupokrito) A: not angry B: silent C: without hypocrisy D: pretentious
5. **fervently** *adv.* – (Gk. hektenos) A: earnestly; without ceasing B: lazily C: wickedly D: angrily
6. **laying aside** *v.* – (Gk. apotithemi) A: not flat in bed B: turned to one side C: saving for a rainy day D: stripping off or laying down one's clothes
7. **malice** *n.* – (Gk. kakia) A: infestation of lice B: anger C: mischievousness D: badness in quality; vicious character
8. **guile** *n.* – (Gk. dolon) A: liver secretion B: temper C: speech intended to entrap D: lie
9. **hypocrisies** *n.* – (Gk. hupokriseis) A: falseness B: play acting or pretense C: evil speaking concerning someone D: a bad attitude
10. **envy** *n.* – (Gk. phthonos) A: displeasure at others' prosperity B: hurt feelings C: covetousness D: jealousy
11. **evil speaking** *n.* – (Gk. katalalia) A: cursing B: lying C: wicked speech in general D: discouraging remarks
12. **desire** *v.* – (Gk. epipotheo) A: to long earnestly B: to wish C: to lust D: to hunger
13. **sincere** *adj.* – (Gk. adolon) A: meaningful B: serious C: without mixture; unadulterated D: holy
14. **confounded** *v.* – (Gk kataischuno) A: mute B: never established C: routed D: put to shame; dishonored
15. **disallowed** *v.* – (Gk. apodokimazo) A: failed a test B: rejected because of disapproval C: expelled D: refused admittance
16. **peculiar** *adj.* – (Gk. peripoiesis) A: divinely owned; therefore, purchased by the blood of Christ B: odd C: old fashioned D: extraordinary

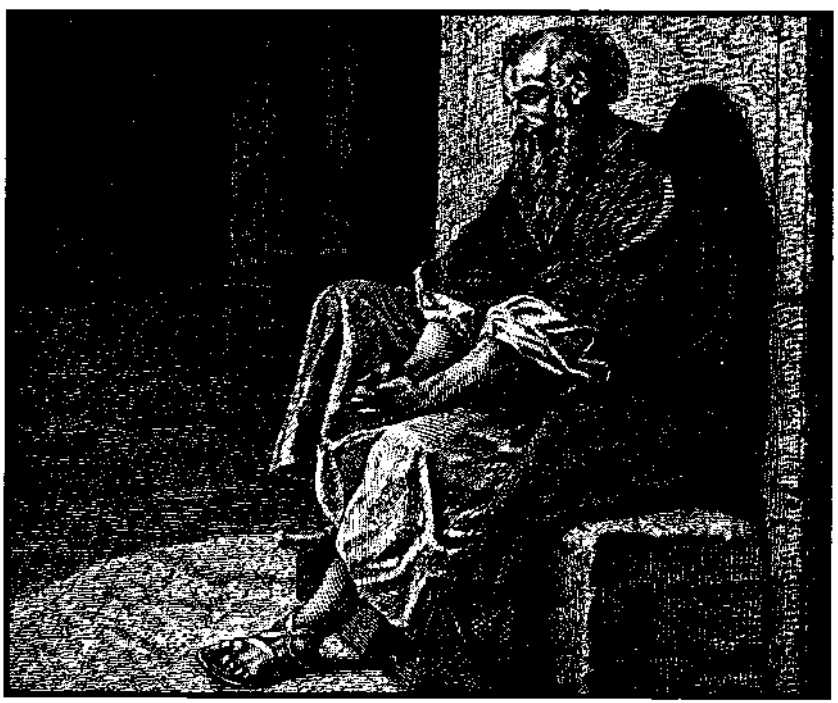
1. **ignorance** – (Gk. agnoia) B: want of knowledge or perception, former unregenerate condition.
2. **foundation** – (Gk. katabole) D: a casting down; as one would lay down a base for a building.
3. **purified** – (Gk. hagnismos) A: Clean from defilement in order to make one acceptable for divine use. The Jews had purification ceremonies to enable them to enter the temple area for worship. The heart must be purified before the Christian can worship God acceptably.
4. **unfeigned** – (Gk. anupokritos) C: without hypocrisy. There is no place for merely pretending to love in Christ's kingdom.
5. **fervently** – (Gk. hektenos) A: earnestly, without ceasing. Not as Laodicea in Rev. 3 whose worship was only luke-warm; nor as Ephesus in Rev. 2 who had left their first love.
6. **laying aside** – (Gk. apotithemi) D: stripping off or laying down one's garments. Read Colossians 3.
7. **malice** – (Gk. kakia) D: badness in quality; vicious character. See Galatians 5:19ff.
8. **guile** – (Gk. dolon) C: speech intended to entrap; therefore, to lead one into error intentionally by deceitful speech.
9. **hypocrisies** – (Gk. hupokriseis) B: play acting; pretense. Read Matthew 23 where Jesus condemned the Jew for practicing only an external religion.
10. **envy** – (Gk. phthonos) A: displeasure at others' prosperity. Not to be confused with jealousy which is feeling displeasure at the threat of losing something.
11. **evil speaking** – (Gk. katalalias) C: wicked speech in general. This would be more than profanity. It may even be without profanity, as character assassination may not include such language.
12. **desire** – (Gk. epipotheo) A: to long earnestly for a thing. To desire any thing with self discipline is not amiss, but unbridled desire – desire to have at any cost – is condemned as lust.
13. **sincere** – (Gk. adolon) C: without mixture or additive, unadulterated; therefore, being genuine.
14. **confounded** – (Gk. kataisehuno) D: put to shame, dishonored. The Christian will never have to be sorry for walking by faith according to God's words (2 Cor. 5:7).
15. **disallowed** – (Gk. apodokimazo) B: rejected because of disapproval. The Jews rejected Jesus because they diapproved of his claims of divinity.
16. **peculiar** – (Gk. peripoiesis) A: divine ownership; thus purchased by his blood (see Acts 20:28; 1Peter 1:18,19).

Vocabulary Scale

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

I Peter and the Grace of God

William Woodson



The life of Peter is a source of example and encouragement in the service of God. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry (John 1:40-42), with occasional failures (Matthew 26:33-35), he served with courage and resolve.

His was the leading voice heard on Pentecost (Acts 2:14,37); his was the voice which won the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius to Christ (Acts 11:13,14; 10:44-48).

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

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

◆ **Grace it was and is that made known the plan of salvation in Christ** (1 Peter 1:10). This plan of redemption was foretold in the prophets and culminated in the death of the Lord. The Gospel presents these great themes, the truth through the Spirit is obeyed, and one is born again by the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22,23). The echoes of Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius are plain.

◆ **Grace guides the people of God in responsible service** (1 Peter 4:10). As good "stewards" of this grace, God's people speak as do the oracles of God, minister in and by means of the ability God gives, and thereby glorify God through Christ in His example and instruction (1 Peter 4:11).

◆ **Grace assures His faithful people of proper standing with God** (1 Peter 5:12). This truth is learned by the words of faithful teachers and the written Word. Accordingly, through the strength of faith, resting on the truth learned and the power of God, one remains strong before God amidst the shifting times around us.

◆ **Grace will be manifested in the eternal salvation provided at the revelation of Christ at His second coming** (1 Peter 1:13). In view of this, one is to live a holy life, exhibiting the qualities of obedient children, recognizing that the holiness of God enjoins the holiness of His people (1 Peter 1:14-16).

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

William Woodson is retired from teaching Bible at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Believing Is A Work

Jimmy Jividen

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

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

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

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

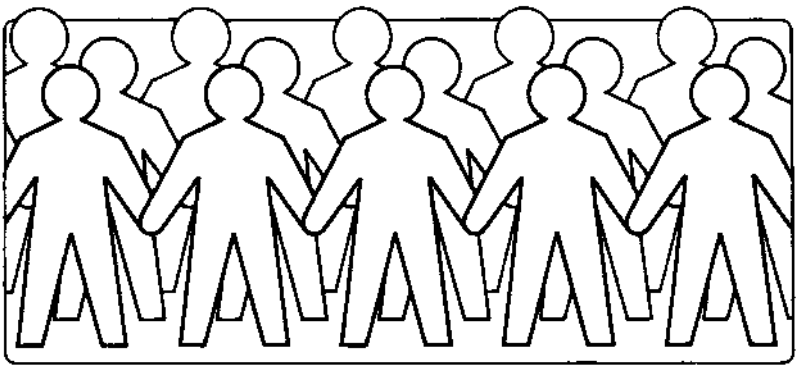
The Bible shows that belief can be commanded. The Bible says, "... this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ . . ." (1 John 3:23).

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

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and is the preacher for the Oldham Lane Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, U.S.A.

EGALITARIAN

Owen Cosgrove



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

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

For seventy-five years the dogmas of Marx and Engels proposing the equality of all people and the coming dictatorship of the proletariat in a classless society utterly failed in the Soviet Union. There are great differences in the minds, morals, and manners of people.

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

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

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

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

Owen Cosgrove writes and sends gospel tracts around the world, and preaches for the Northside Church of Christ in Waxahachie, Texas, U.S.A.

Can You Say?

Can you say in parting
with the day that's
slipping fast,
That you helped
a single person of
the many you have
passed?
Is a single life rejoicing
over what you did or
said?
Does some one whose
hopes were fading,
now with courage
look ahead?
Did you waste the day or
lose it, was it well or
poorly spent?
Did you leave a patch of
kindness, or a scar of
discontent?
As you close your eyes in
slumber, do you think
that God would say—
You have made the world
much better for the
life you've lived
today?

—Anonymous

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John, chapter sixteen, NKJV.

1. Why did Jesus warn the disciples about the persecution to come? (V. 1)

2. Those who persecuted them, even to the point of death, would think they did what? (V. 2)

3. What would be the real reason that they would do these things? (V. 3)

4. *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to* ____ _____ *that I go away; for if I do not go away, the* _____ _____ *to you."* (V. 7)

5. Of what three things would the Holy Spirit convict the world when He came? (V. 8-11)

6. What would the Spirit of truth do for the Apostles? *"...for He will not speak on His own authority, but* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____*."* (V. 13)

7. Would the Holy Spirit glorify Himself? He would glorify _____. (V. 14)

8. Of what did Jesus begin to speak? How did He describe what was about to happen? (V. 16)

9. Did the disciples understand what He was saying? (V. 17)

10. How did Jesus explain more clearly? (V. 20ff)

11. To what ordinary occurrence did He compare their sorrow? (V. 21)

12. Jesus promised that after their sorrow, they would have a joy which _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ (V. 22)

13. Christians are to pray to _____ _____. *"Most assuredly, I say to you,* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. (V. 23)

14. In Whose name are we to pray to God? Jesus promises, concerning prayer, *"Ask,* _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. (V. 24)

15. From where did Jesus come? To Whom was He going? (V. 28)

16. What caused the disciples to believe these statements? (V. 30)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

The Foundation of God

Tom Holland

Foundations are important for building. Foundations are important for educational institutions. Foundations are essential in one's life.

In an era of rapid and sometimes disruptive change, it is so reassuring to know that *"the foundation of God standeth sure"* (2 Timothy 2:19).

Our brethren in the first century were sometimes troubled by religious error the same as we are. There were preachers/teachers *"who concerning the truth have* (had) *erred"* (2 Timothy 2:18). The truth was not so vague or relative that it was impossible to ascertain departures from or corruptions of that truth. However, those who erred from the truth did not shake the foundation of God.

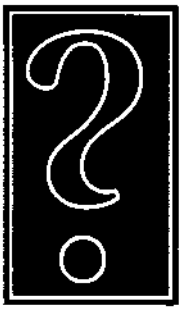
The Lord knew and knows those who *"are His"* (2 Timothy 2:19). There are people who know the Lord (2 Timothy 2:19). There are people who are *known by* the Lord, people who are *children of God* because they have been *baptized into Christ* (Galatians 3:26,27). There are faithful people who *"abide in Christ"* (John 15:4), regardless of opposition, rejection, trouble, trials, storms, or success in life.

It is reassuring to realize that the Lord knows His own. It is a consolation to know that God loves His people. It gives us hope to remember that the Lord knows, cares, aids, saves, and blesses His people.

Think how sad some will be in the day of judgment when the Lord says, *"I never knew you"* (Matthew 7:23). But think how glad we will be when our Lord knows us and claims His own — eternally! ✝

Tom Holland is a writer and preacher living in Brentwood, Tennessee, U.S.A.

A real home is more than just a roof over your head — it is a foundation under your feet



What Could I Preach?

Basil Overton

"For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

Suppose I should want to preach on some subject pertaining to Christ, but not talk about the church. What could I preach?

If I should preach about the headship of Christ, I would have to tell about that of which He is the head, and that is His church (Colossians 1:18).

If I should preach about Him as our Savior, I would have to tell that He is the Savior of the body, which is His church (Ephesians 1:22,23).

If I should decide to preach about His blood, I would have to tell that His blood was the purchase price of His church (Acts 20:28).

If I should preach about His giving spirit, I would have to tell that He always gave and said *"it is more blessed to give than to receive"*; I would have to tell that He finally gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25).

If I should preach about being subject to Christ, I would have to report that it is the church that is subject unto Christ (Ephesians 5:24).

If I should preach about the love of Jesus, I could not afford to leave out the fact that He loved the church and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

If I should tell about His sanctifying and cleansing power, I would have to tell that Christ sanctified and cleansed the church with the washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

If I should preach about the care and concern and the sustaining power of Jesus, I would tell that He nourishes and cherishes the church (Ephesians 5:29).

Obviously, one cannot preach Christ without preaching what the Bible says about His church. ⇧

Basil Overton is the editor of *The World Evangelist* and lives in Florence, Alabama, U.S.A.

Living with Difficult People

Ancil Jenkins

He appointed twelve — designating them apostles — that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach (Mark 3:14).

Were there ever twelve more different people than Jesus' apostles? Look at the extreme contrasts in their personality and disposition. They provide an excellent study in contrasts:

— *Peter* and *John* were so different. *Peter* is impulsive and quick to speak. Some view *John* as quiet and prayerful because he was *"the disciple whom Jesus loved."* Yet, in reality, he had a fiery, vindictive temper (Luke 9:54). He and *James* angered the other ten apostles when they requested the best and highest positions in the kingdom.

— *Nathaniel* and *Thomas* present some differences. *Nathaniel* had little difficulty in believing (John 1:45-49). *Thomas*, wrongly called "Doubting Thomas," asked for more evidence (John 20:25-28).

— Few were more different than *Matthew* and *Simon* the Zealot. *Matthew* had been a despised tax collector, working for the Romans. *Simon* belonged to the Zealots, a group that was committed to overthrow the Romans and all who worked for them. In fact, Zealots pledged to kill every tax collector possible. If *Simon* had met *Matthew* anywhere but in Jesus' presence, he would probably have stuck a knife in the tax collector.

What a difference in these men! They were mixed with six others with equally distinct personalities. Not a one of them was perfect, so each brought to the group his own set of problems and difficulties. Put all twelve together and immediately they are suspicious and jealous.

Out of these men, Jesus molded and formed a group that fully committed themselves to His command and promise. He commanded them to go to the whole world and preach the Gospel. His one promise was that He would be with them (Matthew 28:18-20). On the basis of this command and promise, they successfully accomplished His work (Colossians 1:23). Eusebius, an ancient secular writer, relates a story common to this time. He said that after the Great Commission the twelve met in Jerusalem and divided up the world. Each then made his way to carry out Jesus' command. Almost without exception, each of the apostles died in a foreign country.

If Jesus can provide unity and purpose to such a diverse group, is there not hope for us? If He can make of Jews and Gentiles one new man in Him, cannot He do the same for us (Ephesians 2:13-15)? Disagreements and misunderstandings among brethren should not discourage us. It should make us realize that we are human and different. Disagreements should not disrupt the church, since Jesus gave explicit instructions about how to handle them (Matthew 5:22-24; 18:15-17). Instead of being disturbed, let's trust His power to help us and to make from our differences a powerful and effective church to bear His name and continue His work. He has provided unity and purpose to His disciples before — He can do it again. ✝

Ancil Jenkins preaches for the Sunset congregation in Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

A Little Place

"Father, where shall I work today?"
And my love flowed warm and free.
Then He pointed me out a tiny spot
And said, "Tend that for Me."
I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not there,
Why, no one would ever see
No matter how well my work was done.
Not a little place for me!"
And the word He spoke, it was not stern.
He answered me tenderly:
"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine,
Art thou working for them or Me?
Nazareth was a little place...
And so was Galilee."

— Anonymous

Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

Colossians 2:14

Using a round-ended stylus, early scribes could literally blot out their writing on clay tablets (See 2 Cor. 3:6-13)

The law was written by God's own finger (Ex. 31:18)

As long as the law stood it separated the Jew and Gentile. It prevented them from being united in God's family (Eph. 2:11-22

Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross . . .

It was a wall of partition that Christ removed to make Abraham's blessing available to all. (Gen. 12:1-2; Jno. 3:3-16; Matt. 8:12; Acts 10:45-48)

It was really our cross, as Christ's suffered for us, the Just for the unjust. He was the innocent Lamb dying for the guilty sinner (1 Pet. 3:18.

When they crucified Christ, they killed their old sacrificial law by opening a new fountain of blood for all. (Heb 9:22; 10:4; Eph. 1:7; 1 Jno. 1:7)

—Fenter Northern

3 Principles for Growth

Congregations must revive their dreams for evangelism and church growth.

There are three essential ingredients for the future growth of the church. The first is seen in the admonition to the church at Ephesus, *"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"* (Revelation 2:4,5 KJV).

Love for God and man is an essential characteristic.

Clayton Pepper

Think of one having the qualities of love described in 1 Corinthians 13, and the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22,23. Developing these traits will put genuineness into our lives. We will not be wondering where half of the congregation is on Sunday night or where our workers are.

The second essential is zeal.

We see this need in the Lord's admonition to the Laodicians. They, in their own eyes, were doing well spiritually. They did not need to improve anything. It is difficult to change satisfied people. The Laodicians were in a comfortable state. However, in the eyes of Christ they were spiritually naked. They were not whole-heartedly for Him. Their commitment was just mediocre.

The Lord expressed it in this way, *"I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"* (Revelation 3:15,16).

The solution to their problem was, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"* (vv. 19,20). It is difficult to imagine the Lord on the outside wanting to come inside again to the hearts of Christians.

If the Spirit is quenched and no longer indwells the Christians, and the zeal is gone, the church is no more effective in evangelism than a civic organization would be.

If the Spirit is quenched and no longer indwells the Christians, and the zeal is gone, the church is no more effective in evangelism than a civic organization would be. We see from this passage that *the remedy for lukewarmness is to become zealous.* Zeal is the second ingredient needed (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30). We cannot do the work that has been given to us without these qualities.

The third essential is wholehearted commitment to the purpose of God and His Son.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it has been God's purpose to redeem man. The coming of Christ brought to humanity that great hope that men had longed for (cf. Genesis 12:2,3; Isaiah 2:2,3; Matthew 1:21; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Luke 19:10; Mark 1:38).

Read again the account of the zealous proclamation of the Gospel as seen in the early chapters of Acts. Nothing could obscure this purpose or take its place. Our priorities can rest nowhere else. Good must not take the place of the best. The love of God for lost men must be heralded around the world in every generation (Ephesians 3:8-12).

Cheap, common and trite obstacles that hinder should be seen for what they are. No longer should we play the role of the unevangelistic Pharisee who seemingly would say, "Lord, we thank thee that there are so many things in the church to do without getting involved in evangelism."

Renewal is needed.

David wrote, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.* ***Then*** *will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"* (Psalm 51:10-13).

David felt the need for a clean heart, a renewed spirit, and the joy of salvation. He believed that if he had these qualities again that he could teach transgressors and convert sinners to the Lord. While many characteristics and abilities are needed to be a good teacher, little can or will be done if the inward man is not right.

The word "restore" indicates that David once possessed these qualities but lost them. There is little doubt about the great need for renewal of the inward man in many Christians today. We simply cannot teach transgressors or convert sinners until renewal takes place. The joy of salvation must return. "*Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"* (Psalm 85:6).

Men and movements change with the passing of time. They begin with great vigor and commitment to a cause. With physical age or age of the movement, that life-giving quality that distinguished it from mediocrity gradually passes away and the vision of the founder is lost.

There is quite a contrast between the Jerusalem church and the congregations of Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea. Someone has said that many people believe the last words of Jesus were, *"Go preach the Gospel to every creature"*, but they were not. The last words He spoke to the church, as recorded in Revelation, were, ***"Repent or else."*** These three congregations described in Revelation 2 and 3 were admonished to repent, and they were warned of what would happen if they did not.

Paul recognized the need for renewal. He wrote, "*[B]ut though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"* (2 Corinthians 4:16). Isaiah wrote, "*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"* (Isaiah 40:31).

The dream.

Robert Dale, in his book, **To Dream Again,** describes nine different steps that a congregation goes through from the beginning dream through its plateau and to its

decline. He describes how to revitalize the church to help it come alive again. He says, "A new dream awakes the congregation."

A *healthy* congregation is born out of a dream.

A group of Christians establishes a congregation where one is needed. They believe that God wants them to take this action. The group bands together, and the church begins meeting. They do the necessary organizing. They unite around their beliefs. They set goals and priorities. They develop programs, policies, procedures, and budgets, and they develop certain routines and habits that become the normal way of doing things.

9 Steps from Dream to Death:

1. **Dream.**
2. **Working together.**
3. **Plateau.**
4. **Decline.**
5. **Nostalgia state.**
6. **Blaming others.**
7. **Open to false teaching.**
8. **Apathy.**
9. **Death of the dream.**

If the church does not take steps to revitalize itself, **plateau** occurs in the reaching of those initial goals. Then **decline** sets in. People begin to doubt and say, "Things are not working as well as they used to." This is the **nostalgia** state.

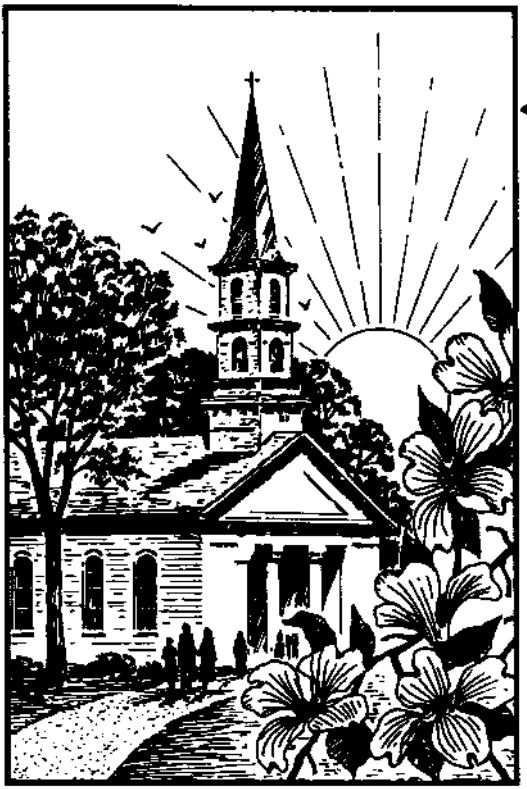
They may begin to place **blame.** "Is this the right way to make progress? Maybe we need to change." It is often at this point that brethren become **open to false teachings** as a solution to the problem when, really, renewal is what is needed.

Some people become **apathetic** and take a **wait-and-see attitude** with **hopes** that things will get better. Finally, some members become alienated and drop out in total disillusionment. This marks the absolute **death of the dream** for that church.

The dream can be lost in a relatively short period of time, or it may take many years. **The solution is to remember the original dream, based on Christ's purpose for His church.** Jesus told the Ephesians to remember from whence they had fallen (Revelation 2:5).

The church must be led to dream again, knowing that to stand still is to die. ✝

Clayton Pepper is the director of listener communication for Restoration Network International, and is an advisor to the Clayton Pepper Center for Church Growth Studies at Ohio Valley College in Parkersburg, WV.



Glorifying God in Worship

Max Patterson

Christians need to glorify God in worship. In order to do this we need to **(1)** learn what constitutes worship, **(2)** warn against perverting the God-given worship which is the only true worship.

The meaning of worship is *respect, honor, reverence, or homage given to someone in authority.* Since all authority is given to Christ, He *deserves* (as well as being *worthy of*) our worship (John 4:24).

There are many examples of perverted worship in the Bible.

1. The priests profaned the holy things of God by not showing any difference between the holy and the profane (Ezekiel 22:26).

2. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord which He commanded not (Leviticus 10:1).

3. The people of Jesus' day worshipped God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

4. The men of Athens ignorantly worshipped idols — even one with an inscription to the unknown God (Acts 17:23).

WORSHIP

In the Old Testament the Jews were commanded to keep the Ten Commandments, one of which was to remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy (Exodus 20:8). In the New Testament this day of worship was changed to the first day of the week, or the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

The place of worship among the Jews was centered in the temple in the city of Jerusalem (Exodus 25:8,9,22). Today under Christianity one does not have to make a pilgrimage, but may worship God anywhere (John 4:20-26; Mark 16:15,16).

The book of Leviticus would emphasize that under the old law there was a great deal of ceremony and ritualism. In Christianity, there is need to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

There are several items of worship. These are also avenues of worship. Some find fault with calling these "acts" of worship. However, when one worships God, he must do something! How can one worship God without worshipping in spirit and in truth? If that is not some kind of action, what would one call it? The acts of worship are:

1. **Preaching or teaching God's Word** (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42).
2. **Music**. We are commanded to sing and make melody in our heart (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19).
3. **Prayer**. Children of God have always prayed to their Heavenly Father (John 14:13,14; Colossians 3:17).
4. **Fellowship in giving** (1 Corinthians 9:6,7).
5. **Partaking of the Lord's Supper** on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23,24).

If we change the worship of God, the result is that we do not have even God, much less Christ (2 John 9-11). If the God-given worship is observed, then God is glorified. *"Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31). ✝

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

Worship ascribes worth to God and involves both attitudes (awe, reverence and respect) and actions (bowing, praising and serving).

DYNAMIC WORSHIP

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

What are we talking about: dynamic worship? We mean active, empowering worship, worship that centers on God, that gives to Him honor, adoration, and praise! Worship that draws upon His strength and power for our lives! While worship is primarily giving to God, it results in blessings of receiving.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I just don't get much out of the worship service"? Such a statement could be a reflection upon the worshiper rather than the service. Study these suggestions that could help put quality into your worship.

1. **Make Sunday worship a priority.** It is the most important commitment of the week. It is nothing less than meeting with God.

2. **Don't bring God leftovers.** God has always demanded "first fruits." He cannot be satisfied with scraps. Get plenty of sleep on Saturday night and come to worship with an alert and refreshed mind.

3. **Prepare your mind.** Discipline begins in the mind and so does discipleship. Train your mind to concentrate on spiritual things.

4. **Be on time.** Rushing in late makes it difficult for you to settle into meditation and it disturbs other worshipers.

5. **Bring your Bible.** Coming to worship without your Bible is like going out to drive your car without your keys.

6. **Open your mouth and sing.** Singing is not an option. It is a command. Those who violate this command are just as guilty as if they neglected the assembly in the first place.

7. **Be friendly.** Worship is enhanced when done as a family. Family members should know and love each other.

8. **Listen carefully to the sermon.** Taking notes will help. Follow along in your Bible. Take the message seriously: it will help you. It will encourage the speaker, and he will do a better job. It will show non-Christians that we are serious.

9. **Make your worship God-centered, not man-centered.** Worship is primarily a giving situation. It is in the giving of ourselves that we get. No giving, no getting. Think about it next time you hear someone say, "I don't get much out of worship service!" ✝

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. preaches for the Walnut Street church in Dickson, Tennessee, U.S.A.

The Case for Sunday Worship

Dalton Key

The New Testament forbids the forsaking of *"the assembling of ourselves together"* (Hebrews 10:25). The early church in Corinth, though in error on many points, still knew enough of God's will to come together each week for worship services. Paul reports they *"came together"* for the purpose of worship (1 Corinthians 11:18). This same apostle tarried seven days in Troas, until the Lord's Day, when he met with the saints of that city in worship (Acts 20:7).

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn ... they found the stone rolled away.
Luke 24:1-2

These regular, first-day-of-the-week services were important to the early disciples. In their worship, in accordance with heaven's authority, the first century saints prayed (Acts 2:42; 6:4-6; 13:3), shared in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29), gave freely of their means as they had been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7), were instructed in the Lord's will (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7), and sang (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). These expressions of Christian worship were not optional, neither were they left open to substitution or alteration; they were divinely approved and authorized.

Moreover, early writers and historians of the first few centuries A. D. serve to corroborate the inspired record of early Christian worship. Pliny the Younger, the proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus during the latter part of the first century, wrote a revealing letter concerning the

Christians and their worship and sent it to Emperor Trajan. A portion of the letter reads, "They were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day . . . when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god." Justin Martyr, in his "First Apology," written near the beginning of the second century, wrote, "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages . . . they rise together and send up prayers." He continued by describing their observance of the Lord's Supper, accompanied by prayer. Tertullian, an oft-hailed "church father" of the second century, reported, "We meet together in an assembly and congregation so that praying to God we may win him over by the strength of our prayers . . . We meet together in order to read the sacred texts . . . with the holy words we feed our faith . . . We have a kind of money-chest . . . every individual puts in a contribution."

Our worship services each first day of the week are not the result of human design; they are not the product of mere modern tradition. Our assembling together may be traced back to the authority of Christ and to the time of the apostles and early disciples. ⇧

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the N. Amarillo congregation in Amarillo, Texas, U.S.A.

An Ordinary Member?

"Just an ordinary member of the
church," I heard him say,
But you always find him present, even on a rainy day.

He has a hearty handshake
for the stranger in the aisle,
And a friend who is in trouble
will find sunshine in his
smile.

When the Sunday sermon
helps him,
he tells the preacher so,
And when in need of comfort,
he lets the elders know;
He always gives so freely
and tries to do his share,
In the ordinary tasks for which
others have no care.

His talents are not many,
but his love for God is true;
His prayers are not in public,
but he prays for me
and you.

"An ordinary member"? —
I think that I would say,
"He's an **extra-ordinary**
member in a humble sort
of way!"

— Author Unknown

God's Word that is done, our giving to support the promulgation of the Gospel, and our remembrance of His Son, Jesus, in the observance of the Lord's supper, are all designed for the expressing of our love and appreciation to Him for the tremendous love with which He has loved us.

In essence, each assembly of the church affords an opportunity for us to say to God and to the

Invitation to Worship

Maxie B. Boren

The worship assembly of the church is for the primary purpose of honoring and glorifying God. In this gathering of His people together, Jehovah is recognized and praised as the great Creator of all things. Hearts are bowed before Him in acknowledgment of the fact that He has always been, He is now, and will always be the Supreme Sovereign of the universe.

The songs that we sing, the prayers we offer, the preaching from world that we are indeed believers, that we recognize the greatness of our Creator, and we offer Him the praise and adoration of our hearts, our love, and gratitude. The fact that God wants His children to worship Him, and that they should want to do so, is clearly seen over and over again throughout the pages of the Bible.

Too, we should understand that an important benefit of Christians gathering together for the worship

of God is the strength and encouragement afforded one another from being with those of kindred mind and spirit. In reverent worship of God, we share with one another in beautiful fellowship our deepest convictions and sentiments. Warmth of kinsmanship and comradeship flows from heart to heart as voices are blended together in praise of Him from whom all blessings flow. Mutual edification, exhortation, and encouragement are given to one another in the acts (expressions) of worship to the Almighty. There is a profound sense of belonging to God's family, and our love for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ is greatly enhanced by our being together before the throne of God in worship.

May these brief thoughts help us to see why we should want to assemble with our brethren for worship at every opportunity we have. Let us say with David, *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"* (Psalm 122:1). We know that today the church itself is the *"house of the Lord"* (1 Timothy 3:15), so perhaps we should say, "Let the house of the Lord be glad to assemble to worship the one true and living God!" ✝

Maxie B. Boren is the preacher for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, U.S.A.

He Couldn't Be a Christian

If a man would be a
soldier
He'd expect, of course, to
fight;
And he couldn't be an
author
If he didn't try to write.
So it isn't common logic,
Doesn't have the right true
ring
That a man, to be a
Christian,
Doesn't have to do a thing!
If a man would be a
hunter
He must go among the
trees;
And he couldn't be a sailor
If he wouldn't sail the
seas.
How strange for any
Christian
To think he can be right
When he fails to work
and worship
And walk daily in the light.

— Channelview Bulletin

Happiness

Salvador B. Cariaga

"Never have a people had more and more but enjoyed it less and less. The standard of living has gone higher and higher, but the standard of life has gone lower and lower. In a land of abundance, we never learned how to abound." **—Anonymous**

Someone said that there are three secrets to happiness: Money. Money. Money. Superficially, this might sound admissible or even logical, but that's all it is, *superficial*. It does not reach down deep inside where it matters the most. If you don't believe that, list all of the most progressive countries in the world and you will find in them the highest crime, suicide, and divorce rates anywhere. Money does not equate to happiness or peace of mind. So how can we have real and true happiness? The number one

book and bestseller of all times, read by more people than any book ever published, translated into over 2,000 languages, survivor of centuries of persecution, offers the following answers.

First, it tells us to **depend on God**. Of all people, we know that *humans* are not dependable. We even let ourselves down. We cannot depend on *things* either. They are temporary, futile, and even dangerous. On the other hand, you can count on *God*. He is everlasting, all-powerful, and all-knowing. He is the shelter in the time of storm . . . He is the Rock of Ages . . . the Alpha and the Omega (see Psalm 23; Philippians 4:6,7; 2 Corinthians 4:8,9,16,17; Matthew 11:28).

Second, **accept what you are and what you have**. Stop pretending! Get past the denial stage. Accept pain, sufferings, disappointments, and move on with your life. Paul says *"learn to be content in whatever circumstances"* (Philippians 4:11-13; see also 1 Corinthians 7:24; 1 Peter 5:7).

Third, **live in the present and not in the past**. Someone once wrote,

"Yesterday is gone, it's gone forever.
Tomorrow may never come, but you have today.
Use it. Don't waste it.
Savor it. Enjoy it.
There will never be another day just like today.
When it is gone, it's gone forever."

(Suggested reading: Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:4-13; 2 Timothy 6:6-10).

Finally, **aim for worthwhile goals**. First things first, and on the top of our priority list must be the things of the *Word*, not of the *world*. Jesus reminded us to *"seek first the kingdom of God . . ."* (Matthew 6:33). Paul said, *"Set your mind on things above . . ."* (Colossians 3:2). People who aim for money, power, and fame above all else will find themselves wanting in the end.

In conclusion, the great apostle Paul summed it up by saying, *"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things"* (Philippians 4:8). ✝

Salvador B. Cariaga is a gospel preacher in Cebu City, Philippines.

Happiness is a healthy mental attitude, a grateful spirit, a clear conscience, and a heart full of love.

Woman's Role in Ministering to the Sick

Jane McWhorter

When we are told ahead of time what some of our questions will be at judgment, we are foolish indeed if we are not prepared. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew states (in verses thirty-six and forty-four) that Christians will be judged, in part, on their ministering to the sick. The manner with which early Christians dealt with this admonition was probably different from the way in which it is handled today, but a broad principle runs through all cultures and times. To "visit" implies caring for the needs of others who are sick just as "visiting" the fatherless and the widows in their affliction denotes meeting their needs (James 1:27). Women often function better than men in this area of service because of their caring, nurturing natures and their ability to notice things that should be done. Perhaps the following suggestions will enable the reader to find more avenues of service.

(1) Praying is the most valuable thing a Christian can do. Let the sick person know that you are praying for her.

(2) Cards are a wonderful way to let those who are ill know that you are thinking of them, especially when it is best not to have visitors. Women with their own physical limitations should not overlook this area of service.

(3) Visits can be useful if they are kept short and cheerful. Five or

ten minutes is long enough. Respect a "No Visitors" sign!

(4) Sincerely offer to run errands. Sometimes the patient is in need of something that you could get for her. Perhaps you could wash gowns or pajamas and return them the next day.

(5) Keep children. A wife whose husband is in the hospital may very well need your assistance in caring for children so she can be by her husband's side. If the wife is the one in the hospital, the need for child care is even greater!

(6) Sincerely offer to stay with the patient to give the family a rest when the sick person may need someone by her side constantly.

(7) Prepare food for family members who are left at home. Concentrate on simple main dish courses that can be pulled from the refrigerator and heated, rather than so many rich desserts. The gift of food is an especially welcome sight to all when the patient returns home from the hospital.

(8) Leave a basket of fruit and snack foods for those who are waiting by the bedside of a loved one. It is not always convenient to leave the room to get food. Leave a similar basket in the waiting room for those who are there with intensive care patients. Tag it with a card that says, "Thinking of you in your time of waiting." Sign it with the name of the local congregation.

(9) Prepare sandwiches, chips, etc. for those who wait by a bedside.

(10) Prepare a decorated "Sunshine Box" for those who are facing a lengthy recovery. Fill it with individually wrapped, inexpensive gifts, one to be opened each day. You may want to ask several other women to join with you in preparing such a box of good wishes.

(11) Don't forget those who are sick at home. Most of the above suggestions are applicable to this situation. Sometimes visits at home, however, break into the routine of the care givers and are not as convenient. Be considerate.

(12) Remember sick children. They love to be noticed with toys and inexpensive gifts, even during routine childhood diseases such as chicken pox, measles, etc. The list is endless. We Christian women should open our eyes and use our imaginations, coupled with common sense, to render service to anyone who is sick. Remember that in so doing we are serving the Master. ✝

Jane McWhorter is a writer and the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Fayette, Alabama, U.S.A.

The Blessings of Friends

Demar Elam

One doesn't have to travel far down the road of life before realizing the need of having sincere friends. It has been said that no man is an island unto himself, and how true that is. Proverbs 17:17 says, *"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."* The type of friends spoken of in this passage are not found in abundance, but must be cultivated. If you want friends who are totally reliable and trustworthy and who don't fail you, then you must be that kind of friend to others.

Everyone needs friends! This life is filled with hardships and disappointments, the nature of which demands that we have friends who stand by us in good times or bad. Do such friends exist? Yes, everyone can have such friends in life, but true friendships do not develop down a one way street. One must be worthy of his friends. If you perhaps wonder sometimes why you do not have true friends, you would do well to remember Proverbs 18:24. *"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly,"* and the rest of the verse says *". . . and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* We all need friends who surpass the standard and are friends who stick closer than a brother.

John 15:13, *"Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends."* The greatest friend any of us will ever have is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We often sing the song, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," yet so often we fail to realize the meaning of the song. The blessings of friendship with the Christ are innumerable! He has already died

in our behalf, and in the words of the song, "Can we find a friend so faithful?"

The amazingly beautiful thing is that when one accepts the friendship of Christ in his life it opens vistas of numerous friendships with those who are already friends with the Anointed One! Surely every Christian enjoys relationships with other Christians who meet every standard of what a true friend should be. Oh, the blessings of friendship with the friends of Jesus! However, we all need to take stock, to take inventory of our own lives and see if we are being such a friend to other people. Are you thought of by another as being ". . . *a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*"? Surely we ought not to want in life what we're unwilling to give. Just as we need friends who surpass the standard, there are others depending on us to surpass that standard for them.

Each Christian is to strive to be more Christlike. It has been said that we are "Christ in miniature." Simply put, that means we can only be a copy of Jesus on a much reduced scale. We can never measure up to the example of Christ, but we can strive to do our best and at least be like Him on a smaller scale. In John 11:35 we read that *"Jesus wept."* Why did He weep? He was, to Lazarus, *"a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* The Jews, seeing Jesus weep openly, said, ". . . *Behold how he loved him!"* Ah yes, the blessings of friendship with Jesus and with His friends are innumerable. ✝

Demar Elam is the director of World Missions at Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.

How Great Thou Art

His power is "Exceeding Great", Ephesians 1:19.
His grace is "Exceeding Abundant", 1 Timothy 1:14.
His promises are "Exceeding Great And Precious", 2 Peter 1:4.
He gives us an "Exceeding And Eternal" weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17.
He will present you faultless before the presence of his glory with "Exceeding Joy", Jude 24.
He is able to do "Exceeding Abundantly" above all that we ask or think, Ephesians 3:20.
"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth", Psalm 8:9.

— Jim Martin

Learn from a Loss

W. T. Allison

In sports, poor losers fling their putters into a lake or smash their bats to the ground. In a job situation, we can't act so emotionally. When we don't get what we want, we need an organized approach to get moving forward again.

Psychologist Rick Wolff works with professional athletes to help them recover from loss. His advice can be used in any field of endeavor. Listen!

First of all, **develop a professional attitude**. Losing points out both our strengths and weaknesses. Amateurs search for irrelevant or superficial factors. Professionals analyze what was done wrong and correct it.

Secondly, **expect to win in the future**. A pro goes on to mentally reassess strategy and learn to adapt to changing situations. The person who can't roll with the punches will never be a winner.

Thirdly, **learn to compete with yourself**. Create your own goals and game plans. Reacting to what someone else does or does not do will not carry you forward. You must be in control of yourself.

Fourthly, **channel your "cool anger"**. This is a conscious, positive thought process. It requires poise and composure in the face of adversity. Athletes and people in other occupations who let emotions get out of hand will not grow from their experience.

Fifthly, **learn from adversity**. People think they have reached their full potential and a loss is a result of bad luck or unfairness. Instead, adjust the way you work so you have a better chance of succeeding in the future.

Sixthly, **have faith in your ability**. There comes a time when you have to rely on a solid belief in your God-given ability. Often that little extra psychological push, that faith in yourself, moves you to new performance heights.

Finally, **believe that God wants you to succeed**. God did not create you destined to fail. He wants you to be successful. When you fall, God will help you up and give you another chance. Develop the attitude of Paul who said, ***"I can do all things through Christ which strengheneth me"*** (Philippians 4:13). ✞

W. T. Allison is the preacher for the Creekwood church in Mobile, Alabama, U.S.A.

Coping with Aloneness

Sylvia L. Camp

When a companion dies, sometimes men and women alike find themselves expecting their mate to return home soon. They may also find themselves turning to the empty chair to share a thought or to discuss a problem. Some even dream that their loved one is still with them. These impulses brutally reopen the wound of loss.

Those who have the care of a spouse through a long illness have special problems. For seven years, a man nursed his wife who had cancer. A little bell was placed on a table by her bed. When she needed him, she rang it. For many months after her death, he would hear that bell at night. Others are jarred into wakefulness when they hear their deceased call their name. Another man was awakened often by hearing his partner's chronic cough long after she had died. One lady would awaken herself on the way to check on her husband. The care instinct is indeed strong!

Death is a part of living. It is something each one must face. Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 states, *"To everything there is a season . . ."* The writer includes *"a time to die"* and *"a time to weep"* in the list. When Sarah died, Abraham wept for her, Genesis 23:2. When Lazarus died, Jesus wept, John 11:35. The writer of Hebrews teaches that it is appointed unto men to die (9:27). But death and mourning are not the end. The Psalmist wrote, ". . . *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"* (30:5).

In an effort to recapture this joy, some quickly and foolishly marry again — even in the face of obvious obstacles to happiness. One widow said, "There's no loneliness like the loss of one's lifelong companion." In this loneliness, instead of drawing closer to God, as should be the case for the Christian, some make unwise choices, even going contrary to the restriction to marry *"only in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 7:39).

One day when he was especially lonely, a widower went to see a friend who had been a widow several years.

"I'm so lonely," he said. "I'm thinking about marrying again."

"Don't do it," she said. "Just get yourself a dog!" ✝

Sylvia Camp is a Christian writer who lives with her husband of more than sixty-one years in Amarillo, Texas, U.S.A.

True Wisdom

Cecil May, Jr.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done with the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envying and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:13-18).

The man who is puffed up, sure of himself, certain that no one who disagrees with him could ever have anything worthwhile to say about anything, is not wise. Or, if he thinks he is, he is wise with a worldly, sensual, devilish wisdom. Vanity is not characteristic of wisdom from the Father.

Of such a man it was said, "He is often wrong, but never in doubt." Of another, "I have never in my life heard him say, 'I don't know,' or 'I was mistaken.'"

The truly wise man is the one who may always be seen to be peaceable and understanding. Even when he knows whereof he speaks, he does not parade it.

The truly wise man is one who knows his own limitations. Anyone can be wrong; everyone is probably wrong about some things. That does not mean no one is able to correct anyone else, but it does mean the one doing the correcting needs to be willing to listen as well as talk. Even the things we are right about will be more readily accepted by others if we approach them with meekness and gentleness.

The truly wise man is one who shows his wisdom by the life he lives as well as by what he says. ⇧

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

The Book of 2 Timothy for adults

Work the math problems below — then use your answers to complete the verse.

3 × 3 = ____ = A	15 − 8 = ____ = N
7 + 6 = ____ = B	7 + 16 = ____ = O
4 × 6 = ____ = C	2 × 2 = ____ = P
11 − 6 = ____ = D	3 × 5 = ____ = Q
17 + 3 = ____ = E	14 − 3 = ____ = R
5 × 2 = ____ = F	18 ÷ 3 = ____ = S
36 ÷ 2 = ____ = G	7 + 12 = ____ = T
15 + 7 = ____ = H	5 − 4 = ____ = U
8 − 6 = ____ = I	14 + 3 = ____ = V
6 × 2 = ____ = J	3 × 7 = ____ = W
24 ÷ 3 = ____ = K	5 × 5 = ____ = X
4 × 4 = ____ = L	5 − 2 = ____ = Y
18 + 8 = ____ = M	2 × 7 = ____ = Z

[5][23] [3][23][1][11] [13][20][6][19] [19][23]

[4][11][20][6][20][7][19] [3][23][1][11][6][20][16][10]

[19][23] [18][23][5] [9][6] [23][7][20]

[9][4][4][11][23][17][20][5] [13][3] [22][2][26] [9]

[21][23][11][8][20][11] [21][22][23] [22][9][6] [7][23]

[7][20][20][5] [19][23] [13][20]

[9][6][22][9][26][20][5] [11][2][18][22][19][16][3]

[20][25][4][16][9][2][7][2][7][18] [19][22][20]

[21][23][11][5] [23][10] [19][11][1][19][22] -2 Timothy 2:15

A Father's Touch

Connie Lee Krute

Christian fathers of the world, you are such wondrous beings! Not only do you give physical life to your children, you also are responsible for their eternal spiritual health. You, as an earthly father, have that special "touch" that can guide those little souls toward their heavenly Father.

There are so many wonderful examples of fathers in the Bible, but I want to concentrate on one earthly "father"—Joseph, the man who raised our Lord Jesus. There is so little said about this father figure in the scriptures. However, Joseph had many outstanding qualities which touched the life of Jesus, and which stand out as shining examples for the modern day dad.

First, we know that **Joseph was a religious man**, coming from a family who loved God, including such well-known ancestors as Abraham and King David. (See the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 for a more detailed list.)

◆ ***Are you truly a religious man, showing your children that God's way of life is the only true way?***

◆ ***Can your children see Jesus shining through in your everyday life?***

Joseph was also a man of honor. When it was discovered that Mary, his betrothed, *"was found with child of the Holy Spirit...then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly"* (Matthew 1:18b-19). He tried to do "the right thing" and not make a spectacle of the woman he dearly loved.

◆ ***Do you strive to do what is right, and not just what is convenient for you?***

◆ ***Do you put the honor of your family before yourself?***

Soon we discover that ***Joseph is an obedient man***. In Matthew 1:20-25 we find an angel has visited Joseph and instructed him to take Mary as his wife, that the child within her was of the Holy Spirit, and that Joseph should name the child Jesus. The angel went on to say that this would be a fulfillment of the scripture, *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"* which is translated, *"God with us"* (v. 23). Joseph obeyed the instructions completely, as shown in verses 24 and 25.

◆ ***Do you heed the will of God at all times?***

◆ ***Can you follow scriptures, even when others around you may have other suggestions for you to follow?***

Another quality we see is that ***Joseph was a good citizen***. He obeyed the laws of the land, as shown in Luke 2:1-5. In this passage he did as the decree of Caesar Augustus dictated, which was to be registered in the city of his family, which was Bethlehem.

◆ ***Have your children seen you break laws of the land, such as speeding in traffic?***

◆ ***Do you obey the civil rules, even when they may seem unnecessary, or do you set an example for your children?***

In addition to being a follower of the law of the land, ***Joseph followed the laws of God***. In Luke 2:21 we find that the Christ child was circumcised, according to the law. Later Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord (v. 22), and then a sacrifice was offered (v. 24) as God's law indicated.

◆ ***Do you study the Bible with your children, teaching them God's laws?***

◆ ***Do you live your life as a true follower of Jesus, or are you a "Christian" in "name only"?***

After the birth of Jesus in chapter 2 of Matthew, we see that ***Joseph is a protector of his family.*** In the opening verses of the chapter

the wise men from the East had an audience with Herod the King, asking, *"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship him"* (v. 2). Herod is troubled by this visit and begins his plot to destroy this new "king." Again, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream, saying, *"Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him"* (v. 13). Joseph obeyed, once again, thus protecting the infant Jesus from a sure death.

◆ ***Do you teach your children about the world and its bid for their souls?***

◆ ***Do your children feel that you are protecting their spiritual well-being as well as their physical well-being?***

In Luke 2 we read that Joseph and Mary *"went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover"* (v. 41). ***Joseph leads by example*** in teaching Jesus the law, the customs and the traditions of the Jewish faith.

◆ ***Have your children seen you participate in worship services?***

◆ ***Do you encourage your children to grow up to be leaders in the church?***

In the same passage Jesus turns up missing. We soon find that ***Joseph is a concerned parent*** and searches for Jesus for three days (v. 45-46).

◆ ***Are you involved in your children's everyday lives?***

◆ ***If they were missing would you find your children deeply involved with the Lord's church, or would you find them out, lost in the world?***

After this incident the family went to Nazareth and we surmise that ***Joseph is respected by the young teenager, Jesus***. In Luke 2:51-52 we read that, "...[Jesus] *was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."* Joseph's teachings were showing through this holy child who had been entrusted to his care.

◆ ***Do your children respect you, as a Christian father?***

◆ ***Are you living a life that would earn the respect of your teenage children?***

Joseph mightily touched the life of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Will your children be able to talk about you as just a man who raised them, or will they be able to proudly say, "My Father truly touched my life!"✝

Connie Lee Krute lives in Sand Springs, Oklahoma and is a member of Tenth & Rockford Church of Christ in Tulsa. She is also a former staff member of World Evangelism.

What Ever Happened To Good Manners?

Eulene Ramsey

Want to do your children the biggest favor possible? Teach them good manners! Our manners reveal so much about us. Good, or bad, they affect every facet of our lives.

When our Lord gave us the great honor of being called Christians (Christ-like), we were also given the responsibility of being good ambassadors for Christ.

When our government appoints an ambassador to another nation, one of his primary responsibilities is to give the people of that country a good impression of the people in our country. The New Testament is full of admonitions to show Christ in our lives. We are to be that "city set on a hill". Something as simple as poor manners can destroy whatever influence for good we might have.

Bulwer said, "What a rare gift is that of manners! How difficult to define; how much more difficult to impart! Better for a man to possess them than to have wealth, beauty or talent; they will more than supply all." Peter said, *"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one for another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous"* (1 Peter 3:8).

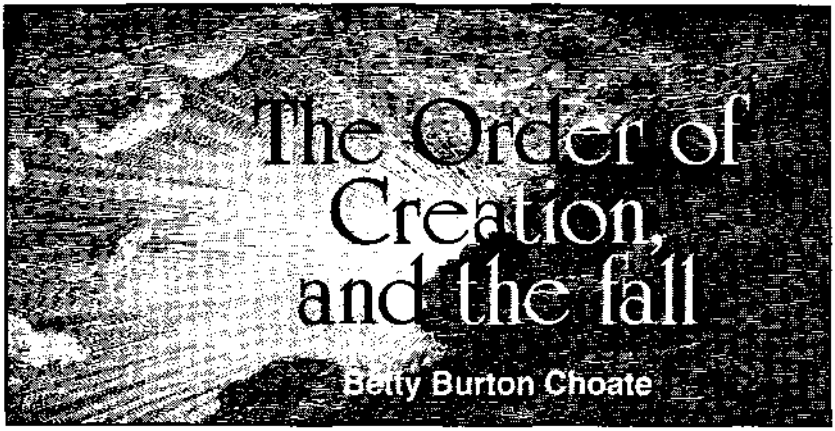
When I see children racing about inside the church building, knocking people off their feet, my disgust is not primarily with the child but with the parents who have grossly overlooked teaching their children how to behave. Perhaps the reason so many children are ill mannered is because they have seen that behavior in their parents at home. Small children are taught by example as much as by words. Every Christian home should be a place where common courtesy is on exhibit every day. If Mom and Dad are not courteous to each other and to the children, how can we expect the children to know how to behave?

Lack of this teaching in the home at an early age produces children who have *no respect for their teachers* (even Bible class teachers), and later in life *no respect for authority of any type.* For children today to say "Yes Mam, No Sir" is so uncommon it is almost startling to hear. "Please" and "Thank You" are no longer in style. Old fashioned? Yes! *A person must have good manners in order to be truly Christian.* Most of our moral values and standards are old fashioned, because they were taught even by Christ and the apostles in the first century!

Salesmen sometimes do not realize that lack of good manners costs them many sales. Preachers sometimes are not invited to serve as ministers at a local congregation because they have never mastered common courtesy, or their children are so ill mannered that the congregation does not want to be burdened with them. Our influence on a person interested in hearing the gospel may be wrecked by discourteous acts on our part.

So, parents, wake up! Begin at a very early age to teach the principles of good manners to your children. And remember, what they see in you will teach more than anything you can say. ⇧

Eulene Ramsey works with the World Evangelism team in Winona, MS, USA



As Christians we live under the law of Christ, recorded in the New Testament. This new covenant which God has made with His children replaces the laws which were bound on the people under the Old Testament. Yet, historically, we are affected by things that happened during those early years of man's existence.

In the records in First Corinthians and First Timothy, the Holy Spirit instructed the Apostle Paul to write certain commands concerning the work and behavior of Christian women.

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says" (1 Corinthians 14:34).

"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12).

These commands resulted from two historical facts:

❀ Adam was formed first, then Eve (1 Timothy 2:13).

❀ Eve, being deceived, led in the transgression and this resulted in the fall of humanity (v. 14).

In 1 Corinthians 11:8,9,11,12, we read, *"For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man....Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman; but all things are from God."*

These thoughts tell us that the order of creation was not only of importance to God at the beginning, but it continues to be a prime factor in His system of order in the home: because the man was made *first*, he is counted as the *head of woman*.

No organization of humans can function without orderliness. There must be authority, and those in authority must be counted responsible for the actions of those under their leadership. Because the man was created first, he was given the responsibility of leadership. "Leadership" meant that he was to go in front of the woman and lead her in the right way. "Responsibility" meant that *he had to answer to God for his leadership,* whether he led in the right way or in the wrong way.

On the other hand, man's responsibility and leadership did not mean that the woman was of no importance. Even though she was literally "made for man", without her role as wife and mother in the home, and in the birth and rearing of children, there would be no continuation of humanity. In these ways both man and woman are interdependent and of vital importance in God's plan.

Humans were perfect, without sin, as they came from the creating hand of God. However, they were given the power of choice. God made certain rules which they were to obey. Disobedience to those rules, exercising their freedom to choose, meant that they would fall from that state of perfection and would become transgressors — sinners. God warned, even at the beginning of time, that sin would bring death, both physical and spiritual death. *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'"* (Genesis 2:16,17).

However, when Satan came into the garden, in the form of a serpent, he asked Eve, *"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of every tree of the garden'?"*

Eve answered, *"We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

Then the serpent said, *"You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Listening to Satan's words, Eve was convinced that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and that it would make her wise like God. So *"...she took*

of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." (Genesis 3:3-6)

As stated in 1 Timothy 2:14, Eve was deceived by the words of Satan. She did as he encouraged, and she brought sin into the world.

A woman is especially designed by God to do the particular work He has planned for her: to be a sharer of life with her husband and to care for their home and their children. (1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4,5). This work requires that she be trusting, tender, and concerned about the welfare of her family. Perhaps these characteristics in the nature of Eve led her to listen to Satan, weighing what she perceived to be a good choice for her family above the necessity of obeying the command of God. Her logic was wrong and her disobedience brought disaster on the whole of humanity.

In this sad story we see the first case of a woman *taking the leadership role from her husband,* and of her husband *allowing it to be done.* There is no indication that Eve turned to Adam to ask his thinking and advice about eating the fruit. There is also no indication that Adam tried to stop Eve, though he knew very well what God had said, and though the record says that he was *with* Eve. How sad it is that *this overturning of the leadership as God had planned it for the family* resulted in the great transgression and the fall of mankind. ✞

Betty Burton Choate is a Christian writer and speaker, the wife of J.C. Choate, editor of *The Voice of Truth International* and missionary to India.

Opportunities, Opportunities

Gordon Hogan

Not since the first century have God's people been faced with such wonderful opportunities for preaching the message of Jesus to all nations. Men and women are better educated, more world conscious and more aware than ever before.

So-called underdeveloped nations, and even developed countries, are clearly convinced that "Christianity," divided as it has been for centuries, has failed to provide moral anchor. A tremendous spiritual vacuum exists, and many people are groping frantically to fill the gap. This vacuum has no reason to exist. The Word of God that supplies man unto every good work provides direction and purpose.

The heathen, divided Christendom, and all men are crying, consciously or unconsciously, for solace of soul.

The disciples of Jesus, His church, can and must step into the breach and fulfill the divinely appointed obligation given to us by our Lord.

There are great continents of this world, where, outside of America, Jesus is little known. The oceans are punctuated with islands, large and small, inhabited by God's creation. The commission of Jesus embraces all; not a single soul is to be overlooked.

However, let's be honest with ourselves. When we consider the church's activity in recent years, we realize that most of it has been confined to the well-known, easily-accessible places of the world, with but few exceptions. It would seem that turmoil in some areas of our globe may frighten and discourage us in the making of our plans. The wars in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa will not frighten those who have already served in these troubled spots, for they, of all people, know that the root cause of the problems is sin and that the only remedy is Jesus. Even if forced out temporarily, these brethren will return. But my concern is for those who may be planning to go and those who may be planning to send. They must not allow their faith to falter. We must go to every creature, to the well-known places, and those not-so-well-known places.

Get a map of the world, pick a spot, do something. Do something; do it now! ✝

Gordon Hogan is a former missionary to Singapore and now teaches at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Is The Task Too Great?

Charles E. Cobb

The call goes forth in congregation after congregation to evangelize the world. Jesus said to His apostles, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). The reply of numerous Christians is that the task is too great, the world is too big, and we are too few.

Let us realize, first of all, that one congregation is not expected by the Lord to do it all. This does not excuse any group of brethren from doing their part. There are many weak congregations seeking to survive and evangelize their communities and worship God. A very small amount of support from some stronger group would be a tremendous help.

There are faithful preachers of the Gospel who are willing and ready to go into the mission areas of the world to preach Christ, but they lack the funds to get to the field and remain long enough to do the job. Several congregations supporting such men would make a world of difference.

To sit back and do nothing is an indication of our lack of faith. To feel that since we can't do it all, we shall do nothing is a mistake of great magnitude. Surely God would have us all to do what we can.

The world is big. The population is growing. The need for the saving Gospel is staggering. People in sin hunger for the truth, if aware of their sin and their need of forgiveness. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to hear and obey the Gospel must feel an obligation to share our knowledge of the faith with others.

The Hebrews thought the task was too overwhelming and fearsome to go in and take the promised land. Even though God had shown them that He would be with them, they thought the task was too great.

We serve the same eternal, everlasting God. Is the task too great for God? Can we believe the task is too great for God's people?

Twelve men were given the responsibility, with the help of the Lord, to take the Gospel to the world. They went to work, and they got it done. The task was monumental, but not too great, because God was with them.

Most members of the body of Christ can find suitable literature and give it to others — or mail it to others. Radio is still a powerful voice in many communities. Television has its opportunities and advantages. An open Bible with a neighbor has had a tremendous influence and effect in many lives. We should use every available means and opportunity to get the Gospel — *"the power of God unto salvation,"* — out to every person who is willing to hear it.

Is the task too great? Not if we serve the great and powerful God who has promised, *"I will never fail thee nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5), and *"My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11). We must keep trying. ✝

Charles E. Cobb is editor of *Tennessee Valley Christian*, and he lives in Scottsboro, Alabama, U.S.A.

Our Bundle

"I compare the troubles which we have to undergo in a year to a great bundle of sticks, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole bundle at once. He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we carry today, and then another, which we are to carry tomorrow, and so on.

This we might easily manage, but we choose to increase our troubles by carrying yesterday's stick over again today, and adding tomorrow's burden to our load, before we are required to bear it."

— John Newton

Fault-finding and Righteous Judgment Are Poles Apart

Tim Nichols

Faultfinding is easy work. Those who set out to find fault with their fellowman will never be disappointed. These can easily establish their own arbitrary standards and then judge the actions of others according to them. Such rules can be established either before or after the other person acts. They are, by their nature, portable and easily exchanged for other arbitrary decrees. They can be completely inconsistent with each other and yet remain in the same carrying case. The arbitrary judge carries with him ammunition for any side of any battle. After he decides to either attack or defend, he can select the rules that work in his favor and apply them to his advantage. He can justify any evil and vilify any good by the skillful application of his homemade rules. At his own choosing he can paint matters that are morally neutral with the black brush of contempt or with the pure white brush of virtue. His arbitrary judgments, though, are condemned by God.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the

plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight" (Isaiah 5:20,21).

Both Jesus and John the Baptist were plagued with arbitrary judges who used their changeable rules to find fault with *opposite* behaviors! *"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; We mourned to you, and you did not lament.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children"* (Matthew 11:16-19).

Learn to ignore such critics unless you are able to find something valuable in what they have to suggest. If such men are numbered among your "friends," you will want to keep an eye on the relationships and avoid having them take your "side" in any dispute. Their syllogisms are slippery, their logic is leaky, and their reasons are unreliable. Their "assistance" will sabotage the cause of truth every time, and your association with them will rob you of your influence for good.

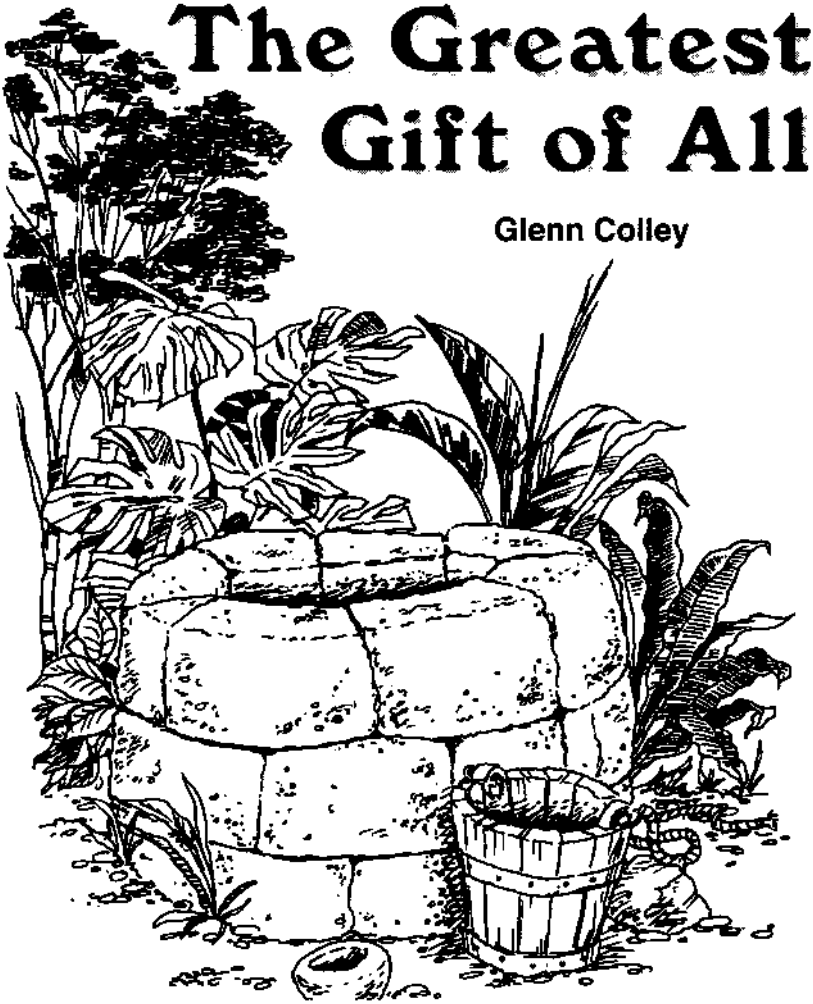
God's standards are revealed, fixed, and unchanging. He has defined right and wrong. He has revealed what is good and evil, and He has placed His standards in an inspired volume for all to read. His children are those who have discarded their *own* notions about what they and others ought to believe and do — and they have replaced them with God's. When they apply what **God** has revealed to men's lives (first to their own, and then to others) they *"judge with righteous judgment"* (John 7:24). They apply God's wisdom and not their own.

Learn to listen to all that God's Word has to say concerning your life and conduct. Those who can and will show you your errors according to God's standards are your friends and ought to be treasured as such. Those who know God's standards and who will not show you your errors according to God's Word cannot reasonably be considered your friends or God's servants. ✝

Tim Nichols preaches for the Lord's church in Keyser, West Virginia, U.S.A.

The Greatest Gift of All

Glenn Colley



He's called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Messiah, the Bright and Morning Star, the Mighty Counselor, the Prince of Peace, and the Savior of the world. There are so many names and titles for the Anointed One, Jesus Christ. Isn't it profoundly amazing that He is also called "the Gift"?

This gift is needed. John 3:16, the "golden text of the Bible," offers

to us a Creator full of love for the inhabitants of His world. Love has never been expressed this way before, nor will it be again. The God whose justice must be appeased knew we didn't have the ability to pay the needed price. He paid the price for us. He gave His sinless Son. Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

The gift is practical. It fits perfectly. *"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life"* (Romans 5:18). Through Jesus our daily needs are met (Matthew 6:33). Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

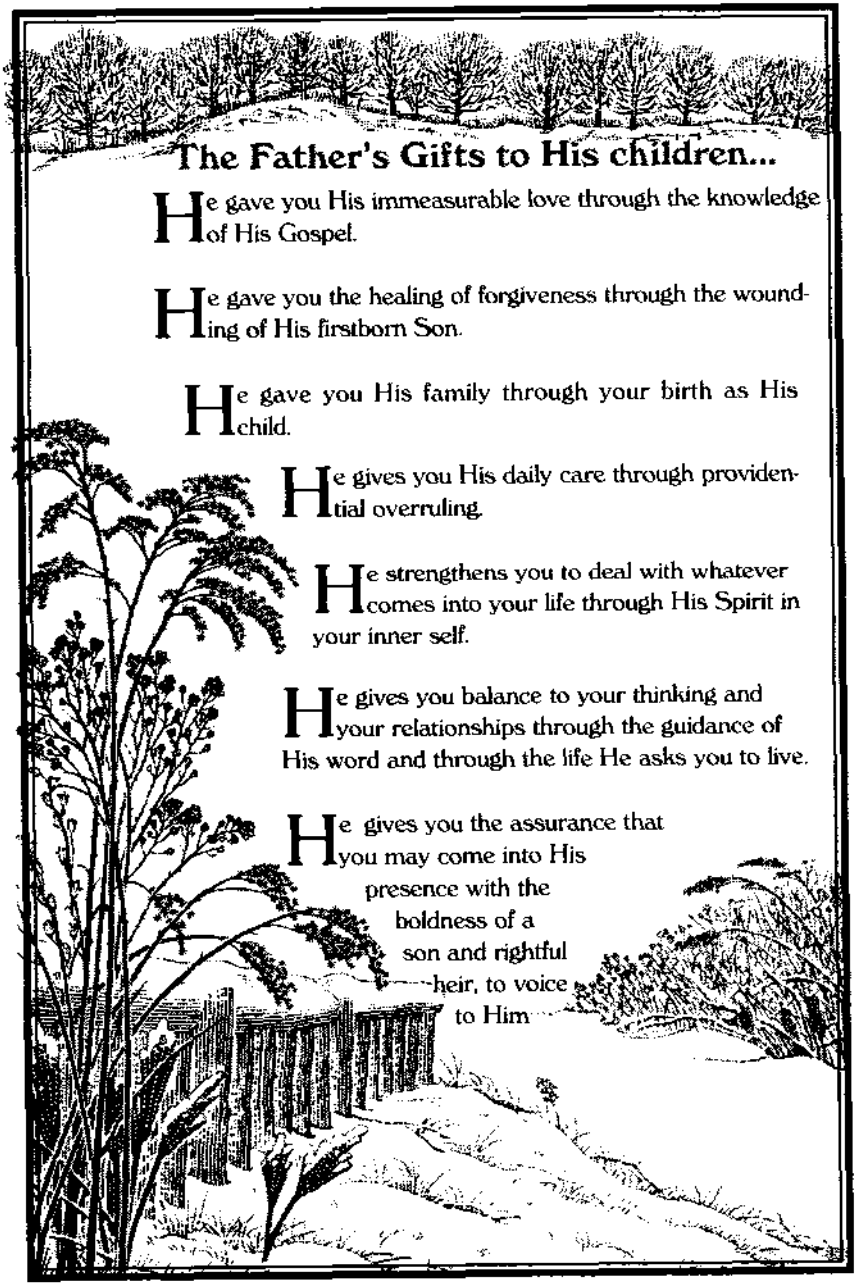
This gift will last. It must feel odd to talk with someone while reading that person's mind. Jesus, knowing the heart and life of the woman at the well, said, *"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water"* (John 4:10). Because of sin and the burden borne with it, our spiritual thirst would forever go unquenched without this Gift. In Christ we drink from the fount of grace that will never run dry. *"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14). Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

It is my prayer that from our appreciation of the greatest Gift will spring a refreshed urgency to share this precious gift with others (Matthew 28:18-20). Sadly, many Christians have subconsciously given up on personal evangelism. They never speak of their King except to other Christians. Don't let that happen to you! Let's work together to be "soul conscious" — ever conscious of the need in each individual life for the greatest Gift of all — Jesus the Christ. ✝

Glenn Colley is the editor of *The Words of Truth*, and he preaches for the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.

A Little Jam on the Bread

The teacher asked the pupils to tell the meaning of loving-kindness. A little boy jumped up and said, "Well, if I was hungry and someone gave me a piece of bread, that would be kindness. But if they put a little jam on it, that would be loving-kindness."



The Father's Gifts to His children...

He gave you His immeasurable love through the knowledge of His Gospel.

He gave you the healing of forgiveness through the wounding of His firstborn Son.

He gave you His family through your birth as His child.

He gives you His daily care through providential overruling.

He strengthens you to deal with whatever comes into your life through His Spirit in your inner self.

He gives you balance to your thinking and your relationships through the guidance of His word and through the life He asks you to live.

He gives you the assurance that you may come into His presence with the boldness of a son and rightful heir, to voice to Him

your needs and concerns, with thanksgiving, knowing that as the Father of a much-loved son He will hear your words.

He gives His peace which passes understanding, as you train yourself to think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute.

He is giving you the gift of His own divine nature as you are ceasing to be conformed to this world, and are being transformed into His image by the renewing of your mind.

He is giving you a transcendent view of life and death, and of hope eternal, through the word-picture of the new heaven and the new earth which he will one day share with His children.

All these gifts God is giving you, real treasures for your happiness. He has provided everything needed to take you, from whatever your background, with whatever hurts you have suffered, and to make you whole and well through His gifts. If you use them as He intended, you will lack nothing for yourself and you will have treasures to give to those around you.

—Betty Burton Choate

The Greatest Treasure

O. P. Baird

Many people want to be rich in worldly wealth. Most of their time, thoughts, and energy are given to gaining material wealth. They think they will find meaning and fulfillment in life if they can gain enough of that kind of wealth. But such riches are deceitful and do not bring the satisfaction and happiness that is expected. In the parable of the sower Jesus spoke of *"the deceitfulness of riches"* as something that chokes out the Word of God from the heart (Matthew 13:22). Jesus also said, *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"* (Luke 12:15).

Paul warned against loving money and wanting to be rich. In a letter to Timothy he said, *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil . . ."* (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

There is another kind of wealth that is far greater than material wealth. It is the wealth that God gives. It is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven. Paul wrote, *"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"*

(Ephesians 3:8). The riches of Christ were preached. Therefore those who received the preaching by faith and obedience received the riches which are so great the human mind cannot search them out and fully understand how great they are.

Jesus used parables to describe the nature of the kingdom of heaven. He said, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field"* (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven with all its blessings is the greatest treasure. If a person could possess all the wealth of the world it would be nothing compared to the value of the kingdom of heaven.

This great treasure is the gift of God by His grace. Jesus came to give us that treasure. Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). Can we imagine how rich Jesus was when He was in heaven and *"was with God and was God"* (John 1:1)? He gave up the riches of heaven temporarily to come and die as the atoning sacrifice for our sins so He could take us to be with Him and share the riches of heaven with Him. He made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16,17). See Philippians 2:5-11.

Not only will God's redeemed children enjoy the riches of heaven in eternity, but by His grace He enriches us now. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace"* (Ephesians 1:7). God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), and His mercy extended to us enriches us. *"Now hope does not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"* (Romans 5:5). Any one who has God's love in his heart has the greatest treasure, the treasure that enriches him now and forever.

In Christ we have God's forgiveness of our sins and all the eternal spiritual riches. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3). This gives greater joy and satisfaction than the world could ever give. It gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15). ✝

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

THE BATTLE THAT HAS CHANGED THE WORLD

Patrick Boynes

It has been thousands of years since the war between God and Satan started — the war between the Truth and the lie. This war may come to its end any time, but questions concerning its origin and who the winner is arise. I think the Bible is able to give answers to these questions. Let us consider the origin of the conflict between God and Satan.

Before the earth was created, God created heaven and angels (Genesis 1:1; Job 38:3-7). The angels included seraphs, cherubs, and archangels, the heavenly host of God. It is thought that among this huge host one angel was endowed with great strength and power. He began to challenge God, and he won many of the angels over to his side (Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 25:41). He led them out to battle God. Some of these angels have been reserved in outer darkness (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), where they are awaiting the judgment.

But the great fallen angel, Satan himself, was cast out of heaven and goes about the earth as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The net of delusion and sin which he has so skillfully thrown over mankind still entangles people so that they die in their sins (1 John 3:8; Romans 6:23).

Many times God sent prophets and angels to the earth, but people continued to listen to the Evil One. Two thousand years ago God Himself came to the earth in the person of the man Jesus Christ, to give salvation and deliverance from Satan's trap. Christ devoted His entire earthly life to man and his salvation. He taught people, healed them, and finally He died for them.

On Calvary the second battle between God and Satan took place. This battle changed everything. The stake was indescribably great — man's eternal life with God in heaven. The victory was gained at a high price — the life of Jesus Christ! In order that we might overcome Satan through Him, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. "It is accomplished," He said before He died. He finished the work! He paid the price! He is victorious!

Satan has lost the battle. He has lost everything. Today, anyone who accepts Christ's sacrifice on the cross gains eternal life and becomes, himself, a son of God (John 3:14-18; 1:12). This battle has changed the world. It will change your life if you let the Winner come in and live with you (Revelation 3:20,21). *"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved..."* (John 10:9). ⇧

Patrick Boynes is the preacher for the Eye Church of Christ in Petersborough, England.

The optimist is one who believes in God, in the right, in his fellowman, and in himself. He believes that God and right will ultimately win. He lives to serve his fellowmen, and makes the most of adverse circumstances.

He believes that this is a world of law and that the same righteous forces that won in the past will win today. He fills his soul with the good, and the beautiful and the cheerful things of life.

Out of these he produces the spirit of optimism — the spirit that makes "the teakettle sing when it is up to its neck in hot water!"

— J. Whitcomb Broughter

One Is Saved by Faith at Baptism

Jerry Jenkins

According to Paul's statement to the Ephesians, there is only **one baptism**. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:4-7).

This one baptism is **water** baptism, based on the following facts:

- Holy Spirit baptism was never **commanded;** water baptism was. *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"* (Acts 10:47). *"And he **commanded** them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days"* (Acts 10:48).
- The baptism of the Great Commission is that which can be **administered by man.** *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19). Holy Spirit baptism could be administered **only** by Christ. *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"* (Matthew 3:11). Therefore, the **one baptism** authorized for those lost in sin was **baptism in water.**

Some in the church at Rome accepted the philosophy that since one is

saved by God's grace, the more sin in which they indulged, the more that grace would abound, so why not keep on sinning so that grace might abound even more?

Paul's response — *"God forbid,"* or *"may it never be so."* He shows that in physical death a person no longer lives the life which he formerly lived. In other words, the sinner dies to the life of sin. Paul affirms this, not only in the lives of others, but in his own as well. *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

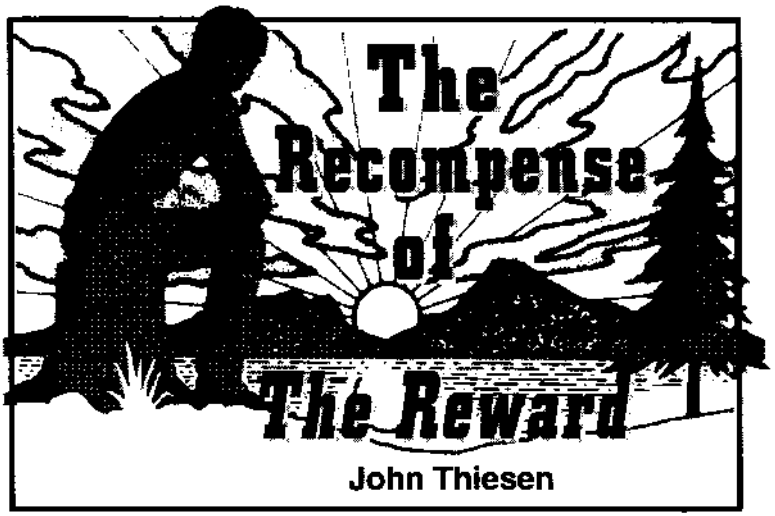
Since these brethren had **died** to the desire to sin, it was natural that they should be **buried.** No other act would so fittingly represent the complete *ending of a life of sin.* Bible baptism is by *immersion.* Thayer, the great lexicographer, defines **baptism**: "immersion, submersion." Mosheim, the historian, asserts, "In this century (the first), baptism was administered in convenient places, without the public assemblies; and by immersing the candidate wholly in water."

To the lexicographic evidence and the historical evidence could be added the evidence from the circumstances, i.e., John baptized people in the river (Mark 1:9) and chose a place near Aenon, because there was *"much water"* there (John 3:23). Philip and the nobleman both *went into the water and both came from the water* (Acts 8:36-39). If we knew nothing of the Greek language, the historians, the commentators, nor the critics, Paul's statement that we are *buried in baptism* should suffice.

Next Paul states that we are raised from the dead by the power of God to *"walk in newness of life."* It is of note that this new life begins *after* baptism, and not *before* it. It was this new life that brought thanksgiving to Paul's heart. *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"* (Romans 6:17-18).

These verses clearly show *when* one is saved: when he/she has in sincerity obeyed that form of doctrine. The doctrine was the death, burial, and resurrection. The form (tupo), signifies a mold into which melted metals were poured to receive the form of the mold (MacKnight). The gospel doctrine is a mold, into which the Romans were put by their baptism in order to make their fashions anew. It is then that one is made free from sin and begins his/her new Christian life. ⇧

Jerry Jenkins preaches the Gospel in Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A.



In Hebrews 11:6 we read these words: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

From this we learn that faith in God includes believing in God's rewards for service. Reward is a powerful motivator. We go to our jobs because of the reward of pay. Business men start new businesses in hope of profits. Athletes "run for the gold" at the Olympics. Aspiring singers and actors sometimes toil in poverty for years, hoping to make the "big time" and become a star. Boy and Girl Scouts work eagerly for patches. Prospectors dig tirelessly in the earth for gold and minerals.

Likewise, God holds out rewards for serving Him. Of course, there are many benefits in just knowing God, without the extra incentive of future reward. Nevertheless, our loving God offers highly alluring awards for our faithful service. These help us to endure hardships, avoid distractions, and to stick with the Lord until the end. Otherwise, we might be tempted to drop out of the race before reaching our goal.

God Has Always Offered Rewards

Bible history confirms that, since ancient times, God has always extended promises of reward to those who follow Him. Noah was promised escape from the flood for his family, and *"moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house . . ."* (Hebrews 11:7). Abraham looked for the

reward of receiving the land of Canaan for himself and his family. As a result, *"he went out, not knowing whither he went,"* in order to obtain it (Hebrews 11:8). He had also been given an even greater promise of a future Heavenly city. *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (verse 10). Moses gave up the riches of Pharaoh's palace for greater riches promised by God, motivating him to face the wrath of the Egyptian king in order to become the leader of God's people in the exodus to the promised land. In the wilderness, he endured the Israelites' stubborn unbelief and bad manners for 40 years. He did it all because *"he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"* (Hebrews 11:26).

Rewards God Has Promised Today

To those who give themselves to follow Christ today, God once again offers great inducements for faithfulness. Among these are forgiveness of sins, peace of mind, the presence of the Spirit of God in us, life after death, the resurrection from the dead and the accompanying glorious body, escape from eternal punishment, a home in Heaven, and eternal life. What more could we ask for? These promises are to those who *"diligently seek Him"* and are worth any amount of sacrifice in order to attain. Friends, let us reach out for the prize God has graciously set before us! ⇧

John Thiesen is a former missionary to Malawi. He now works with Christ's church in Buffalo, Missouri, U.S.A.

Spiritual Arithmetic

Just **add** up all your blessings
And the things that make you glad.
Subtract from this your troubles
And the things that make you sad.
Then **divide** your answer
Into many helping parts
That bring relief and courage
To aching, weary hearts.

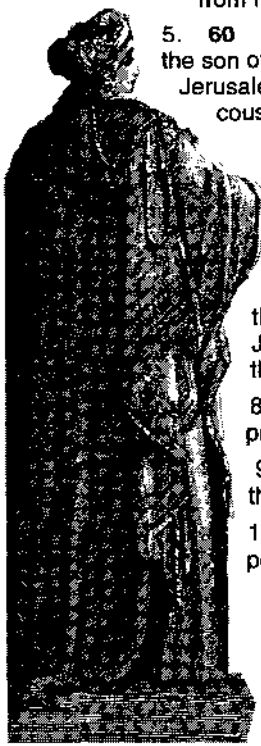
Your portion will be greater then,
Far greater than you'd guess,
Although by your arithmetic
It really should be less;
For while you're busy **adding** up,
Subtracting and **dividing,**
God takes the answer that you get
And does the **multiplying.**

— Clara M. Bode

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 an example of one who was strong in the face of adversity.

1. **100** I was a beautiful young Jewish lady, the daughter of Abihail (Chapter 2, verse 2, 15).
2. **90** The Hebrew word for my name is Hadassah, which means "Myrtle". The Persian form of my name comes from their word for "Star".
3. **80** During my lifetime, the Jews were in captivity.
4. **70** Ahasuerus was king, reigning from Shushan over 127 provinces, from India to Ethiopia. (1:1).



5. **60** My cousin was the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite who had been taken captive from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. When my parents died, my cousin reared me as his own daughter (2:5-7).
6. **50** The son of Hammedatha the Agagite developed a jealousy and hatred for my cousin and devised an evil plan for destroying him along with all of my people (3:1,5,6).
7. **40** The letter was written, sealed with the king's signet ring, and circulated throughout the land, "to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews...on the thirteenth day...of Adar, and to plunder their possessions (3:9,10,13).
8. **30** I asked my cousin to call all the Jews to pray and fast for me three days (4:16).
9. **20** The son of Hammedatha was hanged on the gallows he had built for my cousin (7:9).
10. **10** By God's help, through my courage, my people were saved (8:3-8).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

"If Christ Has Not Been Raised"

Harvey Porter

"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:12-14).

Christians at Corinth had been confused about the resurrection of the dead. In the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to them Paul masterfully gave arguments for Christ's resurrection and the bodily resurrection of all mankind. The pagan religions had no definite doctrines concerning life after death. Christianity was alone in giving hope and certainty for life after death; and it still is.

Paul wrote, *"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith"* (1 Corinthians 15:12-14).

Paul began this treatise by saying that it was of *"first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"* (verses 3 and 4). The essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is His death, burial, and resurrection. This is the key to the message of the whole Bible. Paul emphasized that His death was *"according to the Scriptures"* and that He was raised *"on the third day according to the Scriptures."* These facts were the fulfillment of God's age-old plan for salvation of the whole human family. This was a very deliberate act on the part of Divinity to save all fallen sinners. It was

not an uncontrolled set of human circumstances.

It appears that the Corinthians were saying that Jesus was raised from the dead, but no one else would be. Paul countered by saying that if there is no resurrection for all, then even Jesus could not have been raised. He later states in this chapter that Christ is the *"first-fruits"* of those who are raised from the dead, that after Christ's resurrection there are more to come.

Paul argued next that if Christ was not raised, then the message the church preached was vain or useless. This means that the early church preached the resurrection of Christ. This formed the heart of the message of Good News, which we call Gospel. This is the best news a world of constantly dying people could possibly have. Young and old are dying every hour of every day, all over this planet. The one thing man needs to hear and wants to hear is that we can live again. And the best part is that we can live in the presence of the forgiving, loving Father and the Savior who died for us to make all this possible. It is hard for me to understand why the world has so often rejected this truth. It is even harder to understand why Christians who supposedly have embraced Christianity live as though this life is all there is. Some seldom worship, study, pray, or give to the Lord. Many never talk of eternity, and yet we all know that this is *"of first importance."*

Paul followed by saying that if their preaching of the resurrection of Christ was false, then their faith was useless also. Faith is based upon the message preached. In Paul's Roman epistle he wrote, *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."* Faith is not all that mysterious. God tells us what we must believe, and we either accept it or reject it. If we accept, then we *"live by faith."* Our whole life is guided, comforted, and upheld by our faith. And at the very heart of this faith is the strong belief that we shall live again after these few days, and that we shall live either in heaven or in hell. Jesus also revealed this fact, along with the doctrine of resurrection. It is a package revelation. You have to take justice along with the love of God, punishment along with reward.

Paul closed this section of this great chapter by saying, *"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."* We are not to be pitied, dear believer. It is those who do not believe who have no hope. We do, because **He lives!** ✝

Harvey Porter has preached for many years in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Lamentations

Todd O'Donnell

"How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow is she, who was great among the nations! The princess among the provinces has become a slave!...Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude; She dwells among the nations, she finds no rest; all her persecutors overtake her in dire straits. Jerusalem has sinned gravely, therefore she has become vile. All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness; yes, she sighs and turns away." (Lamentations 1:1,3,8).

It is commonly believed that Lamentations was written by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah had preached his heart out to the people of Judah (the Southern kingdom), calling for them to change their ways. He knew that God would not tolerate their wickedness much longer. But the people would not repent and turn back to God, so they were punished by the world power at that time, Babylon.

Lamentations was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. The author wrote as if he were an eye witness of the destruction that came upon the city. Although Jeremiah acknowledged that the punishment was fair and well deserved, it also pierced his heart to see the sad state of things. He longed for the time when God would restore the fortunes of the nation and things would get back to the way they used to be.

This short book teaches us about the effects of sin upon a people. We are told in the Scriptures that righteousness exalts a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people. Not only is it bad that people separate themselves from God when they sin, but also with sin come many bad attitudes and actions that tear down a family, a community, a city, and a country. The effects of sin (or the consequences of it) often don't just stop at the person who commits the sin. There is a domino

effect that brings heartache, pain, and sorrow to more than just the individual who commits the transgression.

It may sound funny, but Lamentations shows us that sin is no laughing matter. We should cry over sin; it should hurt us; we should be sorrowful to the point of repentance. Too often sin is made out to be a big joke. The modern comedian will take a sinful situation and make it out to be nothing more than a bit of fun, something amusing, just a big joke. People may laugh now, they may scoff at sin, but there is a time coming when many will weep, cry, lament, and rue the day that they ever laughed and made a joke out of sin.

To one degree or another, we have all been bitten by sin and we know that it hurts. Most boys are told not to cry when they get hurt, but to "be a man." Those boys grow up to be men who can't cry because crying is supposedly a sign of weakness. Jesus was the greatest "man" of all, and He wept on a number of occasions. We should learn from Jesus and Jeremiah to cry over our sins. It is not a sign of weakness to admit you were wrong; it is an action of strength that earns respect and love from those who know you. Lamentations eventually had a happy ending when God returned the remnant to Jerusalem and the city was rebuilt. ✝

Todd O'Donnell works with the Lord's church in Palmerston North, New Zealand.

"Greater Works Than These Shall He Do. . ."

Sunny David

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

To understand any passage of the Bible, one must keep in mind four things especially: who was speaking, that is; who made that particular statement; to whom was it spoken; when or under what age (before the law of Moses was given, after the law of Moses was given, or under the New Testament age) was it spoken; and in what context was it said? Too many subjects of the Bible have been misunderstood because people have failed to apply these four basic ingredients in learning from the Bible.

For instance, those who claim today that they can heal people miraculously in the name of Jesus Christ quote from John 14:12 to justify their claim, where Christ was speaking to His apostles before His death on the cross and His ascension to the Father in heaven. He told them: *"Most assuredly, I say*

to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

Here Christ was speaking to His disciples before His death and ascension, and before the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit to receive power (Acts 1:4-8). What was the context of Christ's statement? He had just mentioned to them that He would be going back. They wanted to know where He was intending to go. Christ told them about the Father in heaven.

Philip, one of them, said to Him, *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father"* (John 14:8-10,12).

It is evident from the context of the discussion that Christ wanted His apostles, who were going to be His witnesses, to believe that He was God. Therefore, He told them, *"He who believes in Me the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father."*

What kind of works had Christ done? He had fed multitudes of people with a little food in His hand; He had raised the dead; He had healed instantly all people who had come to Him with all kinds of infirmities and diseases. The apostles, Christ said, would do the same if they would believe in Him. Then the Lord told them, *"And these signs will follow those who believe; In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"* (Mark 16:17,18). By seeing the resurrected Lord Himself speaking to them and seeing Him ascending into heaven, their faith in Him was strengthened, and they returned to Jerusalem, as the Lord had commanded them, to wait for the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-10).

In Acts 2 we read about the apostles being baptized with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and thus they received the power, as the Lord had promised to them. *"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs"* (Mark 16:20). The book of Acts is full of the accounts of the mighty works of the

apostles. At one place we read, *"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people . . . so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed"* (Acts 5:12-16).

Thus, after fully believing in Christ, the apostles did signs and miracles as Christ had done before them. But Christ had told them that they would do **greater works** than His. What does this mean? The greater works are the *spiritual* works. The mission of Christ was spiritual, not physical. Thus, three thousand souls were converted on the very first day when the apostles declared the Gospel of Christ. These people believed in Him, repented of their sins, confessed Him as the Son of God, and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, and the Lord added them to the number of His saved ones, His church (Acts 2), a feat far surpassing anything that was possible before Jesus returned to the Father.

Sunny David lives in New Delhi, India, and is a radio evangelist for much of India.

Live Life Heroically

In the midst of bewildering misfortunes, it is well to remember that every mountain must have its valley, every oasis its desert, every rainbow its storm, and every day its night.

But never has an oak tree grown without weathering the storm. Life's lessons are never learned without heroic self-discipline. This is the acid test of character. Nothing is gained by brooding. Poise and happiness are lost if we worry about life rather than living it heroically.

— Anonymous

Our Most Precious Possession

Jack Harriman

"To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1).

The above title is the subject of 2 Peter 1, and Peter says three thing about it.

First, he identifies it as our faith in the faith (2 Peter 1:1-4). The faith has reference to the whole scheme of redemption. Because of God's love for the world, He gave His Son to save it. This plan was first revealed to the apostles, they received it and then preached it to others. The most precious possession that any one of us has is our faith in the faith. What the world would give to know what we know and believe what we believe!

Second, we may keep or lose our most precious possession (verses 5-11). The faith has been delivered, confirmed by miracles, and will remain on the earth until the Lord's return, and it can neither be added to nor taken away from. But our faith in the faith not only *may* be added to, but it *must* be added to. Add to our faith in the faith courage, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. If we do not add these to our faith in the faith, we will lose it. But if we add these to our faith in the faith, we will never lose it.

Third, our most precious possession rests on the sure foundation of the eyewitness testimony of the apostles (verses 16-18) and the fulfillment of prophecy (verses 19-21). If anyone knew about the miracles, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord, it was Peter. If anyone knew about the radical change in the lives of the apostles which would lead to their death for His cause, it was Peter. If anyone knew about the fulfillment of the many prophecies in the life of Jesus, it was Peter.

Our most precious possession is our faith in the faith. ✝

Jack Harriman preaches for the Center Street Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U.S.A.

The Prodigal Son
(In the Key of F)

Feeling footloose and frisky, a featherbrained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the farthings and flew to foreign fields and frittered his fortune, feasting fabulously with faithless friends.

Fleeced by his fellows in flooy, and facing famine, he found himself a feedflinger in a filthy farmyard. Fairly famishing, he fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from fodder fragments.

"Fooey! My father's flunkies fare far finer," the frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled, frankly facing facts. Frustrated by failure and filled with forboding, he fled forthwith to his family. Falling at his father's feet, fearfully and with foreboding he floundered, "Father, I've flunked and fruitlessly forfeited family favor!"

The farsighted father, forestalling further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to fetch a fatling from the flock and fix a feast.

The fugitive's fault-finding brother frowned on fickle forgiveness of former folderol. But the faithful father figured, "Filial fidelity is fine, but the fugitive is found! What forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled. Let the fanfares flare."

And the father's forgiveness formed the foundation for the former fugitive's future fortitude.

Here are a few thoughtful statements from former baseball manager Casey Stengel:

"All right, everybody line up alphabetically according to your height."

"I made up my mind, but I made it up both ways."

Here are a few from his student, Yogi Berra:

"You can observe a lot by watching."

"A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."

"Baseball is 90 percent mental. The other half is physical."

A man waking out of a deep sleep answered the phone: "You have the wrong idiot, you number."

"Where's my pencil?" an executive shouted in anger. "Behind your ear, sir," his secretary replied. Again the executive roared, "You know how busy I am . . . which ear?"

A farmer increased egg production by putting up this sign in his hen house: "An egg a day keeps Colonel Sanders away."

A pedestrian is a man who has taught his son how to drive the car.

If lawyers are debarred and clergymen are defrocked, wouldn't it follow that electricians could be delighted; musicians denoted; cowboys deranged; models deposed; tree surgeons debarked; and dry cleaners depressed?

A woman driver had just backed into a tree, and she turned to her friend and said, "I'm getting so I just despise reverse!"

The preacher had just closed his final sermon in a gospel meeting, and one teary-eyed, appreciative lady came by, clasped his hand, and said, "I want you to know I have really enjoyed every sermon; they were like water to a drowning man."

You may have missed the news report that told of a five year old Texas boy who was accidentally left behind at a Nashville, Tennessee, service station by his family. He had gotten out of the family van to use the rest room. Meanwhile, his family drove west on I-40 toward home. It was two hours later in Jackson, Tennessee, when they realized that Tyler was missing. When the family was finally reunited, the boy hugged his mother and told her, "I'm never going to the bathroom again!"

A Childish King

Betty Tucker

We are introduced to Ahab in 1 Kings 16:28. He was the seventh king of Israel's Northern King-dom. He was a compelling force, having inherited his political position from his father.

This was a man who loved wealth and enjoyed parading it in various forms of extravagance. He even adorned the palace with ivory.

Ahab practiced paganism and served Baal. He "... *did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him*" (1 Kings 16:30). He married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians.

A Neighbor's Vineyard

A lush, well-tended vineyard lay next-door to the mighty tyrant. He set his heart upon it and desired to make a deal with the owner, Naboth.

The king's offer was rejected, for it was the poor man's inheritance from his fathers, and it was all that he owned. He would not sell or trade away his solitary piece of land.

Ahab was not accustomed to being refused. He reacted as a child and lay upon his bed in a tantrum. He turned his face to the wall and would not eat (1 Kings 21:4).

Wicked Queen Jezebel conspired to have Naboth falsely accused of blasphemy. A speedy "trial" ensued, and Naboth was put to death.

Words of Doom

God told Elijah to go down to the vineyard and tell Ahab that he would not live to enjoy his ill-gotten vineyard. Imagine the shaken

monarch's feelings as he heard the prophet's declaration that ". . . *in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood!*" (1 Kings 21:19).

This prophecy was fulfilled in chapter 22, verses 35 and 38. Ahab was killed in battle, and the dogs licked his blood at a pool in Samaria.

Thus ended the life of King Ahab. He was a mighty man of war, and he could have accomplished great things for Israel. But, he married a vain and haughty woman who influenced him in the ways of the world.

Lessons Learned From Ahab

God recorded lessons on the pages of Holy Writ that we might learn what He wants us to do. This weak king teaches us some valuable lessons in Christian living.

(1) We must obey the Lord. His instructions were clear that the Israelites were not to take wives of the heathen. When Ahab took Jezebel as his wife, he began his journey away from the Lord.

(2) We must assume responsibility, and conduct ourselves as befitting adults. King Ahab gained nothing by his childish actions in setting his face toward the wall and pouting. Then, when his wicked wife cheated Naboth of his vineyard and took his life, Ahab was guilty by proxy.

The happy life does not come by cheating. Those people who like to work to achieve what they desire are by far the happiest. We learn in Philippians 2:14 to ". . . *do all things without murmurings and complainings.*"

(3) We must not covet what belongs to another. Ahab had much of this world's riches. Yet, he coveted the vineyard of his neighbor. Thus, he began his descent into the valley of sin. ✝

Betty Tucker is the wife of a gospel preacher, and they serve the Lord in Linden, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Children are natural mimics; they act like their parents in spite of every effort to teach them good manners.

He Turned His People Back to God

Bobby G. Wheat

What would you do if you became king at the age of twenty-five years and you had the responsibility of turning your people away from their idolatry to serve the only true God? How much pressure would you feel in this responsibility if you knew that a nation of distantly related people was about to be destroyed for committing the same sins as your own people? How hard would it be to accomplish your task if your father, the king before you, had been unfaithful, had in fact been partly responsible for the terrible situation in which your people now found themselves?

Hezekiah was a man in such circumstances. He became king of Judah when North Israel was in trouble from the Assyrians. His own people had repeatedly broken their covenant with God and worshipped idols, the gods of the Canaanites. They worshipped on the hills of Judah, against the explicit instructions given to them by God through Moses. Hezekiah's own father, Ahaz, had been responsible for replacing the altar in front of the temple with a replica of a pagan altar in Damascus. The people worshipped the bronze snake which Moses had had made according to God's instructions in the wilderness. Judah was herself oppressed by the Assyrians and constantly troubled by the Philistines.

Scripture tells us that Hezekiah was equal to the task before him. Early in his reign, exhibiting great courage, he began to set things right. In Second Kings, chapter eighteen, we read that Hezekiah removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones of the illegal altars, cut down the Asherah poles, and broke up the bronze snake. We are further told that Hezekiah stood up to the Assyrian king and refused

any further payment of tribute, and that Judah under Hezekiah finally defeated the Philistines.

Can you imagine the pressure on this young king? I seriously doubt that all of his subjects were happy at the destruction of their altars for worshipping Baal and Ashtoreth. Nor were they pleased when the bronze snake was broken up. And is it possible that some of Hezekiah's fellow Jews would have resented his decision to resist the Assyrians? Might they have been afraid of the consequences to Judah of such a rebellion against this powerful nation? Yet, Hezekiah persisted in doing the right things to lead his people back to God and the path of righteousness.

Does any of this mean anything to us today? Absolutely! I would suggest that, if you are a parent, an elder, a preacher, a teacher, a leader of people in any capacity today, you have the same task before you as did Hezekiah. The nation, in some cases even the church, is full of corruption and idolatry. Sinful lifestyles are the norm, not the exception. There are not many today who genuinely call on the name of the Lord. Christianity is held up to ridicule and scorn, in part because of the failure of many who claim the name of Christ to live up to the obligations of that name. We need Hezekiahs today, men and women who will stand up and face the people around them with the challenge and the example of doing right.

There are two keys to Hezekiah's success which need to be included in our arsenal for the fight against Satan's forces. First, Hezekiah ***removed*** the things which came between his people and their God. He broke down the pagan altars and places of worship, and he smashed the sacred stones and the bronze snake. We need to do the same thing today. Too many of us are worshipping at the man-made altars of greed, pleasure, personal success, and entertainment. Anything which comes between a man and God is an idol for that man, and God would have it torn down. This obligation weighs most heavily on parents, who have the great task of teaching children to decide between what is right and wrong, what is important and trivial, what is spiritual and ungodly.

The second key is expressed in 2 Kings 18:5,6 — *"Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel . . . He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses."* Hezekiah ***trusted*** God! Humanly, we have a tendency to look, not to God for direction and encouragement, but to ourselves and to other men. Sometimes we even

tell ourselves that great, sweeping changes are no longer possible, considering ourselves too weak to take the steps to bring them about. Hezekiah looked to God. Whether it was in facing his own people as he tore down their idols and unauthorized places of worship, or in facing the wrath of the king of Assyria and all his mighty hordes, Hezekiah looked to God and trusted that God would help him. Scripture tells us that Hezekiah's trust was not misplaced: *"And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook"* (2 Kings 18:7).

Let us be people of moral integrity, of strong backbone, of great courage. Let us look at examples of great leadership, like that of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and draw from them the lessons we need to turn our families, the church, and our nations back to God and His righteous path! ✝

Bobby G. Wheat is a long-time missionary to Zimbabwe, recently returned to the States.

Many a man has failed because he has a wishbone where his backbone ought to have been.

If we are going to grow we need to...

- ☆ Make God real in the lives of the people whom we associate with on a regular basis.
- ☆ Have a strong emphasis on Bible preaching and teaching.
- ☆ Have exemplary leadership.
- ☆ Have Christian living on the part of every member of the church.
- ☆ Have congregational warmth and love.
- ☆ Have evangelistic fervor.
- ☆ Be involved in mission work.
- ☆ Have an "I want to serve" attitude.
- ☆ Have hospitality, compassion and concern.
- ☆ Be a giving people.
- ☆ Be a praying people.
- ☆ Be a faithful people.

— Bruce Stewart

Establishment of God's Kingdom

Isaiah 2:2,3; Micah 4:1,2; Joel 2:28,29; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18,19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1: 6-8; Acts 5:11; Colossians 1:13.

1. **"The Last Days"**
2. **"From Jerusalem"**
3. **"All Nations"**
4. **The Lord's House**
5. **"Days of these Kings"**
6. **Kingdom come with power.**

Eph. 1:3
2 Tim 2:10
CHRIST
[Saviour]
Forgiveness

SON

Heb. 3:6; 1 Tim. 3:15
HOUSE
[Family of God]
Security

KING

1 Tim. 6:14,15; Col. 1:13
KINGDOM
[Subjects of King]
Citizens

HEAD

Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18
CHURCH
[The Called Out]
Salvation

HEAD

Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12-27
BODY
[Members of Him]
Fellowship

Dillard Thurman

The Old Testament and Redemption's Sweet Song!

Hugo McCord

Introduction:

The Old Testament poets spoke feelingly of redemption and of the Redeemer (Psalm 107:1-3; 130:7,8).

I. What is the meaning of redemption?

A. Two significant Hebrew words the Holy Spirit employed to portray redemption:
   1. *Ga'al*, release, set free what was bound or fettered, redeem (Isaiah 35:9; 51:10).
   2. *Padah*, ransom, purchase, redeem (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11).

B. Two significant Greek words the Holy Spirit employed to portray redemption:
   1. *Agoradzo*, buy, purchase, redeem (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 5:9; 14:3,4).
   2. *Lutroo*, release on receipt of ransom, redeem (Matthew 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Hebrews 9:12).

C. The price paid for a slave's freedom was redemption money (Exodus 21:31; Leviticus 25:47).

D. God sent Moses as a *lutrotes*, a redeemer, to deliver Hebrew slaves from Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:35; Exodus 6:6; Micah 6:4).

E. The Babylonian exiles were ransomed, but *"not for price nor reward"* (Isaiah 45:13; see 35:8-10; 48:20; Micah 4:10).

F. A first-born son had to be redeemed by animal sacrifice (Exodus 13:2,13,15; Leviticus 12:6-8; Luke 2:22-24).

II. The Old Testament: A "Lamp shining in a dark place"

A. Boaz, a *go'el*, a redeemer (Ruth 3:13), is a parallel and a contrast with Jesus in His work of redemption:

1. Boaz was a near-kinsman of Elimelech's family (Ruth 2:1); and Jesus became a near-kinsman, a sharer in *"flesh and blood"* (Hebrews 2:14), to qualify as a redeemer.
2. The price of redemption was no problem to Boaz, *"a mighty man of wealth"* (Ruth 2:1); the ransom paid by Jesus was not with silver or gold, but *"with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Peter 1:19).
3. Boaz's redemptive work was easy and pleasant; but, Jesus' redemptive work demanded death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

B. Redemption from sin's guilt was predicted by the Old Testament.

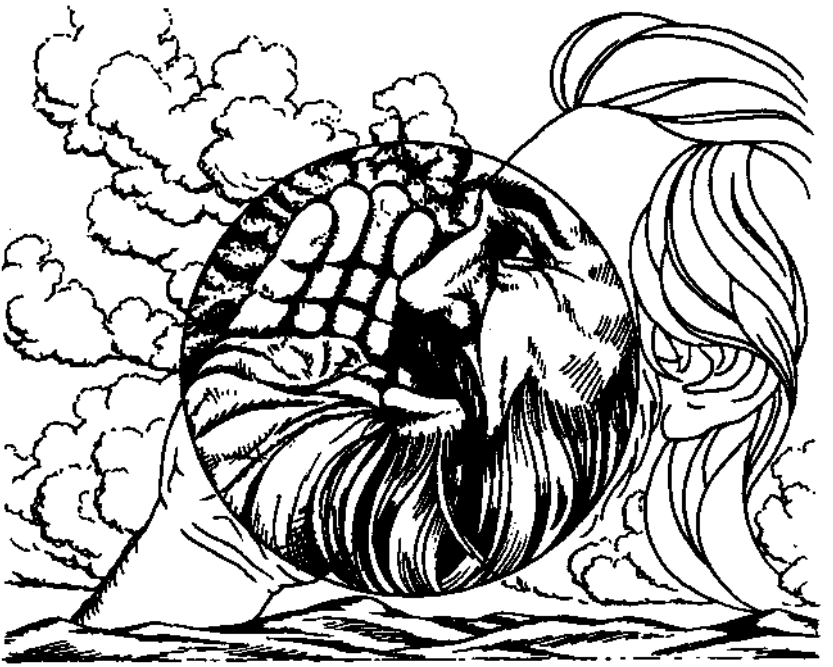
1. Abel's lamb typified the *"Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29).
2. The passover lamb typified Christ as *"our passover"* (1 Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:11-13,46; Psalm 34:20; John 19:36).
3. The blood of a goat, a sin offering, brought within the veil on atonement day and sprinkled on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:15), was a type of Him who with His own blood *"entered in once for all into the holy place* [heaven itself]*; having obtained eternal redemption"* (Hebrews 9:12,24).
4. The *"servant"* of Isaiah 53 was predicted as a sin-offering, enduring wounds, and bruises, even death, not for His own iniquities, but for ours. ✝

Hugo McCord was for many years a professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University, but is now retired and lives in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.

What Mothers Ought To Teach Their Children

At a banquet, the mother of George Washington was sitting beside a distinguished French officer. Turning to her, the officer asked, "How have you managed to rear such a splendid son?"

She replied, "I taught him to obey."



The Great Invitation

Revelation 22:17

Ken Tyler

Purpose: To show the importance of coming to Jesus for salvation.

I. *"And the Spirit and the bride say, come . . ."*
   A. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit.
      1. The Word was given by Him (2 Peter 1:21; Mark 12:36; 1 Corinthians 2:13).
      2. The desire of the Holy Spirit is for us to come to

Christ and be saved.

B. The bride is the church (Romans 7:1-4; Ephesians 5:25).
   1. The mission of the church is to invite people to Christ (Mark 16:15,16).
   2. Do we "*. . . say, come . . .*"?

II. *"And let him that heareth say, come . . ."*
   A. What kind of hearers are we?
      1. The Bible places great emphasis on hearing (Deuteronomy 6:3-5; Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; Revelation 3:6,13,22; Hebrews 5:11).
      2. Those that hear will "*. . . say, come . . .*"

III. *"And let him that is athirst come . . ."*
   A. How thirsty are we?
      1. *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"* (Matthew 5:6). See also Psalm 42:1,2; Psalm 63:1.
      2. What our society needs is to become thirsty!

IV. *". . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*
   A. Where is our will today (Isaiah 1:19,20; Luke 9:23)?
   B. "*. . . the water of life . . .*" should be our greatest desire. See John 4:5-14.
   C. Please notice the words "whosoever" and "freely." Life is available if we want it.

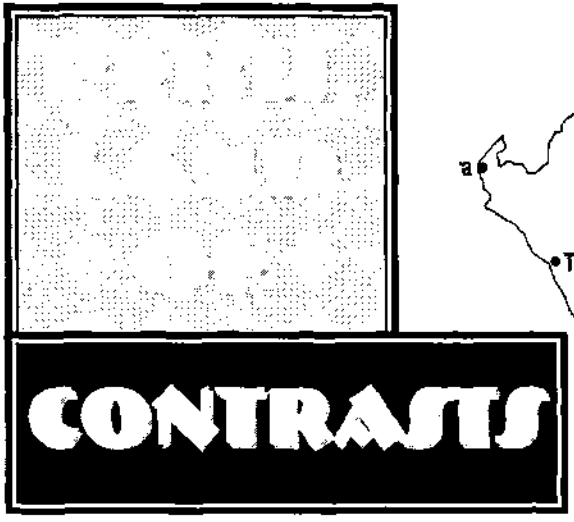
Conclusion: The "Great Invitation" should impress upon our minds the desire of God for us to be saved. God does not want us to perish! The question is, "What do we want?" ✝

Ken Tyler preaches for the Lord's church in Arab, Alabama, U.S.A.

A man's character and his garden both reflect the amount of weeding that was done during the growing season.

How do you measure up?

Remembering without ceasing
your work of faith,
labor of love,
and patience of hope
in our Lord Jesus Christ
in the sight of our
God and Father,
knowing,
beloved brethren,
your election by God
(1 Thessalonians 1:3,4).



Glenn and Janice Kramer

Peru seemed to be an unheard of and unthought of country to most North Americans at the time we were preparing to move to Lima in 1963. A librarian cheerfully told me, "I've found a book about the country you are going to!" She handed me the book and I read the letters, "I-R-A-N." She had the right number of letters, but the wrong ones, and the wrong side of the world!

Hopefully, things have improved during the intervening years, but if you don't know anything about Peru, here is some basic information:

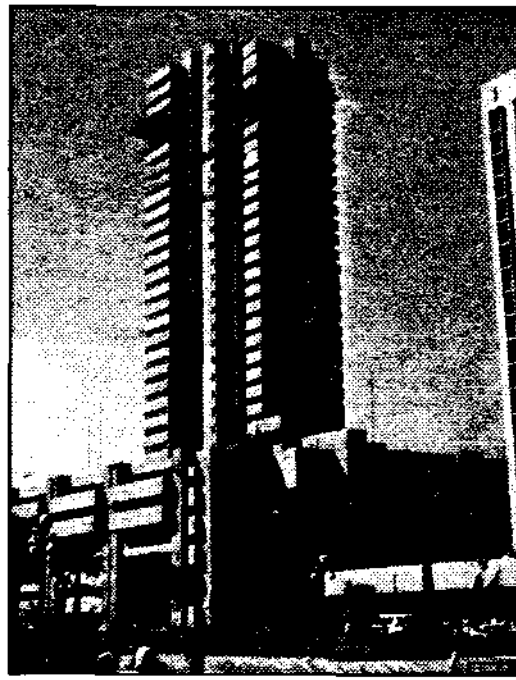
Peru lies on the west coast of South America. Its land area is the size of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona combined. Its geography has contrasts "as sharp as can be seen in any nation on earth". Unlike the western coast of the United States, Peru's extremely dry desert is a narrow strip along the coast, watered only by rivers that come down from the snow-capped Andes Mountains. The jungle begins on the other side of the mountains, long before the flat Amazon basin. There, vast areas of steep slopes are covered with verdant foliage and plantations of coffee, cacao, tropical fruits, and — too often — fields of cocaine.

There are extremes of culture, also, from the dignified aristocrats of the cities to the just-as-dignified mayors of Indian villages who hold

their council meetings in their colorful ponchos and knee-length trousers. Although Spanish is the major language, there are Aymara and Quechua-speaking Indians in the south of Peru, and a Quechua of the north, which is a different dialect. Some three dozen distinct tribes live in the lower jungle, each with their own language.

Lima itself, with about seven million inhabitants, is quite a contrast from other Peruvian cities, most of which have populations well under 500,000. And in the city itself there is another array of contrasts — old balconies and gnarled olive trees, built and planted in the 1500's, alongside modern high-rise apartment buildings, beautiful homes and well-watered gardens, in a city surrounded by a ring of shantytowns, many without electricity and running water.

Concerning the development of the Lord's church in Peru, Bert M. Perry has supplied this information: "Interest first began to be shown in starting the church in Peru in 1957 when the Dow White family was living in Lima and conducted services in their home. The first formal work began in 1961 in the home of Bob Morrison. The first gospel meeting was held that year with preaching by Evert Pickartz and Oscar Aguilar. Glenn Kramer and family arrived in 1963 to exert a prolonged missionary effort. In their first tour of 4 1/2 years, about 200 were baptized and 4 congregations were established. Carrol Robertson and family arrived in June 1967. Bert M. Perry and family came in August



Lima is a modern city of nearly 7 million people, and several active congregations.

of 1968, and in January 1969, Hans Dederscheck, a German national already living in Peru, began full-time work as a missionary, especially as a printer, translator, and gospel preacher."

We began our outreach with Bible studies in homes and things grew from there. A member's teenage son was hospitalized with tuberculosis. He took his correspondence course with him and soon other patients asked for the course, then requested classes in the hospital. Men were converted who returned to their homes all over the country.

An ad in a Lima newspaper somehow reached a sugar plantation 400 miles north of Lima. One man requested the course and then wrote that he and three friends had left other churches and then others joined them with a desire to be a simple New Testament church.

In this way new congregations were gradually formed in various places because even in Lima, where we lived, some converts lived too far from our meeting place and asked for help so they could meet in their homes.

Throughout the years some of these small groups have faded away or become part of other congregations. Others developed into churches which planted other churches, as has happened in the mountain areas of Huamachufo in the north and Cuzco in the south of Peru.

Part of the congregation of Tinta, Peru in the Cuzco area.

We know of no accurate count of members of the Church of Christ in Peru. Throughout the country there are about 35 congregations with whom members in Lima have had fairly recent contact.

As soon as some young men expressed interest, Glenn started a small training school in our home. There have been some year-long and other short-term sessions led by missionaries and nationals over the years. Some preachers have studied by correspondence. Young men have also studied in the United States, Mexico, Panama, and Honduras. At present there are seven national preachers who have completed the training program in one of these countries. Four of these men are receiving close to full support from churches in the United States, but most of the leaders in all of the churches have received their training in Peru and are self-supported.

The churches in the mountain villages build their own meeting places, as they do their homes, of adobe bricks. They occasionally ask for some help for roofing materials, doors, windows, and benches, but basically, they provide their own. One mountain church has added a second story to their meeting place and furnished it with beds so that men from the area can come for a month-long Bible school once a year. Hipolito Trivenos, supported by the Broadway Church in Lubbock, has held such a school once or twice a year for 17 years in different locations around Cuzco. Hipolito speaks both Quechua and Spanish and teaches in both languages.

Churches in urban areas usually meet in homes or in rented facilities. Only a few have a building provided by contributions from brethren in the States. Only one church in Lima has room for more than about 50 persons, and it is several blocks from a main transportation line.

Several attempts were made to have a radio program in Lima, but each effort finally failed for lack of funds. But one enterprising congregation in the High Sierra has purchased their own radio station! Living in a no-cash environment, they decided to rent some land and plant a crop of potatoes which they cared for in off hours after providing food for their own families. They bought the station with the proceeds of that endeavor. Now they would like to find a way to buy a stronger transmitter so that they can reach out to the whole country in both the Spanish and Quechua languages. *Radio is a valuable tool for teaching in the Andes. Many villages are still without electricity, but most families own a battery-powered radio, their only contact*

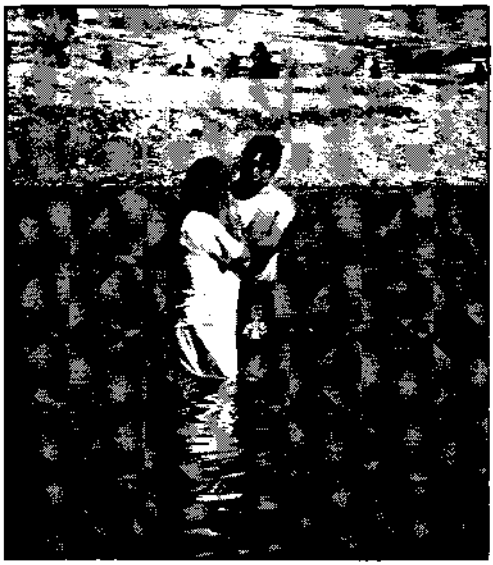
Hipolito Trivenos speaking to preachers and workers at lectures, for which brethren came to Cuzso from distant places.

with the outside world.

Of all the many contrasts found in the country of Peru, there are some that I wish did not exist, and others that I hope will be erased. I am sorry we did not have the strength and vision in the Church of Christ to go there many years ago. The Bible Society and some denominational churches took the Bible to the people of Peru as early as 1891.

In Peru as in the rest of the world there is a powerful spirit of Anti-Christ, and even Anti-God. We had several young people living in our home while continuing their education. Whether they were in elementary school, high school, or the university, they came home with notes copied from their teacher stating, "There is no God." Often this was the teaching in so-called "religion" classes. Is it any wonder that young people become terrorists, when they don't know who they are?

We need to help them learn, and to fill the spiritual void. We can't change the past but somewhere among us there must be churches with vision who will send men and women of faith to the country of Peru and make disciples in great numbers. ✝



I Never *Thought* It Would Be Like This

Hipolito Trivenos

I never thought that my duty after preaching would be to baptize persons in water, to go to the river like a shepherd with his sheep and to get myself soaked with water in front of so many people and the brothers.

I never thought that I would have to go to the homes of discouraged brothers to encourage them, solve their problems, listen to their complaints and gossip, and suffer with them. Then, with others who are resentful, I should make friends, and all of this without time even to excuse myself to go to the bathroom, or, if there is no bathroom, to go outside like a buffalo.

I never thought that I would have to do weddings, counsel newly-weds, give a good example, preach about the Christian life, speak in front of the guests, exhort, teach, and preach to edify. I never expected I would have to do all of those things. I thought I would preach and that is all.

I never thought I would eat with the natives and sleep on the ground, and arrive home with loose bowels, or that I would take medicine, have to walk 10 or 15 kilometers looking for a way to get home and, if there is no bus or truck, stay one or two days, suffering and hungry.

I never thought that one day I wouldn't have money to give to the poor and I would not eat either. I didn't think I would pass through the same problems.

When I preach they observe me

from head to toe, me and my family. I am crucified in the pulpit. I am thankful that my wife and I can cry together without giving up. And they never taught us this in the training school. I am just now learning it.

I never thought that after baptizing a man and encouraging him in his house, I would see him sick in bed, in pain, weeping and miserable, that then I would have to carry him to his burial and I would have to preach in the cemetery and give a good testimony and help his family and relatives deal with their grief.

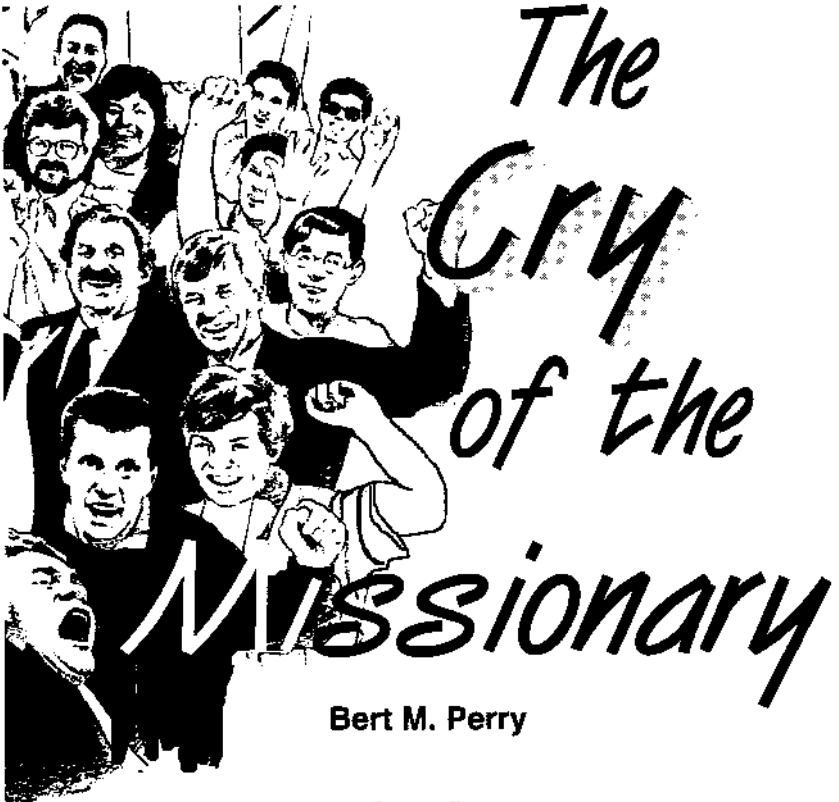
There are letters I should answer; a newly arrived brother I need to attend to, giving him food, preparing a bed, giving him something for his trip. There are requests for tracts that we don't have. There are no hymn books, Bibles, cups for the Lord's supper, to meet the needs of the various churches. There are requests, "Trivenos, preach for us." There is so much need. I never thought I would be a missionary.

I am an evangelist, but I am not a missionary. Yet, here, because of the need, I am everything. But there's not enough of me to go around. I can only do the best I can, with the help of God!

Will you come to help? ✞

Hipolito Trivenos has been a preacher of the gospel in the Cuzco area of Peru for 20 years.

Mission work in Peru can be a mixture of hospitality and "exotic" — This noon meal on the football field behind the church building in Juancalle, Peru consisted of guinea pig, rice and corn, mixed with a warm feeling of fellowship.



Bert M. Perry

Scene I

I am standing in the midst of about 300 people. They are pushing me from every side. The ones who cannot touch me stand with hands uplifted, begging, pleading. Some are trying to climb up me like a pole, in order to reach my hands. Some even try to pull me down to their level.

What is it that is causing these people to act in such a strange, undisciplined manner toward me? By their actions, it is obvious it is not *me* about whom they are concerned. It is the **50 well-written, professionally printed, beautifully colored gospel tracts** which I hold in my hands!

Someone tell me: how do you hand out **50 tracts** to **300 people** who are hungering and thirsting after a knowledge of the gospel? *How do you select the "right" people in the crowd to receive the tracts?* Do you give them to the 50 who look the most educated? The 50 who are the best dressed? The youngest? The oldest? The best looking ones? It's hard to decide, isn't it?

Who has the door of opportunity for salvation slammed in his face?

Wouldn't it be *wonderful* if you had **300 of those beautiful tracts** — one for each of the people?

The next question would be, "*Well, why isn't someone doing something about the situation?*" Brethren, someone is *trying*. That is the reason the missionary had even 50 tracts for those 300 people.

Someone else says, "*Well, I happen to know that missionary* ***received 50,000 of those tracts.*** *Why can't he do a better job of distributing them?*" If we did not get the problem across to some the first time, let's try again. Someone tell me, how do you distribute *50,000* tracts to *16,000,000* people? How do you distribute them to even *three* million in *one* city when practically every person in that city needs a tract and will accept it if it is offered?

Scene II

Now, let's look at another scene. I am standing on the sidewalk. Hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of people pass this spot every day. I have come to town with 1,000 tracts to be distributed on the street. The people do not "swamp" me as they did in the Andean city of the first scene, but each person accepts a tract as it is held out to him. In 15 minutes, half of the tracts are gone. In another 15 minutes, the other half are gone.

The next day, I return with a box containing 15,000 tracts. At first they go as fast as the day before. But, then, other things begin to happen. A bus stops right in front of me, blocking all the traffic on the narrow one-way street. The driver wants a tract; all the passengers want tracts! Are the people in the cars worried about being blocked? No, they want tracts, too. I look up

from my work, and what do I see? Three policemen coming toward me! I think, "Now, I'm in for it, for causing a snare-up in traffic!" But, no, what do the policemen want? Tracts! *One asks for a few hundred to hand out in his home community.*

I finally make it back to the sidewalk. A mountain man asks for 1,000 tracts to take back to his home town. Other people approach me — visitors from the south, the north, from all over the country — asking for *a thousand tracts each to take back home.* In one hour's time, all 15,000 tracts are gone!

Someone may ask, "*Would you not get better results and more conversions if you just went from door to door setting up Bible studies?*" That system works also, but when you have so few workers, you have to let literature do as much of the teaching as possible. Each tract handed out contained our address and the offer of a Bible correspondence course, as well as home studies. Our results? So many invitations to come teach, and requests for Bible courses, that we did not have workers to meet the needs, or courses to fill the requests.

Brethren, the scenes you have witnessed are not exaggerations. They happened to me; the first on the steps of the train station in Cuzco, Peru, and the second scene on one of the main streets of Lima.

Today, as this article is being written, the needs still have not been met. The truth remains that if American brethren, individuals, and congregations do not help with much greater contributions for printed literature for the world surrounding us, we will continue to fall far short in our efforts.

J. C. Choate and Byron Nichols are working diligently to enlarge the publication of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL,** so that it will reach into many nations of the world. Already there are 11 foreign editions, with individual copies or bundles being sent to 90 countries, as well as to all 50 states. Because this is a non-profit publication, it means that every subscription helps to pay for issues being sent free of charge to mission fields. Contributions of $25 a month pay for 35 copies of each issue being sent to the sup-

porting congregation, and an equal number made available for foreign use.

What are our specific needs in this work? **Congregations that will include this program in their budgets for a substantial amount each month**...*individuals who will contribute monthly*...**brethren who will really commit themselves to this work.**

During World War II, a nineteen year old soldier who lost his life in the battle at Bataan wrote:

And if our lines should sag and break,
Because of things you failed to make —
That extra tank, that ship, that plane
For which we waited all in vain;
Will you, then, come to take the blame?
For we, not you, must pay the cost
Of battles you, not we, have lost.

In the battle of Bataan, lives were lost, the battle was lost. The spiritual battles in which we are engaged are of much greater importance, for *the results are eternal.* Listen to:

The Cry of the Missionary

Bert M. Perry

If *we* fail in our great task
To preach the word to those who ask,
Because of things *you* failed to do
To share with them God's precious truth,
Will *you*, then, accept the blame
For those who die without His name?
Or, would you rather help today
Reach dying souls while still we may,
And in so doing, gain your own,
To live with God near His great throne?

If you wish to know more about this work, or to contribute to it, please write or call

J. C. Choate
P. O. Box 72
Winona, MS 38967

(**Phone:** 601-283-1192; **Fax:** 601-283-1191.)

Bert M. Perry is a former missionary to Peru, now living in Premont, TX, USA

Dear Sirs:

☐ I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____.

☐ *Please send your special prices for WBS teachers and their* students.

☐ I want to send $25.00 per month, for a box of 35 copies of each issue of the magazine as they are printed.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dear Sirs:

☐ I want to MAKE A GIFT subscription of THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL to the address below. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____.

☐ The church has agreed to send $25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiple) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. These are to be used in the work of the local church.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

(Return this card in an envelope with your check to the following address)

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
2148 N. National
Springfield, MO 65803

Att. Byron Nichols

(Return this card in an envelope with your check to the following address)

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
2148 N. National
Springfield, MO 65803

Att. Byron Nichols

Answers to Puzzles

Verse Search — 16 (from page 28)

1. So that they would be forewarned , and not discouraged.
2. That they offered God a service.
3. Because they had not known the Father or Christ.
4. Your advantage; Helper will not come.
5. Of sin, righteousness, and the judgment.
6. Guide them into all truth. *"Whatever He hears He will speak."*
7. No. Christ.
8. Of His approaching death. In a little while they would not see Him, but after another little while they would see Him again, covering the time of His crucifixion and resurrection.
9. No.
10. That they would weep and mourn while the world was rejoicing, because He would leave the world and go to the Father.
11. To a woman giving birth and then, in her joy, forgetting the birth pains.
12. No one will take from you.
13. The Father. *"Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."*
14. The name of Christ. *"Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*
15. From the Father, and He was leaving the world to return to the Father.
16. He was speaking plainly, and in such words that they realized He knew all things.

Who Am I?

(from page 80)

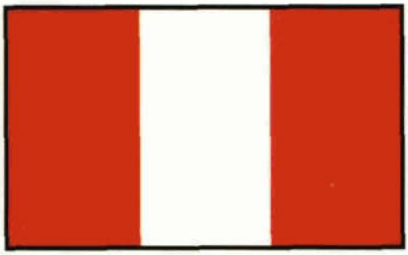
The Book of 2 Timothy

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by Him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

(page 54)

For further information, please contact:

Peru



Government: Republic of Peru
President: Alberto Fujimori
Prime Minister: Dr. Efrain Goldenberg Schreiber

Secular Facts:

Location: Western South America, extending 1327 miles in length. The third largest country in South America, Peru borders the Pacific Ocean, straddles the Andes Mountains, and contains the head waters of the Amazon River — a land of tremendous contrasts.

Land Mass: 496,222 Sq. Mi., 5/6 the size of Alaska.

Population: 22,900,000.

Major Cities: Lima, Arequipa, Callao, Trujillo, Chiclayo.

Language: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara.

Ethnic Groups: Indians, Blacks, and Mestizos.

Literacy: 85%.

Religion: Predominantly Roman Catholic, mixed with Indian beliefs.

Economy: *Natural Resources:* Silver, gold, iron, fish, petroleum, timber. *Crops* are wheat, potatoes, beans, rice, sugar, cotton, coffee. *Major trading partners:* U.S., Japan, Western Europe and Latin American countries.

Monetary Unit: Nuevo Sol.

The Church:

Congregations: There are approximately 31 churches meeting in Peru, incorporating a total membership of about 600 Christians, with some representation in 12 of the 24 "departments" into which the country is politically divided.

History: Evert Pickartz distributed tracts from Lima to Tacna in Peru in 1958, thus being the father of the work in that country during the present century. In 1961 Oscar Aquilar was sent by Pickartz from Santiago, Chili to Lima to establish a church.

Glenn and Janice Kramer became the first full-time American missionaries, arriving in 1964. They were joined by the Bert Perrys, Carrol Robertsons, and Hans Dederschecks. These families worked together for many years before eventually returning to the States for one reason or another.

Through the efforts of Peruvian preachers, the work continues. A number of these have attended training schools in the States or some neighboring country, so their service is invaluable.

A small radio station is owned by a church in the high Sierras. Help is needed for enlargement, to service the whole country.

Front Cover: Ruins of the ancient city of **Machupicchu, Peru.**