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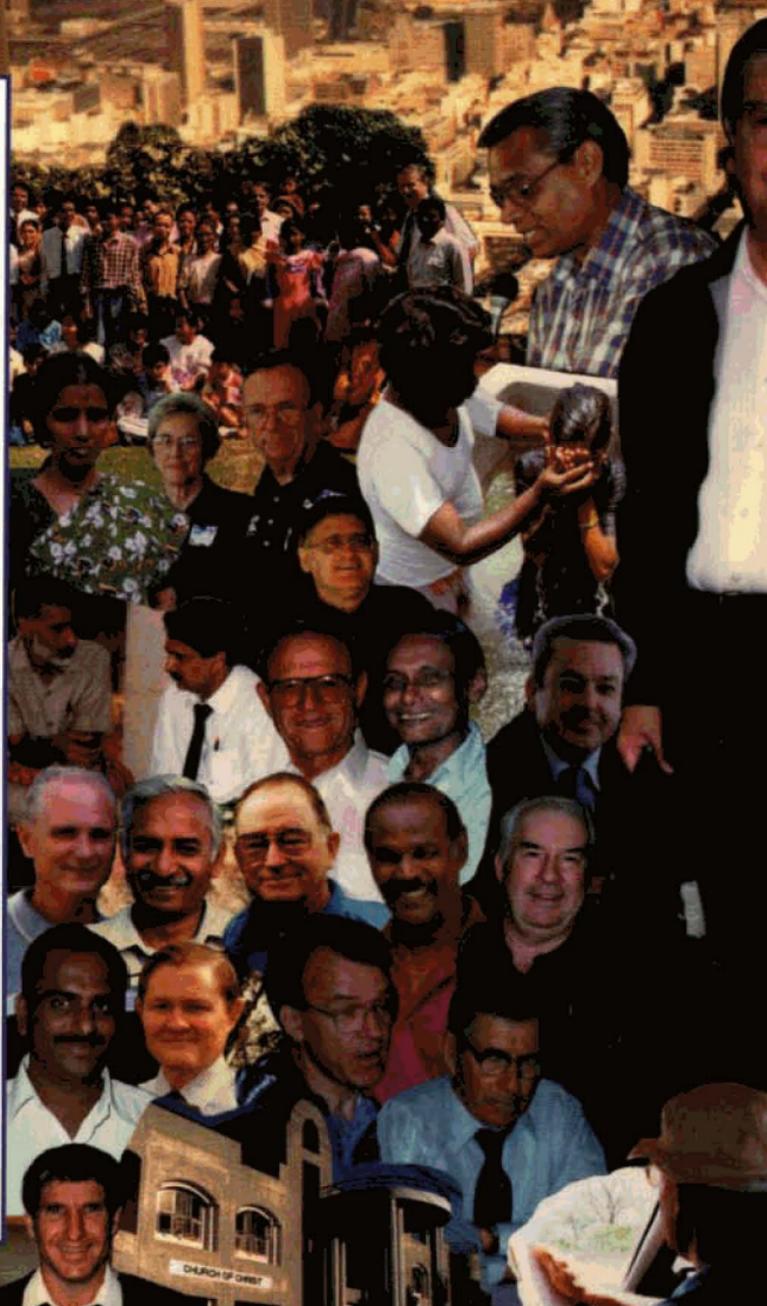
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View from the Mountain

Come, climb with me the mountain high,
The one that transcends both earth and sky,
Where with clarity of vision you might see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

Loose your feet from earthly bounds
And climb this mountain before the trumpet sounds
Where with wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, you can see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

With troubled heads bowed, we travel life's valley road
Never to know the end of life's seed sowed,
But without answers we need not be, we can see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

But we must climb, climb where He leads,
Above clouds of darkness, ever upward is His plea,
To lofty places in Truth's rarefied air, then we can see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

Up there with vision so clear
We can know our value to Him, souls so dear
That He paid the price that we might see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

All must travel life's valley road, that is true
And suffer trials and troubles, not a few,
But how sweet it is to reach the mountain top, and see
Where we were, where we are, and where we will be.

"I go to prepare a place for you," we were told,
And trust in this has made us bold
For of the three, one means most you see
Not where we were, not where we are,
but where we will be

— Charles Dennis Salmon

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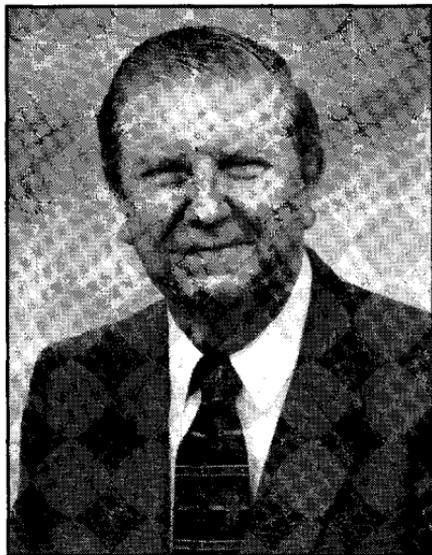
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).



LOOKING BACK

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

As we come to the end of the 20th Century, we naturally begin to look ahead to the 21st Century, wondering just what it may have in store for us. Such a time may be one of anxiety, fear, anticipation, and hope.

But this is also a good time to look back over the past century to see our successes and our mistakes, to see our accomplishments and our failures. We are told that history repeats itself. Have we done well enough in the 20th Century that we would want all of it to happen again?

It has been almost 2,000 years since Christ lived and died upon the cross that we might be saved and have the hope of eternal life. He promised to build His church, and through the Apostles it had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 33. It was given a great commission which involved the whole world, even every person in all the world (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16). The plan was to preach the good news of salvation in the city of Jerusalem, then in Judaea, Samaria, and finally to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). With the Lord's promise to be with them (Matthew 28:20), and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles and converts followed that plan and within less than 30 years they had preached the gospel to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23). Again, we read the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said, "*But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, THEIR SOUND WENT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS UNTO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD*" (Romans 10:18).

The world has never been the same since. The enemy spoke of Paul and Silas as having **turned the world upside down with the things they were preaching** (Acts 17:6). Indeed, they preached Christ as a resurrected Lord, and through faith in Him and obedience to Him, their lives were

changed, and a different world was set in motion. Although as far as we know, the gospel has never again been taken into all the world from that day to this, still it has made such an impact on the human race that it is being felt even to this day. Morals, law, woman's position, family, man's relationships, work ethics, politics, the judicial system, education, art, music, and attitudes toward slavery, war, and sin have been changed. As bad as the world may be, it is still as good as it is because of Christ and the gospel.

On the other hand, regardless of the world's achievements, the heights we may reach as humans in our economics, mechanics, technology, communication, and production, still we are nothing without the Lord. If we can do all of these things on our own, think of what we could do in obedience to God! Denying our Creator is not going to change the fact that He exists. Rejecting Jesus and Christianity will not take mankind to greater heights, but rather will bring him to the lower levels of existence — to becoming the “animals” evolutionists have proclaimed him to be.

But think what a different scenario there would be **if every generation of Christians had continued to take the Gospel to every creature right on up to this present time!** Many wars would have been averted. Numerous sins would have never gained the prominence and acceptance they now have. The entire face of humanity would have been more tempered and godly. But succeeding generations did not obey their commission, and when we fail to do God's will, we suffer. The entire world is presently paying heavy consequences, and this is just the beginning unless we awaken and turn back to the Lord in obedience.

What a shame to think that we have had all of the tools at our disposal to evangelize the world and to secure our own salvation in the process, and yet we have not done so. As a result, many Christians sit idle, in spiritual ignorance, denying the truths of the Bible, fellowshipping those in religious error, and living like the world. This is failure to ourselves, our families, and mankind. The church does not grow; the Lord's people deny themselves all of the blessings we would have had if we had done the job He asked us to do. We have also denied the countries of the world the gospel and its healing and saving power.

Oh yes, as we can think on these things; we can grieve over what might have been — but the fact is that **we are where we are!** We could dwell on our failures to the point of discouragement and total despair. But instead, let's acknowledge our mistakes and rise up with the determination that we — at last — are going to obey the Lord and evangelize the world. We can do it yet. That is our hope and the hope of humanity for today and tomorrow and forever.



THINGS MAN CAN DO THAT GOD CANNOT DO

Byron Nichols

In reflecting upon God and His great power, we think of the words of Jehovah about Himself as He asked the rhetorical question in Genesis 18:14, *“Is anything too hard for the*

Lord?” Just a very brief review of the Scriptures causes us to conclude with conviction, *“No, nothing is too hard for the Lord!”*

The angel Gabriel stated to Mary, *“For with God nothing will be impossible”* (Luke 1:37). Jesus Himself later declared in Matthew 19:26, *“With God all things are possible.”*

With all of this in mind, it hardly seems mentionable that we could actually affirm that there could possibly be anything that man is capable of doing that God, man’s creator, is incapable of doing — yet it is so.

Jesus taught that we ought to pray that we not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:9). As human beings, we are very susceptible to temptation. However, God is not even able to be tempted. Satan is exceedingly powerful, but he cannot tempt God. In James 1:13, James says, *“God cannot be tempted by evil....”* In His human experience, even Jesus was tempted. The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus *“was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* But not so with the Father. Temptation is not even a possibility with Him.

Lying is common to a great many men, but the Bible records Paul’s declaration that *“God cannot lie”* (Titus 1:2). Because He created us as free moral agents, God has made it possible for us to do what He in His complete purity cannot do. He has not, will not, and cannot ever tell a lie!

Unfortunately, it is quite clear that man is capable of committing every sin in the book. Sin became so rampant that God was very sad that He even

brought man into existence (Genesis 6:5-7). But God cannot sin. Sin results from giving in to the devil's temptations (James 1:12-15). We have already seen that God cannot be tempted, so it is utterly impossible for God to sin.

Man is definitely adept at showing partiality. While many engage in showing partiality to certain ones over others, most everyone deplors such actions. We cry out for fairness and impartiality, but it is hard to find. It is a different story with God, though. He accepts whoever fears Him and works righteousness (Acts 10:34,35). In Romans 2:11 Paul strongly affirmed that "*there is no partiality with God.*" Peter declared that God shows absolutely no favoritism as He judges each person strictly on the basis of his or her own work (1 Peter 1:17).

We are all painfully familiar with the fact that mankind is capable of dying. God planned it this way. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that each one of us has an inescapable appointment with death (unless Jesus returns beforehand). God, however, is not subject to death — He had no beginning and will have no ending. He is eternal. He was already in existence when "*the beginning*" took place (Genesis 1:1). In Psalm 90:2 David expressed the fact that God is "*from everlasting to everlasting.*" Paul declared that God is eternal and immortal (1 Timothy 1:17). This means that God is not subject to dying. He cannot die. Oh yes, several years ago it was proclaimed that "God is dead!" The fact is that God had not even had a sick spell, let alone experienced death. Not only can God not die, He can't even get older.

Let me mention here another of God's self-imposed limitations that I believe needs our attention. God cannot make something that has already happened not to have happened. An understanding of this fact will change some of our prayers. God has chosen to be unable to erase history. For example, He cannot give an affirmative answer to a congregational prayer that says, "Lord, we pray that we have all assembled today for the right purpose." Friends, God cannot do anything about that prayer. The purpose for assembling is past history, it cannot be undone. The purpose for future assemblies can be changed, but not any in the past. Likewise, a prayer at the close of a worship service praying that we have worshipped in spirit and in truth cannot be granted by God. The worship has already occurred, and it either was or was not acceptable at that time. It cannot be erased or deleted. God can erase the guilt of our sins of the past, but He cannot erase the actions themselves. They will continue to stand as a part of history.

We need to recognize and acknowledge God's limitations. They exist because He has imposed them upon Himself through His complete holiness and righteousness. In contrast, man is limited in what he can do and be because of his lack of holiness and righteousness. †

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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Volume 24 of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** is very special. In this issue we have chosen to look back over this century (and a little earlier than that), to see the development of what is called the "restoration" movement of the Lord's church in the United States — and to look at its mission outreach into the world.

During this period of time, many believers in Christ, in Europe as well as in North America, made the commitment to leave denominational groups and to follow nothing but the Scriptures. Their plea became, "Let us speak where the Bible speaks. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways." Amen to that! JCC

The Pre-dawn

Like a tolling bell
in my head
Tragedy wakes me
To the pre-dawn,
to the hour of tortures,
to awareness
— returned —
of anguish;
to the creeping chill
of horror and of fear,
to the gray dawning of hurt.

I die in this stillness.

Let me move!

Let the day come!

Let me see

the one step

I must take toward healing,
the one step

I must take toward strength.

Let me walk!

Let me move!

Let me work!

*Let me cry out all the pain
at last*

And, tonight,

let me rest,

let me sleep,

In the peace

of God's enfolding heart.

— Betty Burton Choate

COVER: Faces of Christians, workers, converts — worldwide —, and a few of the tools used in preaching the Gospel by mass media.

In Awe of Him

Glenn Colley



as “awesome.” Has the word “awe” been belittled to the point that it can be used to describe things no greater than automobiles and speed?

Hear the inspired words of the Psalmist: *“The Lord will hear when I call unto Him. Stand in awe and sin not”* (Psalm 4:4). *“Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him”* (Psalm 33:8). *“My heart standeth in awe of thy word”* (Psalm 119:161).

* Have we in our contemporary society lost the ability to feel the awe described by the Psalmist?

* Did not Moses feel awe when he stood on holy ground (Exodus 3:5)?

* Did not the children of Israel feel awe as they stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord at the dividing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)?

* Did not Daniel feel awe at seeing the Lions’ mouths closed (Daniel 6)?

* Did not the people surrounding

What ever happened to awe? Awe, as you know, is a feeling of wonder and reverence inspired by something of great beauty, sublimity, majesty, or power.

Last week I noticed a television commercial in which the speed of a popular automobile was described

the cross feel awe when our Lord bowed His head and gave up His spirit (Matthew 27:54)?

* Did not the church feel awe at the execution of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)?

Can we today know this true awe in reality? Certainly. We can know it in worship when we sing words like, "I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene," and "Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy hands have made...."

We can feel awe when we bow our heads and hearts in prayer, and know that we are talking to a living God who has power over the universe.

We can feel awe when we partake of the Lord's Supper and think of a loving Savior who was willing to give His life for those still in sin.

Faith comes by hearing, and this great awe comes from our faith. Spend time this week meditating on and studying the Word of God. If you are not faithful in your attendance of the worship services, decide now to never forsake them again. The awe that you will develop of Him will draw you to a greater devotion and faithfulness.

"Oh Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:9)! †

Glenn Colley is the preacher for the Collierville Church of Christ in Collierville, Tennessee, USA.

Daniel's Awesome Encounter

"I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!... And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell on them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

"...when I saw this great vision...no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me.... Yet I heard the sound of his words; and...I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

"Then, suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. ...While He was speaking...to me, I stood trembling....

"When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I...spoke, saying... 'How can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.'" (Drawn from Daniel 10)

"It Is Finished"

Betty Schumack

John 20:6 *"Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen."* NIV

In Jesus' day when people finished a meal, it was the custom that if you enjoyed yourself, and were honored and blessed, you would roll up the napkin, and lay it on the plate before leaving.

When the host came to clean up the table, the napkin on the plate signified to the people there that you had a great time and that you would come back if you were asked. However, if you were mistreated somehow, didn't like the fellowship or the food, then, when you finished eating, you would fold your napkin, leave it in another place, and leave. When the people came to clean up and saw the napkin placed elsewhere, it was a sign to them that you would not be back again.

When Jesus rose from the

dead He left His headcloth napkin lying in another place, signifying to the women, the disciples, and the more than 500 people who saw Jesus after the resurrection, that He was never coming back to that place again. God gave a physical example to demonstrate to the world that Jesus had died for all. It was finished ...the final sacrifice. †

Betty Schumack is a Christian living in Hopkins, MN, USA.



GOD

Because of their fear of Jesus, the enemies of our Lord tried several security measures to ensure His capture and demise. But were they really necessary, and were they effective, for accomplishing what they wanted to do to Him?

The **arresting mob** came to the garden armed with swords and other weapons. Although Jesus Himself would have surrendered peacefully, Peter was not as compliant, and he promptly cut off a servant's ear (no

doubt aiming for his neck). This attack only served to give Jesus the opportunity to (1) heal the injury, and (2) rebuke Peter for violence (Matthew 26:52). As the Lord later told Pilate,

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (John 18:36).

What about the **guards** at the tomb? Did this security measure, granted by Pilate to the Jews (Matthew 27:63-66), fulfill a purpose? Did it keep Him in the grave? No, but it provided another obstacle for Christ to overcome and to show His power. Even though the tomb had

been made secure, *"it was not possible that he should be holden of it"* (Acts 2:24). The fact that soldiers were vigilantly guarding the burial place of the Christ simply gave added proof that He arose from the dead, rather than that His body was stolen by the disciples to fake a resurrection.

But one of the security procedures was entirely useless: binding Him. First of all, no leather strap or iron chain could have held Him, for *"He could have called ten thousand angels."*

Secondly, He had no intention of running away from the cup from which He was to drink, because He was determined to do His Father's will. His tormentors could have left off the thongs, and still Jesus would have calmly cooperated in all that was inflicted on Him. His love for the Father and for us enabled Him to endure the cross (and all that led up to it). But all these things happened, proving that He was who He claimed to be, and . . .

"that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled"
(Matthew 26:56). †

Dan Wheeler preaches for the South Seminole congregation in Winter Park, FL, USA.

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Dan Wheeler

The Gentle & Humble King!

Thomas R. Dohling

"...I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls..." (Matthew 11:29).

How blessed we are as Christians, to have One who is approachable, who sympathizes with our weaknesses, who has revealed Himself to us in the flesh and bridged the gap that separated us from Him. When the debt became too great for us to repay, Jesus paid it all. When the burden became unbearable, Jesus lifted it. He said something that comes to mind. *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Did you catch it? First, He says, "Come to me." The invitation. Then He says something startling, but very soothing. Something that touches the truly weary and burdened soul, and causes such an one to put his/her trust in the Person uttering these words. It is not about the yoke or the burden. You will catch another glimpse of Jesus.

Notice what He says about Himself in verse 29, *"...for I am*

gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls...."

My King, Lord, Master, and Savior (in fact He is my **All** in all) has a gentle and humble heart, because of which my soul finds rest and is at peace in the assurance that He hears me when I cry to Him. He makes haste to help me. He eases my burden and lightens my load along life's highway as I submit to His yoke, which is easy, and to His burden, which is light. Indeed, His teachings and instructions are never cumbersome when we abide in Him.

Jesus. He is gentle and humble in heart. Remember those words the next time you feel rejected, scorned, humiliated, lost, in despair, and when everything seems bleak. His love will lift you up. He will comfort you. Leaving His glory behind, He came to seek and save the lost. May you be blessed in the knowledge that you do have a "high priest" who is able "to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15), a Judge who is not only "gentle and humble", but who is also your Savior and Lord. Praise be to God for His wisdom which is beyond our understanding! †

Thomas Dohling is a Christian Bible teacher in New Delhi, India.

Understanding the Sin of Moses & Aaron

Kevin L. Moore

In response to Israel's complaints at the Wilderness of Zin, God determined to give them water. He instructed Moses and Aaron to gather the assembly together, and Moses was to speak to the rock before their eyes. Instead Moses struck the rock. Although water came forth, he and Aaron were told they would not be allowed to enter the promised land (Numbers 20:1-13).

Some may think that the penalty imposed on Moses and Aaron was harsher than they deserved. But before anyone accuses God of over-reacting and being unfair, the situation needs to be examined more closely:

"Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

"And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: 'If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.'

"So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, say-

ing, 'Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.'

"So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and



GOD

he said to them, 'Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?'

"Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'"

Striking the rock instead of speaking to it was certainly a presumptuous act, which went beyond what God had commanded, but there was even more involved. As God observed Moses and Aaron, He could see the condition of their hearts and the attitude which prompted their actions (cf. 1 Chronicles 28:9). God's accusation was, "...*Because you did not believe Me*" (Numbers 20:12)

We learn from Psalm 106:32,33 that this sin also involved something Moses said: "*he spoke rashly with his lips.*" What did he say that was so bad? Before striking the rock, Moses proclaimed: "*Must we bring water for you out of this rock?*" (Numbers 20:10).

Did you notice the wording? Moses failed to acknowledge God, and he gave the impression that *he and Aaron* were responsible for pro-

viding the water. In so doing Moses and Aaron were guilty of rebellion, in that **they did not hallow God** in the eyes of the children of Israel (Numbers 20:12,24; 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51).

God was perfectly just in the punishment He executed. *Pride, arrogance, and rebellion* are attitudes with devastating spiritual consequences (cf Proverbs 16:5,18). If forfeiting the physical promised land was *necessary* to gain the eternal one, no doubt the behavior of Moses and Aaron in this particular incident had contributed to the delinquency of a people, and would have ultimately jeopardized the coming of the Messiah through them. Jeopardizing God's overall plan for the ages was an extremely serious matter. Therefore it had to be stringently corrected and punished.

There are at least two lessons which we need to learn from this incident; (1) God must be glorified before all people (Leviticus 10:3); and (2) He is perfectly just in all His ways (Deuteronomy 32:4). May our acknowledgment of God on earth be comparable to that expressed in heaven: "*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created*" (Revelation 4:11). †

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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.

1. **100** I appeared as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 14:19; 13:21).
2. **90** I appeared in a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4).
3. **80** I appeared to Abraham as an ordinary man (Genesis 18:1).
4. **70** I was the captain of the army of God (Joshua 5:13-6:2; Exodus 14:19).



5. **60** Zechariah the prophet saw Satan and me standing in opposition to each other (Zechariah 3:1-5).

6. **50** I led the Israelites, designated by God as "the _____ of His _____" (Exodus 33:14; Isaiah 63:9).

7. **40** I was '_____' who struggled with Jacob (Genesis 32:24-28; 48:25,16; Hosea 12:3-5).

8. **30** I stopped Abraham from killing Isaac (Genesis 22:11).

9. **20** I was at the top of Jacob's ladder (Genesis 31:11-13; 28:13).

10. **10** I was One of the Godhead — His _____ — who led Israel (1 Corinthians 10:4-9; Acts 7:30-36).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

Evolutionists Have Switched Boats

Jon Gary Williams

For many years promoters of evolution claimed that during multiplied millions of years, life on earth evolved through small, intermediate stages. This is the way evolution has been presented in the textbooks.

Of course, if such an evolutionary process occurred, evidence of it should be found in the fossil record. **There should be millions of examples of transitional forms showing how life gradually evolved.** This is what evolutionists expected to find, and this is why for over 120 years they searched the fossil record for instances of gradual evolution. However, none have been found, not a single one!

As time passed the lack of such transitional fossils became more and more obvious and embarrassing to the followers of Charles Darwin. Since intermediate forms could not be found, many correctly assumed that evolution could not have happened gradually. In the 1940s the renowned paleontologist, G.G. Simpson, stated: "...continuous transitional sequences are not merely rare, but are virtually absent...their absence is so nearly universal that it cannot offhand be imputed to chance, and does require some attempt at special explanation, as has been felt by most paleontologists" (*Tempo And Mode In Evolution*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1944, p.105).

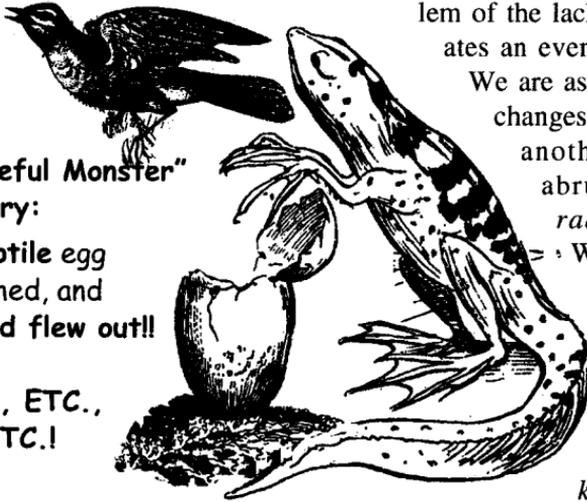
So, what did evolutionists do? Did they give up? No! They continued to paddle upstream! *But they switched boats!* They began to invent another, even more absurd, theory. As the old, slow Darwinian concept was being abandoned, they turned to the idea of a *rapid* type evolution. Here is how Simpson explained it: "**It is thus possible to claim that such transitions are not recorded because they did not exist, that the changes were not by transition but by sudden leaps in evolution**" (*The Meaning Of Evolution*, New York: Mentor, 1956, pp.102,103). In the 1950s the well known geneticist, Richard Goldschmidt, made the same claim. His view was labeled the "Hopeful Monster" theory.

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The "Hopeful Monster" Theory:

A reptile egg
hatched, and
a bird flew out!!

ETC., ETC.,
ETC.!



lem of the lack of fossils, it creates an even *greater problem*.

We are asked to believe that changes from one form to another came about abruptly by drastic, *radical* changes!

What does this mean? It means — we are being asked to believe that animals gave birth to entirely *different kinds of animals!*

WOW! Can you imagine?

What? Evolution by “leaps”? “Hopeful monsters”? What nonsense is this? As silly as it sounds, this view has now become the accepted theory.

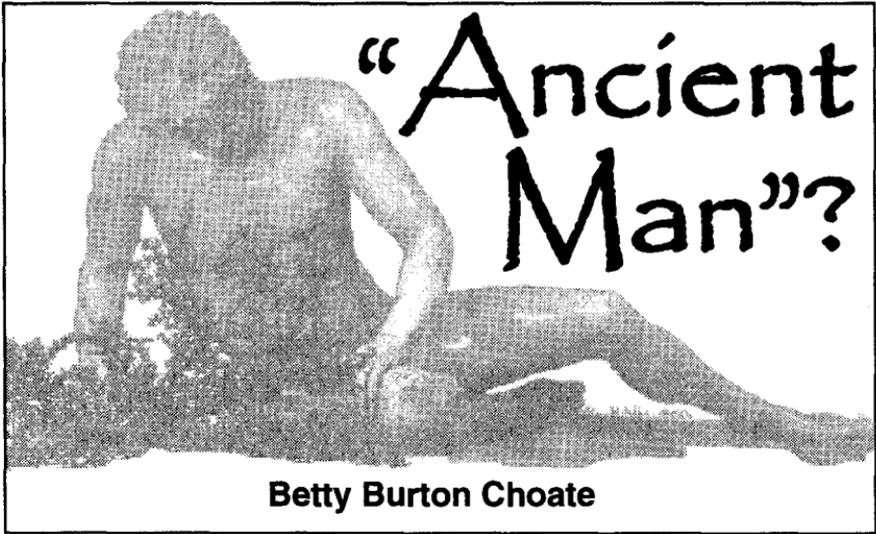
By the 1970s and 1980s leaders in evolution were calling it “explosive” evolution; that is, new forms of life just “exploded” on the scene! Derek Ager of the British Geological Association, wrote: “The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, we find, over and over again, not gradual evolution, but the *sudden explosion* of one group at the expense of another” (*The Nature Of The Fossil Record*,” British Geological Association, Presidential Address, Vol.87, No.2, p.133).

While this new theory conveniently “explains away” the prob-

lem? Why, this is harder to believe than the old, slow theory! No wonder Goldschmidt’s idea was labeled the “Hopeful Monster” theory! Yes, evolutionists have switched boats, but this one has more holes in it than the first!

All this ought to tell us something! It tells us that evolution is nothing but guesswork. As Henry Morris expressed it: “Its nature is coming more plainly into focus and can be discerned as that of a *vast framework of deductions* built upon the foundation of a *false premise*” (*The Twilight Of Evolution*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Publishing, p.35). †

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In three places the story is told of the history of man, from his earliest days: in the archaeological record that is buried in the earth, and in the Bible; and in a third account, an *interpretation* of archaeological findings according to what evolutionists want to believe and teach. This version is printed in all history and science books. Though there is no actual geological column and no fossil record of the Darwinian Evolutionary Process, mankind's story is stretched by millions of years to accommodate these hoaxes.

In contrast, the biblical account begins, not with ape-like humanoids living in caves, but with the fully developed — mature — human family:

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living being [soul]**. . .

“Adam knew Eve **his wife**, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have gotten a **man** from the Lord.’ Then she bore again, this time his **brother** Abel.

“Now Abel was a **keeper of sheep**, but Cain was a **tiller of the ground**.

”And in the process of time it came to pass that **Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord**. . .

“And Cain knew **his wife**, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he **built a city**, and called the name of the city after the name of **his son** — Enoch. . .

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“And Adah bore Jabal. He was **the father** of those who **dwelt in tents and have livestock**.

“His **brother’s** name was Jubal. He was **the father** of all those who **play the harp and flute**.

“And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, **an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron**” (Genesis 2:7; 4:1-3; 17; 20-22).

From this account we learn several important things about early man:

- ◆ He did not evolve into humanity but was created by God as a mature human being.
- ◆ Humans begot, and gave birth to, humans.
- ◆ From the beginning humans were farmers and keepers of domesticated animals.
- ◆ Men had a personal knowledge of the one God, and they worshipped Him according to His directions, praying and personally offering animal sacrifices in penance for their sins.
- ◆ These early people learned how to build not only houses but even cities.
- ◆ Some lived nomadic lives and herded livestock.
- ◆ Instruments of music — the harp and the flute — were developed and played.
- ◆ These early men learned how to make bronze and iron, and were craftsmen in the use of these metals, even teaching the art to others.

Evolutionists would have us to believe that civilization gradually developed, following the slow evolution of ape into man. They teach that those “ape-men” all over the world lived in caves for eons of time and knew only the use of stone instruments. They would say that primitive religions developed as the newly evolved men began to realize the power of the elements and, thus, began to worship the sun, moon, stars, the earth, and water.

Such a contrast between these two pictures!

Consider this: a closer look shows that the Bible tells of “primitive”, nomadic-type life-styles co-existing with well developed urban life — just as we know to be true now. In **today’s** world are there not “stone-age” people in isolated places who exist under the most primitive of conditions? Are there not people who hole up in caves, or even live continually in available caves, or have become “street people”? This has always been the case, because the circumstances of people scattered throughout the world vary greatly. Yet who would deny that in the same world with very primitive

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societies **today** there also exists the space-age, driven by technical knowledge far beyond the comprehension of any but the experts in their fields?

And, actually, the archaeological record says that the same thing has always been true. Yes, there have been “uncivilized”, “stone age” peoples living in various parts of the world since the initial spreading of humanity. But archaeology also shows fully developed civilizations at the earliest levels of digging. They were people of tremen-

to one and all that they lived, even though in many cases no written record remains of their history.

Isn't it strange that those same intelligent scientists and archaeologists can look at the stupendous creations from **God's hands** — creations so great and majestic that man can scratch only the surface in comprehending the ‘how’ of their workings — and *they can even read the detailed written record* of His glorious history in the pages of the Bible, and **yet they go on denying His very existence?**

Man was created capable, even, of crossing boundaries no other living thing can cross and of having a spiritual relationship with the great **I AM!**

dous intelligence who constructed things, moved things, and did things far beyond our comprehension of their capabilities. *How did they do those things?* Even the experts are puzzled, wondering *how and from where* such fully developed cultures came into existence.

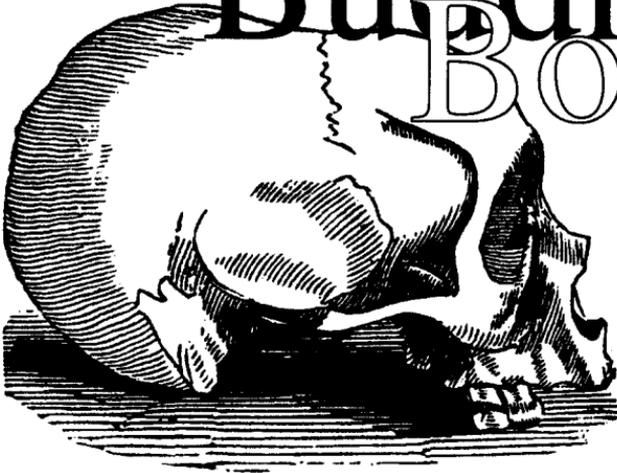
Oddly enough, though, scientists, archaeologists, and even evolutionists never question the *reality* of the *existence* and the *intelligence* of the **creators** of those ancient civilizations. The pyramids they built, the stones they carved, the monoliths they raised, the legends they left are sufficient evidence to prove

Did man come from a primordial soup, by way of amoebae and apes?

The biblical explanation is that man came from the creating hand of God *as man*, with a supremely intelligent mind, capable of thinking and dreaming and doing “the wonders of the ancient world” — *capable, even, of crossing boundaries no other living thing can cross and of having a spiritual relationship with the great I AM!* †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, editor of *The Voice of Truth International*.

Buddha's Bones



David Smith

According to a recent news report, the claim is being made by some Chinese archaeologists that more bones of Buddha (the famous philosopher of the fifth century B.C.) have been identified. Buddha's body was cremated and until this find, the only known remains to the present time were two teeth. However, according to the report, two tiny ash pellets the size of a grain of rice have been "definitely identified" as "Buddha's bones." Records show that the cremated remains of Buddha arrived in China in 616 A.D. and were sealed in a jade casket and hidden in a cave. The casket was discovered in 1981. The archaeologists stated that they waited until

now to announce the find in order to make certain that these were indeed the bones of Buddha. Let us make three observations.

All men are mortal. It doesn't matter if you are a great philosopher that revolutionized world history and influenced cultures for centuries or whether you are just a poor farmer, *you are going to die someday.* The great and the unknown, the attractive and the repulsive, the wealthy and the poor, the famous and the infamous, the young and the old, the healthy and the ill, the strong and the weak, the good and the bad — everyone is going to die someday.

Do you live your life in view of your death or have you ever serious-

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ly contemplated the inevitability of the grave? Why live as though you think you'll never die, when everyone does? "... *it is appointed for men to die once and then the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27).

"Dem bones is gonna rise agin."

Cremated or not. Intact or not. Certainly identified or not. There will come a time when the being who wore those bones for a time will be resurrected from death. "*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment*" (John 5:28,29).

Isn't it interesting that Buddha's bones are supposedly found, but **no one has ever claimed to have located the bones of Jesus?** And they will never be found!

If Jesus' bones were still on earth, they would have long since been found. If the Jewish or Roman authorities had been able to produce Jesus' body, they would have done so, even on the day of Pentecost when Christianity began to turn the world upside down by means of the declaration that Jesus had truly risen from the grave. If someone had robbed the grave of the body, they would not have taken the time to

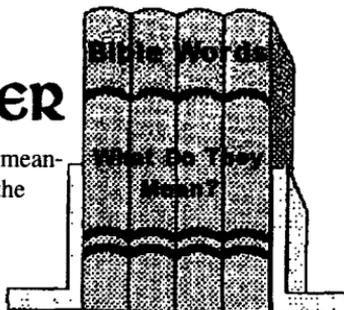
unwrap the heavily anointed body and leave the grave clothes in the tomb. Besides, if grave robbers had taken the body, they would have soon sold it to the highest bidder for personal gain. But the body never turned up. It has never been found.

No one (not even the disciples) could have taken the body of Jesus from the tomb. Why? Because it was sealed by Rome's authority, the entrance blocked by a one- or two-ton stone and carefully guarded by Roman soldiers. The disciples did not understand what Jesus had spoken concerning His "resurrection" and even after it took place, they did not believe it at first. They had to be persuaded by the undeniable, sheer weight of the evidence, when Jesus Himself came into their closed room and upbraided them for their unbelief! The disciples couldn't have stolen the body of Jesus.

So what happened to the bones of Jesus? "*Jesus Christ . . . was declared the Son of God . . . with power by the resurrection from the dead...*" (Romans 1:4). Why seek the living among the dead? Jesus' bones "done did" rise again! But Buddha's bones will have to wait until the resurrection of all men, when Jesus comes in the clouds with all His holy angels, heralding the end of time on this earth (Revelation 19:11-16). †

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD power

Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words as they are used in the context found in Romans 7 (KJV). After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.



- dominion** *n.* – (Gk. *koo ree yoo' o*) **A:** lack of will power **B:** strong **C:** to be lord of, exercise lordship over **D:** a kind of game.
- bound** *pre. adj.* – (Gk. *deh' o*) **A:** to be in bonds, tied or knitted together, as by law **B:** determined to move forward **C:** running with speed **D:** a surety.
- adulteress** *n.* – (Gk. *moy khal is*) **A:** a weak person **B:** one who has relations with the spouse of another **C:** a divorcee **D:** culturally approved.
- free** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *el yoo' ther os*) **A:** not a slave to culture **B:** a slave who has been emancipated **C:** amoral **D:** no longer bound, as by law.
- flesh** *n.* – (Gk. *sarx*) **A:** skin **B:** earthy, a sinner from Adam **C:** the body, in contrast to the soul; human nature **D:** filled with care and pain.
- motions** *n.* – (Gk. *path' ay mah*) **A:** movement of the body **B:** suggestions made at a meeting **C:** flickering light **D:** affliction; sinful passions.
- held** *v.* – (Gk. *kat ekh' o*) **A:** to possess; retain; seize on **B:** to make one a prisoner **C:** unlawfully seize **D:** to bind with heavy cords.
- covet** *v.* – (Gk. *ep ee thoo meh' o*) **A:** wickedness **B:** to set the heart upon, to lust after, to desire **C:** to look on a man or woman with lust **D:** misery.
- deceived** *v.* – (Gk. *ap at ah' o*) **A:** lying **B:** deluded; to be convinced of a lie **C:** overwhelmed with anger **D:** uninformed.
- spiritual** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *pnuyoo mat ik os*) **A:** a 'charismatic' form of religion **B:** ethereal; of the spirit; regenerate **C:** unrealistic **D:** dead.
- carnal** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *sar kee kos*) **A:** pertaining to the flesh; unregenerate **B:** dead **C:** a corrupt form **D:** a place of entertainment.
- dwelleth** *v.* – (Gk. *oy kat' ace*) **A:** to linger **B:** another form of the word 'dwelling' **C:** to reside in, as to occupy a house **D:** to impose one's presence.
- good** *adj.* – (Gk. *ag ath os*) **A:** that which is beneficial **B:** happy **C:** service rendered for service **D:** proficiency in social work.
- evil** *n.* – (Gk. *kak os*) **A:** an influence **B:** wicked; intrinsically worthless **C:** 'black' sins; the most serious offenses against God **D:** an old wives' tale.
- law** *n.* – (Gk. *mom' os*) **A:** conduct **B:** local traditions **C:** the Constitution **D:** a code of rules and consequences; especially, the Law of Moses.
- deliver** *v.* – (Gk. *rhoo' om ahee*) **A:** to run an errand **B:** to rescue from; to free one who cannot save himself. **C:** to walk around **D:** a blow.
- mind** *n.* – (Gk. *nooce*) **A:** nervous system **B:** an idea **C:** the intellect; the understanding **D:** to resent the imposition of the will of another.

1. **dominion** *n.* – (Gk. *koo ree yoo' o*)
C: to be lord of, exercise lordship over; citizens in Christ's Kingdom recognize His dominion over them.
2. **bound** *pre. adj.* – (Gk. *deh' o*) **A:** to be in bonds, tied or knitted together, as by law. The word itself shows the enduring quality of the togetherness, reinforcing the statement, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder."
3. **adulteress** *n.* – (Gk. *moy khal is*) **B:** one who has unlawful relations with the spouse of another, a divorced person who is married a second time without having a scriptural reason for the divorce.
4. **free** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *el yoo' ther os*) **D:** no longer bound, as by law. This does not mean that the law has been broken or temporarily set aside to fit a particular situation, but rather, that the situation itself has complied with God's law.
5. **flesh** *n.* – (Gk. *sarx*) **C:** the body, in contrast to the soul; human nature.
6. **motions** *n.* – (Gk. *path' ay mah*) **D:** affliction; something one has undergone; sinful passions.
7. **held** *v.* – (Gk. *kat ekh' o*) **A:** to possess; retain; seize on.
8. **covet** *v.* – (Gk. *ep ee thoo meh' o*) **B:** to set the heart upon, to lust after, to desire. Covetousness lies at the base of most other sins; hence its listing repeatedly as a deadly evil
9. **deceived** *v.* – (Gk. *ap at ah' o*) **B:** deluded; to be convinced of a lie because of deliberate false words or actions that leave the appearance of being truth. Self-deception is a grave danger for humans, because of the difficulty in identifying and ridding oneself of it.
10. **spiritual** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *pnuyoo mat ik os*) **B:** ethereal; of the spirit; regenerate; because of sin we have committed, humans are dead spiritually until they are "born again" in the baptism of obedience to Christ.
11. **carnal** *pred. adj.* – (Gk. *sar kee kos*) **A:** pertaining to the flesh; unregenerate; dead in sin.
12. **dwell** *v.* – (Gk. *oy kat' ace*) **C:** to reside in, as to occupy a house.
13. **good** *adj.* – (Gk. *ag ath os*) **A:** that which is beneficial in its effect; good in character or constitution. We become good to God when we have obeyed Him.
14. **evil** *n.* – (Gk. *kak os*) **B:** wicked; intrinsically worthless; in opposition to God and His law of righteousness.
15. **law** *n.* – (Gk. *mom' os*) **D:** a code of rules, with consequences and rewards; especially, the Law of Moses; governance of conduct among a people.
16. **deliver** *v.* – (Gk. *rhoo' om ahee*) **B:** to rescue from; to free one who cannot save himself.
17. **mind** *n.* – (Gk. *nooce*) **C:** the intellect; the understanding; the part of man that can think with God.

Vocabulary Scale

- 7-10 correctGood
 11-13 correct.....Bible Student
 14-17 correct.....Bible Scholar

You Can Rely Upon the Bible

Flavil H. Nichols



You can rely upon the Bible! It is indeed reliable! Just as the writings of Shakespeare can be reproduced by comparing the many and varied copies of that author, so, by comparing the manuscripts and translations of the Holy Scriptures, we can be sure that we have the Word of God! In fact, there are far more serious discrepancies among the copies of Shakespeare than there are among the manuscripts of the Bible.

Compare the span of time and the number of manuscripts of the sacred text with some of the other ancient writings:

The ancient classical history of Caesar's Gallic War was composed about 58-50 B.C. with the oldest known manuscripts of it dating back to about 850 A.D. A gap of about 900 years exists between its writing and the oldest known copies. Only ten manu-

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scripts of the history are known. Yet, all scholars accept these as reliable history.

The Roman History of Livy was written about 59 B.C. to A.D. 17, but the oldest known manuscripts of it were made in about A.D. 300. Only 35 copies are known to exist.

The History of Thucydides, written 460-400 B.C., is reproduced from only eight manuscripts which were produced thirteen hundred years later (A.D. 900).

The History of Herodotus (450-425 B.C.) is translated from only eight known copies which were made from the "original" (?) 1300 years later, about A.D. 900.

Now, how does all of this "stack up" in comparison with the New Testament?

Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, was written about A.D. 89-96. A span of only 250 years brings us to A.D. 350, the date of the CODICES (the oldest complete manuscripts of the New Testament). Some 4,000 Papyrus Fragments, however, were written as early as A.D. 130 to A.D. 250. This puts them back within 30 to 150 years after John wrote Revelation. Furthermore, from almost the time John penned the original autograph, early "church fathers" began to quote from the New Testament writings (A.D. 90 to A.D. 160, a span of 0 to 60 years).

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Further Note:

From "The Canon of Scripture" in the Dickson Analytical Bible we

read, "Clement of Rome, Paul's fellow-laborer, referred to First Corinthians as 'Paul's epistle'. Papias, a disciple of Polycarp (who, in turn, was a disciple of John, writer of Revelation), assigned to Matthew and Mark the Gospel accounts that bear their names.

Tertullian (about A.D. 130-200) regarded the four accounts of the Gospel and most of the books of the New Testament as genuine.

Eusebius of Caesarea (about A.D. 260-340), declared in his **Ecclesiastical History** (A.D. 315), that it was universally admitted that the following are genuine: the four Gospel books, the Acts of the Apostles, the 14 Epistles of Paul (assuming that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews), the First Epistles of John and Peter, and the Revelation of John. The catalog of Origen (about A.D. 185-254) is precisely the same as that of Eusebius."

Though the general dating for

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the writing of the Gospel accounts has been rather late in the First Century, evidence presented in **The Jesus Papyrus**, by Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew D'Ancona offers evidence of a much earlier date:

"In this context, the redating of the Gospel — a process which is only now beginning in earnest — may seem an enterprise appropriate to its times, to the mood of the millennium's end. **There is now good reason to suppose that the Gospel according to St Matthew, with its detailed accounts of the Sermon on the Mount and the Great Commission, was written not long after the Crucifixion and certainly before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70;** that the Gospel according to St Mark was distributed early enough to reach Qumran; that the Gospel according to St Luke belonged to the very first generation of Christian codices; and that internal evidence suggests a date before AD 70 even for the non-synoptic Gospel according to St John (as the highly respected German academic Klaus Berger argued in 1994). These are the first **stirrings of a major process** of scholarly reappraisal. It concerns all of the Gospels. It affects everyone who has read them or will read them."

Students of the Bible can never forget that the Scriptures claim certain things for themselves: (1) that *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..."* (2 Timothy 3:16). (2) that *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). *"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books"* (Revelation 20:12).

If these claims in the Bible are true, its very words were given by the direction of the **Holy Spirit** — not as *men* remembered or decided to write the words — but as the Holy Spirit spoke; and its preservation until the judgment is assured by God Himself.

As long as we believe God, we will accept — side by side with our faith in the Almighty — the fact that we have in the canon of the Scriptures exactly what was written in its entirety by His direction, and that through His power He has preserved it whole to this time and will continue to preserve it until all humans meet those books as their judge on that last great day! †

Do Not Mess With The Bible

Sunny David

Going through the big state of Texas in the U.S.A. one can't miss reading the sign at various points which says, "Don't Mess With Texas". The idea behind it is to keep Texas clean; do not litter or throw trash, as one travels through the state of Texas.

In the Bible, in Deuteronomy 4:2, in giving the commandments of the Lord, Moses said to His people, "*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*" Again, he said, "*Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it*" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

After the death of Moses, God spoke to his assistant,

Joshua, and said, "*Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the **right hand** or to the **left**, that you may prosper wherever you go*" (Joshua 1:7).

This warning is again written on the last page of the Bible, in the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ, in these words, "*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in*

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this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

Yes, don't mess with the Bible! And those who stubbornly do mess with it need to remember what Christ said in John 12:48: "*He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that that judges him, the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*"

People mess with the word of the Lord, or with the Bible, when they teach and believe that baptism is not necessary for salvation; even though the Bible so plainly teaches in the words of Christ Himself that "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved*" (Mark 16:16).

Others mess with the Bible when they substitute sprinkling of water for a burial in water, in baptism. The Bible says, "*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism...*" (Romans 6:4). When Philip had baptized the eunuch, both of them had gone down into the water, and then Philip baptized, or buried, the eunuch in water (Acts 8:38,39).

Baptism — burial in water and coming out of it — symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the gospel, by which one is saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Another way of messing with the Bible would be to say that there are saved people in all kinds of churches; whereas the Bible teaches that the Lord adds to His church daily those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). Christ built only one church, which is His (Matthew 16:18). His church is His spiritual body (Ephesians 1:22,23). He is the head of His body, the church (Colossians 1:18). He knows His church. All congregations of His church are called by His name (Romans 16:16). Inferentially, all the saved are in His church only.

Let's stay with the Bible. Let's not take away anything from it and let's not add any doctrine to it. **Let's not turn from it to the right hand or to the left!** †

Sunny David is a preacher of the Gospel in New Delhi, India.

The Bible is bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions.



Ancil Jenkins

"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10).

Have you ever pondered the importance of one ingredient? Have you ever had bread without salt? Have you ever had a car but not have the key? I remember in my youth several of us boys who had our gloves and bats but could not find a ball to play with.

How often there seems to be a

missing ingredient in our lives and in the life of the church. Often every other vital element is present, but diligence is missing. This is because it often comes disguised as hard, perhaps unrewarding work.

I was recently impressed with this need for diligent effort from a quotation from Everett Donaldson's biography of "Racoon" John Smith, a pioneer preacher of the nineteenth century. Donaldson quotes from an earlier biography which described Smith's efforts to study the Bible

THE WORD OF GOD

and prepare himself to preach.

"He spent every moment that he could spare in the close and earnest study of his Bible.... The pine-knots blazed on his hearth till a late hour every night; for he poured over the sacred text with a diligence that never tired. He saved the hour of noon, by reading while his tired yoke browsed in the shade or stood at the rick. He laid the Bible by his side on the dinner table, and committed to memory, over his plate, some verse on which he could ponder while at work. For he studied even in the fields, improving sermons as he piled up his log heaps and exhorting imaginary congregations as he plowed" (**Raccoon John Smith: Frontiersman and Reformer**, by *Everett Donaldson*, p. 86).

Often we hear the desire expressed, "I wish I knew more about the Bible..." In almost the same breath come the next words, "But I just don't have the time to study." Yet the apparent problem is probably not a lack of time, but a *lack of diligence*. Few of us have several hours of unbroken, uninterrupted time to study. However, we often have ten minutes or so. Carry a pocket New Testament and spend your waiting time reading it. We do not need more *time* — we need more *diligence*.

What would happen if we approached the enhancement of our

spiritual life with the same diligence with which we approach our work or hobby? Few mind arising early, even at dawn, to fish or play golf. Would you do the same for the Lord? Most are faithful to get to work on time and not miss a day unless ill. Could we not do the same with our appointments for God? If we are commanded to be diligent in His service, how can we dare disobey?

If there is something lacking in your spiritual life, why not examine your *diligence*? This may be the **missing ingredient**. †

Ancil Jenkins is the preacher for the Sunset congregation in Miami, FL, USA.

Hard Times . . .

It has been said, "Our forefathers did without sugar until the 13th century, without coal fires until the 14th century, without buttered bread until the 16th century, without tea or soap until the 17th, without gas, matches, or electricity until the 19th, without cars, canned goods, or frozen foods until the 20th century.

"They did without inexpensive printed Bibles until the 15th century, with only a few languages available until the later 1800's. Now what were you complaining about?"

Real Answers

David Deffenbaugh

I believe in the promotion of good and the opposition of evil. I believe in laws and regulations and programs that seek to curtail and deter immoral and unethical behavior. Forget the old argument about not legislating morality. It's been done all along. How else does one explain laws prohibiting murder, stealing, and lying? They are morality legislated.

Such laws and regulations need to be recognized for what they can and cannot do, though. They do represent a community's or state's or nation's attitude towards immorality. That's important because, remember, *"Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people"* (Proverbs 14:34). And besides, God intends for governments to promote good and oppose evil (Romans 13:1-4).

But laws, regulations, and programs don't *eliminate* the **problems**. They never will and should never be expected to do that. They shouldn't be viewed as *answers* to the problems they address. Christians cheer when we see victories for righteousness, public efforts at opposing immorality in our land, as well we should. But let's not be led to think of these as answers. Laws and regulations don't keep people from being thieves, homosexuals, drunkards, and swindlers. Paul said that in Corinth there were many people who were turned away from these and other immoral behaviors. How? By laws passed and programs implemented? Hardly. *"You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:11).

It's good to promote laws, regulations, and programs aimed at promoting morality and restraining immorality. It's all useless and worthless, though, if we're not strongly promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is able to transform lives and save men's souls (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; James 1:21). †

David Deffenbaugh is a preacher of the Gospel in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.

What About "Reverend" and "Father"?

Dale Grissom

The scriptures are very clear as to who is "Reverend" and who is to be addressed as Father. The word "reverend" is found only once in the Bible: "*He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name*" (Psalm 111:9). We clearly see from this passage that God is holy and reverend; God is to be worshiped and adored. Jesus alone is equal with God, as we read in Philippians 2:6 — "*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" It is very dangerous for a man to attempt to make himself equivalent to God. Man is not holy, nor does he deserve to be worshiped. Only God is to be honored in this way.

No man on earth should be called Father in a spiritual sense. "*But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven*" (Matthew 23:8-9). The scriptures

could not be plainer: it is sinful for a man to wear the title Father.

Man has always had a tendency to elevate those for whom he has respect. The apostle Peter dealt with such a situation in Acts 10:25,26: "*And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.*" Paul also cautioned that a man should not think too highly of himself: "*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*" (Romans 12:3).

May we always strive to conform our will to that of our Heavenly Father, and may we always guard against the temptation to follow the ways of the world. †

Dale Grissom works with the Lord's church in Dexter, MO, USA.

Character is what you are in the dark.

Children and Baptism

Frank Chesser



Sin is a portrait of grotesque ugliness. The blackness of sin makes the sable night appear light. Sin stains and defiles the soul, rendering it unfit for the divine presence. Sin drove God from Jerusalem to the mountain to oversee the destruction of the city (Ezekiel 11:23). Sin severs the Creator from his offspring and marks him as being "*without God, without Christ and without hope in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12).

Calvary is God's answer to sin. The *obedience of faith* is man's means of appropriating the provisions of grace to his soul. **Baptism** is the culminating act of gospel obedience that activates *grace* and brings cleansing by blood. Thus, the sole purpose of baptism is "*for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38).

To the degree consistent with human ability, one must understand

sin, grace and the gospel in order

to qualify for baptism. One must be able to count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:25-33). Does a simple knowledge of the steps of salvation make one eligible for baptism? If so, then there are many four and five year old children who are proper subjects of baptism.

Is an unbaptized ten-year-old child a pawn of Satan? Is he polluted by sin and separated from God? Relative to repentance, are most ten-year-old children qualified by unrighteous behavior and sufficient maturity to have a genuine change of mind with regard to the sinful course of their lives? Will the Lord declare to such unbaptized children on the last day, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*"

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

(Matthew 25:41)?

Paul questioned some twelve adults concerning their understanding of baptism (Acts 19:3). A few questions regarding the nature of sin, penitence and the gospel would deter most preachers from baptizing children. One child offered bickering with his brother as the reason for his desire to be baptized. Was he thus separated from God and in need of cleansing by blood? It is

not unusual to observe parents having to awaken their baptized children from sleep in order to partake of the Lord's Supper. What is the difference in infant baptism and children's baptism? God did not design the scheme of redemption with children in mind. †

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street congregation in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

To My Child: Things I Can and Cannot Do

- I can share your *life*, but I cannot **live** it for you.
- I can teach you *things*, but I cannot make you **learn**.
- I can give you *directions*, but I cannot always **lead** you.
- I can allow you *freedom*, but I cannot **account** for it.
- I can take you to *worship*, but I cannot make you **believe**.
- I can teach you *right from wrong*, but I cannot **decide** for you.
- I can give you *love*, but I cannot **force** it upon you.
- I can teach you to *share*, but I cannot make you **unselfish**.
- I can teach you *respect*, but I cannot force you to show **honor**.
- I can tell you the *facts of life*, but I cannot build your **reputation**.
- I can tell you about lofty *goals*, but I cannot **achieve** them for you.
- I can teach you to *obey*, but I cannot answer for your **actions**.
- I can warn you about *sins*, but I cannot make your **morals**.
- I can love you as *my child*, but I cannot place you in **God's family**.
- I can *pray for you*, but I cannot make you **walk with God**.
- I can teach you about *Jesus*, but I cannot make Him your **Savior**.
- I can teach you about *prayer*, but I cannot make you **pray**.
- I can tell you how to *live*, but I cannot give you **eternal life**.

Author Unknown

PUZZLE PAGE

The Book of 2 John for adults

Dad

Church teaching

Offspring

Opposite of hate

Planet Earth

Prize

Home

Tricker

Female sibling

Be happy

Unending

Kind, compassionate treatment

Opposite of to

Undeserved favor

Opposite of old

Leader in the church

Not a few

Opposite of war

Opposite of ending

Opposite of false

God's son

-2 John 6



Waiting for Something to Happen

Owen Cosgrove

Some time ago I spoke to a man about obeying the Gospel. He said, "I know what is right, and I know what I ought to do. I

just do not feel it is the right time. Something will happen, and then I will know that the time is right."

I wonder how many people who knew the truth have died in a lost state while waiting for "something to happen"?

Something has happened!

- ✓ We have sinned.
- ✓ God has seen our predicament and allowed His Son to suffer unspeakable torture to save us from our iniquity.
- ✓ Christ's church has been established, and His plan for our salvation has been made known.
- ✓ His Bible has come to us on streams and rivers of martyrs' tears and blood.
- ✓ Untold sacrifices have been made so that we can know our needs and have access to God.

Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. God has made everything happen that *can* happen, short of *forcing* salvation on us. He can't do that.

Now is the time for us to make something happen! It is time to hear the Gospel, believe it, repent of our sins, confess our faith in Christ, and to be baptized into Him for the remission of our sins. If we have done these things, it is time to continue to put Him and His kingdom first in our lives.

Dare we ask the Lord to do any more than He has already done?

"Hear the voice that entreats you. Oh, return ye unto God."



Owen Cosgrove is involved in printed evangelism in many countries and preaches for the Northside congregation in Waxahachie, Texas, USA.



Y2K AND HIS COMING

Randall Caselman

We hear a lot today about the Y2K problem. What will happen in the computer world at the turn of the century? Will the computer that runs our electric and natural gas grids shut off our supplies? Will our bank accounts all go to zero, or will we get somebody else's money? Will our bills, insurance policies, stock options and Social Security benefits be lost in cyber space?

Personally, I think the media has sensationalized the problem beyond reality. Perhaps we are all concerned with the wrong Y2K

problem. What should be our concern? Our Y2K problem is, "Will Jesus return in the coming millennium?"

We must be alert to His coming. The Greek word translated "coming" is *parousia*. Parousia speaks to us of the eminent, for-sure coming of Jesus. Parousia says His coming is a guaranteed event. After all, His return was an angelic promise found in Acts chapter one. Both Peter and Paul tell us that His coming will be as a thief in the night. They admonish us to be alert. Jesus gave the parable of the ten vir-

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gins as a warning for us to be watching.

We must be ready for His coming. In Jesus' parable about a wedding banquet, all the preparations had been made by the king at great expense. The invitation was sent out and the banquet hall filled with guests. However, when the king arrived he noticed that some were improperly dressed. Scripture tells us what is proper dress for His coming. We are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, have been clothed with Christ.

We must be found serving at His coming. *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

Then the King will say to those on his right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and

you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:31-40).

We must be found encouraging others. Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica concerning the second coming. Twice he says, encourage or comfort one another. The Greek word translated encourage or comfort means to call, to invite, to pray, to beseech to entreat. We are to be evangelistic! We are to point others to Jesus as we wait for His return.

No, I don't know if Jesus will return in the Y2K, but He *could!* If I understand the Bible correctly, there is nothing that needs to happen before Jesus can come. He *could* come this year, this month, today, before you finish reading this article.

You see, what we believe about His return determines what kind of people and person we will be. What we believe about His coming will change our thinking, what we talk about, our agenda and priorities.

General Douglas MacArthur told the Philippine people, "I will return", and he did! Jesus tells us, "I will return", and He will! Are we ready? †

Randall Caselman preaches for the Bella Vista congregation in Bentonville, AR, USA.

SALVATION

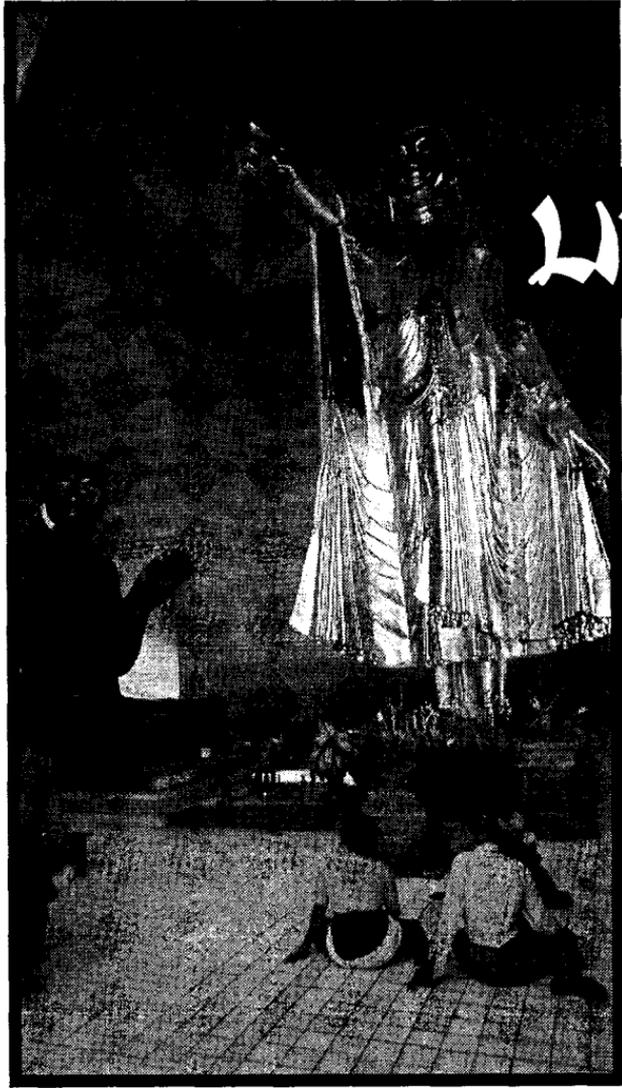
FROM ANCESTOR WORSHIP TO FAITH

IN THE

LYING

GOD

Gordon
Hogan



Nineteen years ago a teenage girl in Singapore was introduced to Jesus and His way. She had been reared in the tradition of her Chinese family to worship her ancestors. The love of Christ captured her heart. Shellon is married to Chang Chee Wee and they have two children. Both are honor

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graduates of Harding University. They are faithful members of the Moulmein Road congregation in Singapore. I asked Shellon to tell me why she decided to become a Christian. Following is her response which shows the power of the Gospel of Christ.

“The truth about man is that he needs to be loved the most when he deserves it the least. Putting it the Bible way, *‘For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly’* (Romans 5:6).

“I used to shed a tear or two when reading about the torture and sufferings of our Lord Jesus. I said ‘I used to’ not because I have become indifferent to His death but because as I grow I see the death as a necessity for the reconciliation between God and man. Now as I remember the cross, it brings to me a certain peaceful joy and it just overwhelms me to reciprocate this love! *I realized that Gratitude is an element in my relationship with God.* If I live every day with a *consciousness* (not *feeling* only) of how God has loved and cared for me unceasingly, it would be hard for me to ever want to leave or forsake Him. I always ask myself ‘What would I have become if I did not know God?’ I know the answer.

“Many times we have heard people saying, ‘If only I could do this all over again...’ Being in

Christ, I have the opportunity to start all over again, even to re-live my life! All of us are tired of living our old life at one time or another. But in Christ, our life is new because *‘if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away: behold new things have come’* (2 Corinthians 5:17). I am no longer a slave to my own passions and lusts; they are crucified at the cross. Of course they still resurface now and then, but I am no longer under their bondage. Victory is mine as I learn obedience to our Almighty God. What a comfort!

“Security is a need that everybody seeks to fulfill. In hard times, like an economic recession, we want to be assured of a stable income, a roof over our heads, etc. But beyond that, the man-shall-not-live-by-bread-alone principle still holds. All of us need the stability in our lives that only God can provide. All of us have a vacuum which only the Creator can fill. Man’s standards are ever-changing but God’s principles are everlasting. It saddens me especially to read in the newspapers of the devastating state that man is in now because he does not have God in his heart.

“The world today is overcome by the hunger for power and the love of money. But it is actually love, mercy and righteousness that

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will bring contentment, peace, and joy in life and make life worth living. Is there anything in this earth that is worth selling your soul for? Just as Matthew 16:26 says: *'For what will a man be profited if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'*

"But alas! Not many have chosen the good part. Just as one writer puts it, 'The only thing a man is not afraid of losing is the one thing that is really worth anything to him — his soul!'

"God's word has helped me to see the world as it is. The Bible is like a pair of spectacles that correct human shortsightedness. It certainly helps me to avoid warped vision of myself and others. It also points out to me what I should really treasure in this transient life. Not money, or for that matter, anything physical. *'For we have brought nothing into the world so we cannot take anything out of it either'* (1 Timothy 6:7).

"Friends and brethren, can you sug-

gest a better way of living than being in God? If you can, I would certainly like to hear it. I am looking forward to a home not made with hands and to treasures beyond my human comprehension.

"'BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE CROWN OF LIFE'. This is the promise from God." †

Gordon Hogan, missionary in Asia for 39 years; Missionary-in-Residence at Harding University, Searcy, AR.USA.

The Great Christ Story

There is hope for our salvation.
It's for believers of every nation,
Hope of an eternal life in glory
As found in the great Christ story.

This hope is in Christ
Who is the one Lord
Whose body is the one church.
We read of one God, one Spirit,
One faith and one baptism
In the great Christ story.

Those who will the one baptism obey
And keep the faith till judgment day
Will be assured of that hope in glory
As promised in that great Christ story.

— Ferrell Hinds

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter three, NKJV.

1. Who went up to the temple? (V. 1)
2. When a beggar asked alms, how did Peter answer him? (V. 2-6)
3. How did the healing of the crippled man affect the onlookers at the temple? (V. 10)
4. Peter used the miracle to teach them about _____, whom He identified as the _____ and the _____. (V. 13,14)
5. What had the listeners done? (V. 15)
6. What had God done to Jesus? (V. 15)
7. How did Peter and John know Jesus was resurrected? (Chapter 1, V. 32; 3:15)
8. How had the lame man been healed? (V. 16)
9. Does this refer to the faith of Peter and John or the lame man? (V. 6)
10. In what manner was the lame man healed? (V. 16) **(A)** He got "better" at that time. **(B)** He improved gradually over a period of time. **(C)** He was healed completely and instantly.
11. Peter said that the people and the rulers crucified Christ because of _____. (V. 17)
12. How had God foretold all that happened to Christ? (V. 18)
13. What did Peter tell the people to do? (V. 19)
14. What would be the result of their conversion? (V. 19)
15. Through Moses God had promised what? (V. 22)
16. Through the physical nation of Israel, what promise would be fulfilled? (V. 25)
17. To whom was the Savior sent first? (V. 26)
18. What is the only means of blessing anyone? (V. 26)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

Restoring the New Testament Church



Jack Harriman

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2).

Which New Testament church would we want to restore?

Certainly not Corinth, nor most of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3). In fact, there may not be a single congregation that we would want to restore just as they were! We want to restore the church which was in the mind of God — the church as He **intended** it to be.

But is such a thing possible? Yes, and here’s why. The New Testament is a complete revelation from God. When we read it and obey it, *it makes us wise unto salvation* (2 Timothy 3:14-17). And it is the pattern for the church, the *ideal* that was in the mind of God. From it we learn what God intended the church to be and do.

But is the restoration of the church that was in the mind of God actually necessary? Was not the Corinthian church, with all its deviations, still

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addressed as the “church of God” (1 Corinthians 1:2)? Yes, but the deviations did not please God, and specific corrective instruction was given. Would God still have considered it His church if the members had ignored His instructions?

Was not the church at Ephesus, even though it had left its first love, still considered to be the Lord’s church? Yes, but it was told to repent and do the first works, or else its candlestick (spiritual life) would be removed. A restoration in these churches was absolutely necessary.

But is such a restoration practical? Not all restored things are practical in today’s society. The restoration of the church as it existed in the mind of God is not an attempt to restore the *human customs* attached to the church of the first century or any other century. The goal of the restoration is to understand and follow the teachings of Jesus as He intended that they be understood, to believe what Jesus intended men to believe, and to carry out the commands of Jesus as He intended that they be carried out. **This is that which must be restored.**

And such a restoration is practical for any place and any time. One can obey the Gospel, worship God acceptably, and live a life pleasing

to God without being asked to do a single thing except that which God clearly requires of him.

And such a restoration is the only practical basis for the unity of believers. This would remove the walls of denominationalism and be common ground of unity for all who profess faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. †

Jack Harriman is a gospel preacher working with the Center Street congregation in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.



Always in any affairs of humans — and certainly in the spiritual condition of individual Christians and congregations of the Lord’s church — the cycle of birth, falling and restoration is possible, even probable. Paul sternly warned Christians in his day, **“For I know this, that after my departing shall greivous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”** (Acts 20:29,30).

"I will build my church..." - Jesus



The Church Of Christ

Mack Lyon

There are so many different denominations, it's confusing. They all say it makes no difference which one I choose, the church doesn't matter anyway. Then, I wonder why there are so many? If it isn't important, why can't they unite? United, they could be a much more powerful influence against the evil in the world. Well, I guess it's too much to expect of them,

because they teach so many different things.

Jesus said, "*I will build my church*" (Matthew 16:18). I'd like to be just a Christian and a member of His church. Do you think I could be and not be a member of any denomination at all? They tell me I can't do that. I don't understand. People in New Testament times did it.

How would I become a member of the church Jesus said He would build? The Bible says, "*The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). If I just did what those people did to be saved, would I be saved? And would Jesus add me to His church, as He did them? I'd like that! I could be a brother to every other saved person in all the world and not have to be alienated from anyone by loyalty to some denomination. Oh say! That's what I want to do! And that's just what I did! The very thought of it is exciting!

But now something else is confusing me. A man who says he is a member of the church of Christ just told me that the church Jesus built is

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only a denomination, too. I can't believe that! He said that people who think as I do are legalistic, divisive, and sectarian. I don't believe him. Do you?

Would you come along with me, and let's be Christians like we read about in the Bible, and members of the church Jesus built? Please do. †

Mack Lyon lives in Edmond, Oklahoma, USA., and he is the speaker on the international television program "In Search of the Lord's Way".



CHRIST IS THE WAY

THOU ART THE WAY: TO THEE ALONE
FROM SIN AND DEATH WE FLEE;
AND HE WHO WOULD THE FATHER SEEK
MUST SEEK HIM, LORD, THROUGH THEE.

THOU ART THE TRUTH: THY WORD ALONE
TRUE WISDOM CAN IMPART;
THOU ONLY CANST INSTRUCT THE MIND
AND PURIFY THE HEART.

THOU ART THE LIFE: THE EMPTY TOMB
PROCLAIMS THY CONQUERING ARM;
AND THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN THEE
NOR DEATH NOR HELL SHALL HARM.

THOU ART THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE,
NONE ELSE CAN HEAL MY SOUL,
NONE ELSE CAN WASH THE STAINS OF SIN,
NONE ELSE CAN MAKE ME WHOLE.

— GEORGE W. DOANE

BUT WHEN I DIE, WHERE WILL I GO?

The Bible does not teach reincarnation, that is, the soul being housed in many different bodies through many rebirths. Instead, it teaches that the soul is **one personality**, passing through this life **only once** and answering to God for the deeds done in that **one body**.

After the sin of Adam, God said, "...for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19b). But man is more than the physical body. At the time of his creation, God made him a living soul, breathing the breath of life into his mortal body.

When man dies, his *spirit* or *soul* returns to God to await the resurrection and the judgment, when all of us will be judged *according to the deeds done in the body*. Concerning the obedient, Jesus said, "...the righteous [will go] into eternal life." Concerning the disobedient, He said, "...these will go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). Following the judgment is eternity for all.

NEXT: HOW LONG IS ETERNITY?

10 Marks of a Growing Church

Mike Vestal

- 1. Growing churches have elders** who are spiritual men of wisdom, knowledge and vision, and who are deeply interested in the souls they are shepherding (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- 2. Growing churches have deacons** who believe in servanthood, and as deacons they rejoice for the privilege that is theirs to work in special ways to God's glory (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- 3. Growing churches have preaching that exalts Jesus Christ and His word**, that proclaims the "*whole counsel of God*," and that encourages and challenges, in a bold but loving way, everyone to draw nearer to God (2 Timothy 4:2-4; Acts 20:27; Ephesians 4:15).
- 4. Growing churches have an educational program** that stimulates all to know more of God's word and to better apply its truth (2 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 4:12).
- 5. Growing churches regard worship as a privilege** rather than a chore. The singing is enthusiastic, the Lord's Supper is thoughtfully observed, prayers are humbly and lovingly offered, and brethren give generously as they have been prospered. People bring their Bibles, in order to follow along during the sermon because they desire to better know God and His will for their life (John 4:24; Psalm 116:12; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:16; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2).
- 6. Growing churches make guests feel at home.** Others can see the unity, warmth and love that exists within the congregation (Romans 12:10; John 13:34,35).
- 7. Growing churches make a diligent effort to teach the lost and to restore the fallen.** Visitation, Bible studies and outreach are constant (Acts 5:42; Galatians 6:1,2).

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8. Growing churches keep up with their missionaries by writing them letters, sending them good literature and encouraging them in their work (Philippians 4:14-20; 1 Corinthians 3:9).

9. Growing churches respond to goals and challenges because every member is focused on glorifying Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17).

10. Growing churches exhibit the mind of Christ — they are humble, serving, loving and obedient to the Father (Philippians 2:5-11).

Does this sound like the congregation of which **you** are a part? Let's all work together to help this congregation grow even more! †

Mike Vestal is the preacher for the University Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas, USA.

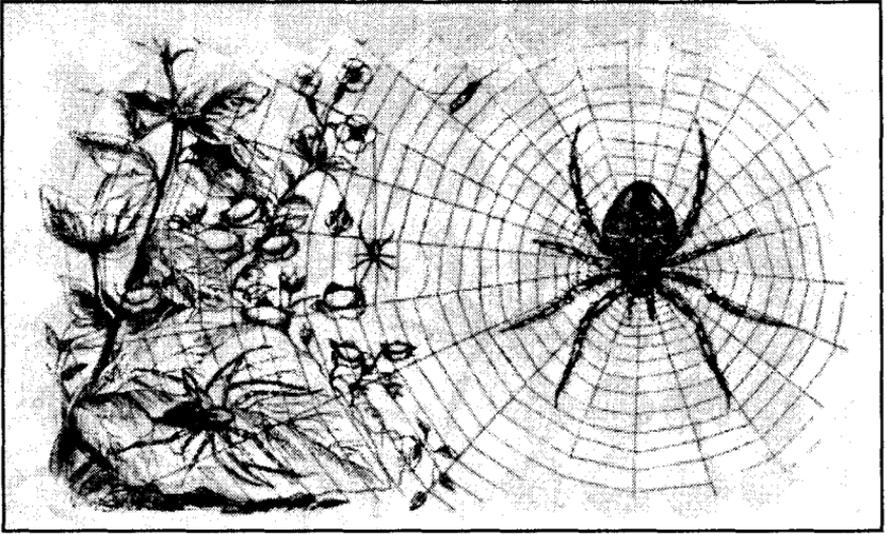
Heirs of Life Together

Recently I had the opportunity to preach in a gospel meeting in a small mid-western town. At one time the church boasted a membership of close to 100 members, but today the story is quite different. In fact, if you were to attend this congregation on any different Sunday, only 20 to 25 other Christians might be there with you, praising the name of God.

What happened to the church in this small town? Two things, I believe, caused the upward trend of growth of the '70's to go into a spiral which threatens to bring about its extinction. First, perhaps like those of Ninevah, **some of the members of this particular congregation forgot to teach their children the way of the Lord.** Read the book of Nahum to see the results of this lapse in parenting. The sad thing about the destruction of that great city was that it did not **have** to happen. In the days of Jonah the city had repented and turned away from its wickedness. Then, just 150 years later, God allowed it to be completely destroyed. The reason was *they forgot to teach their children about God, and right from wrong.*

The second reason for the decline in growth of this mid-western church is **that they forgot their community.** Any time we forget to teach those around us the pure will of God, we and they are only one generation away from apostasy, and we are bent on physical and eternal destruction.

— Douglas Yates



Some Things I Learned from an Argiope Spider

Mike Hinton

Recently as I explored a graveyard of old tractors, near Lindsay, Oklahoma I had an opportunity to watch one of the graceful hunters called argiope at work. The great size of this shiny black and yellow spider indicated that it was probably a female. She had spun a large intricate web between the rusting hulks of two old Farmalls, and sat placidly in the middle of her creation waiting for some luckless bug to join the silk encased grasshopper that already adorned her web.

It was a short wait as a yellow grasshopper fleeing my approach flew directly into the web that was maybe 18 inches across. At the instant of impact the long-legged argiope threw herself across the web and began trying to subdue the wildly thrashing grasshopper. With very dexterous movements of her many legs, she began dismantling that gorgeous web, totally intent on preventing the escape of her next meal. The hopper's powerful legs tore the web, but each time he

CHURCH GROWTH

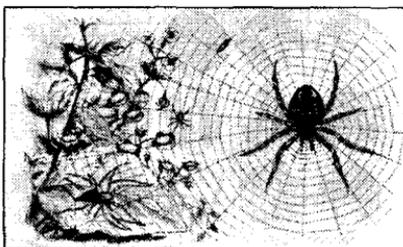
seemed sure to kick free, she would loop another strand of silk around those legs. Finally he could no longer break the strands. Within the space of about a minute, the grasshopper was hanging motionless near its equally unlucky cousin. The web was in shambles, but it had accomplished its purpose, and the argiope turned to the task of repairing her net for her next visitor.

I believe there are many lessons to be learned from observing God's magnificent creations. **Christians, like that argiope spider, are to be in the business of casting forth a net in hopes of catching something.**

Jesus spoke to Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:19 saying, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" The church is still in the business of fishing for men's souls.

results are not prompt and impressive. Almost any method of evangelism will reach some lost souls if it is pursued with vigor for enough time. While it's true that we owe it to God to strive for efficiency, I believe sometimes we become so bogged down in analyzing programs, and in searching for new and innovative ideas, that we forget the old adage, "Nothing works unless you do." A sustained effort, driven by realistic goals and a patient spirit, will usually bear some fruit. We may not baptize hundreds of people, but if we plant enough seed, some of it will come up. Matthew 7:14 reminds us that no evangelistic effort will reach the greater part of those contacted.

Another lesson the argiope has for the church is seen in the diligence that the spider used to keep what it had caught. It seems



There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise: ... The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces. (Proverbs 30:24,28)

There are several lessons we can learn from the argiope. **The first is patience.** Often we try programs of work designed to reach the lost, but we lose heart quickly if

we're sometimes more concerned with baptizing the lost than we are with keeping them in the flock and making of them committed Christians. Baptism is only the

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beginning. Nothing is gained unless that newborn babe in Christ can be matured in the faith.

The argiope became wholly focused on the task of keeping the grasshopper from escaping. Without remorse she used whatever fibers of her web were needed, heedless of the fact that its beauty and integrity were being disrupted.

Sometimes when a new Christian is born among us, we concern ourselves with how that person will fit into the neat little group that we've established in our congregation. Maybe they're different somehow, and we're just not sure that they are "right" for us. James 2:1-8 warns us not to treat brothers differently based on their economic condition, and Galatians 3:28 carries the same thought to nationality, social status, and gender. We should always be willing to

disrupt our level of comfort in the hope that we might gain a new brother or sister in Christ. And once we've welcomed them, **our attention should be directed toward teaching and encouraging, lest the struggles of life allow them to slip away, back into the world.**

The last thing I want to point out about the argiope is that **when a bug did escape, she went quietly back to work repairing the web.** At times we will be unsuccessful, but we must resume our efforts, and continue to seek the lost. We cannot let our disappointments hinder us from spreading the truth. Today's failures may set the stage for tomorrow's victory. Our job is but to plant and water and leave the increase to God. †

Mike Hinton is a Christian living in Hobart, Oklahoma, USA.



Happiness is not perfected until it is shared with others.
Neither is salvation.

Great occasions for service come seldom in life.
Little ones surround us daily.

The one who lives for this life only will have eternity
to regret it.

It's better to declare the truth in love and be rejected
than to withhold it just to be accepted.



Tips for an Effective Visitation Program

Compiled by Clayton Pepper;
Other Suggestions by Clifford S. Owens

Assisting the Bereaved

1. Why is this a fertile, potential field in doing personal work and leading souls to Christ? Why is this a must in the overall program of the church?

- A. Because Christ taught it. Matthew 5: "*Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.*"
- B. In Romans 12 Paul taught that we should "*weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice.*"
- C. This is an appropriate time because the grim reaper, death, has visited their home. They realize more keenly the realities of death and the importance of being prepared to meet God. Many, many souls have been converted because someone made an effort to reach them in their time of bereavement.

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2. How should we approach these unsaved people at a time like this?

- A. The most effective way is by ministering first to their needs.
 - (1) Offer your services in any way possible.
 - (2) See that the ladies of the congregation prepare food and carry to the home. Many people are shocked because someone in the community cares enough to help alleviate their sorrow.
- B. Encourage the members to visit the funeral home and express sympathy. Send flowers if possible.
- C. Encourage the members (as many as possible) to attend the funeral service. There is a great need for this teaching, especially in the cities. Very few people attend funerals.
- D. In the event you are called upon to conduct or assist with the funeral service, I would recommend three helpful manuals: **Minister's Manual**, by George Dehoff; **Sermons for Funeral Occasions**, by B. L. Bedwell; and **Christian Minister's Manual**, by James Murch. All of these are excellent.

3. What should I hope to accomplish by working in this area?

- A. Visit the family within two or three days after the funeral service. Do not rush in the same day or leave the impression that you are trying to take advantage of their sorrow to convert them.
- B. Usually they are most receptive at a time like this. They also want to express appreciation for all that the church members have done.
- C. As is the case with any personal work and any new contact, the continuation of contact, showing interest and concern, and the development of the relationship are vital to the success of winning souls.
- D. It would be worthwhile to keep track of contacts via a written record in a notebook, so that you won't forget to call occasionally, invite the person to your home for dinner, to share a flower or some other thing of common interest. It is most important not to let one be forgotten. †



From the various available records, the following summarisation can be made of the state and beliefs of the Lord's people in Europe from the 1200s onwards.

They believed that baptism was by immersion for believers for the remission of sins, whereby entry is made into Christ's church (the only true church). They taught that children are innocent, rejecting the

Historical Traces of the Kingdom that Would Never Be Destroyed

Keith Sisman

teaching of original sin and proclaiming free will. They rejected the use of special buildings, altars and other paraphernalia. They rejected the idea of the clergy, teaching that all believers were of the univer-

sal priesthood of believers.

Each congregation was autonomous and, wherever possible, had elders and deacons. The Lord's supper was taken each Sunday and was served as a memorial, not as an ordinance. They rejected the use of special holy days. They taught the triunity of the Godhead. These believers were spread throughout Europe, including Britain, and were also present in the east. They used their own vernacular versions of the Scriptures and were strongly evangelistic in promoting the true faith. They referred to themselves as Christians and members of the true church, in spite of the fact that other "names" of identification were sometimes used by others in reference to them.

They were arrested and persecuted because of their opposition to the Catholic church. Their appeal was for a return to Scripture and they defended themselves by the use of Scripture. This was embarrassing for the Catholic church which in the year 1229 banned the Bible to the laity. It was put on the list of forbidden books by the Council of Toulouse! That decision made it an offence for an ordinary person to study or own a Bible with-

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out permission.

It must also be remembered that throughout those ages the Catholic church was holding its services in Latin, a language understood by only the educated people. When the Council of Toulouse forbade the reading of the Scriptures or the owning of a Bible by the common people, the aim was to further insure the total ignorance of the population concerning the laws and teachings of God.

As the Bible was a banned book copies were desired everywhere (one way to make any book popular is to ban it). A new version was needed in England in the modern vernacular of the day.

Wycliffe's Bible was eagerly sought by the Catholic church and burned. Each Bible was hand copied, as its publication pre-dated printing. It was extremely popular everywhere, for the simple reason that this was the first time a Bible had been available in the modern English of the day. The Latin Vulgate was not used very often and it can be guessed that many Catholic priests had no Bible knowledge at all.

For the first time in many years the Scriptures were available to ordinary people, and the appeal for a return to New Testament Christianity was being made.

Wycliffe's Bible was eagerly sought by the Catholic church and burned.

The task fell to the direction of the Oxford theologian John Wycliffe (died 1384). It first appeared in 1380 and was initially very poorly written, being translated (from several versions of the Latin Vulgate and possibly the Old Latin), by his colleagues, namely Nicholas of Hereford (Old Testament) and John Purvey (who later revised the Wycliffe Bible New Testament at Bristol in 1388 to a much higher standard).

The Bohemian John Huss (died 1415, who was a student of Wycliffe) wrote a book, **De Ecclesia** which played an important part in Luther's break with the papacy. At one point Luther confessed, "We are all Hussites now."

Neither Wycliffe nor Huss reached Luther's understanding of 'Justification by faith alone', Luther considering baptism to be unessential to salvation. An interesting letter was written to Erasmus (died

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1536) out of Bohemia by Johannes Slechta Costelecicus, dated October 10, 1519 referring to some followers of Wycliffe in Bohemia who were known as Hussites. This letter refers back to the time of Huss (around 1410) and says of his followers that *they called themselves brother or sister, they had no other authority than the Scriptures, opposed infant baptism, teaching believers' baptism by 'dipping', and they elected officers from the 'laity'.*

Loenzo Valla (died 1457) proved by linguistic analysis in 1440 that the 'Donation of Constantine' a document which the

The Burning of Heretics.

In 1401 the famous Act for the burning of heretics, *De Comburendo Hæretico*, was passed by the king but not by Parliament! Whilst the Commons and several of the nobility objected to this law — in fact the Commons rejected it altogether — it was approved by the bishops and abbots (who had proposed the law) so the king gave his assent. The first Lollard Martyr, Sir William Sawtre (or Santree; 'Sir' at this time was a title used by the clergy to be replaced later by the more familiar 'Reverend'), said to be a *baptised believer*, a priest from

The law for burning of heretics was repealed in 1732.

Roman Catholic Church relied upon for its 'temporal authority' was in fact a forgery from the ninth century. Valla in 1444 made a critical comparison with the New Testament Vulgate and the Greek New Testament. He pointed out that the Greek word 'Metanoia' which in the Vulgate is translated '*do penance*' actually means '*repentance*'.

Erasmus incorporated this change in his 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament. In turn, Luther found this new reading the basis of his famous assault on the practises of indulgences (1517).

the town of Lynn, Norfolk but later of St. Osyth, London, was burned March 2, 1401. The Act was passed eight days later! This cruel law was finally repealed in 1732. Bishop Ridley (died 1555) in his book, *de Cæna Domini*, says that in the first two years of Queen Mary's reign, above eight hundred people died for their religious beliefs. †

Keith Sisman is a Christian living in Huntingdon, Cambs. England. Having been granted permission to do research in the huge and ancient library of Cambridge University, Keith is writing a history of the Lord's church during those dark and silent years.

In Remembrance of Me

Randy Kea



Jesus Himself, the same night that He was betrayed, instituted the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23). This is recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul (1 Corinthians 11; Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22). John gives other glimpses of this meeting in the upper room (John 13-17). Here are the specific details:

1. The Lord's Supper is also called the "**Lord's table**" (1 Corinthians 10:21), "**communion**" (1 Corinthians 10:16), and the "**breaking of bread**" (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7).
2. The elements to be used are "**unleavened bread**" (1 Corinthians 11:23; Luke 22:7-18; Exodus 12:15-20), and "**fruit of the vine**" (Mark 14:25; 1 Corinthians 11:25).
3. The Lord's Supper is to be observed in the **kingdom of God** (*the church*) (Luke 22:30; 1 Corinthians 10:21).
4. The only day we have Bible authority to observe the Lord's Supper is the "**first day of the week**" (Acts 20:7).
5. Here are some things to remember:
 - ☞ Jesus "**gave himself for our sins**" (Galatians 1:4).
 - ☞ Jesus "**died for our sins**" (1 Corinthians 15:3).
 - ☞ Jesus "**laid down his life for us**" (1 John 3:16).
 - ☞ Jesus "**offered himself without spot to God**" (Hebrews 9:14).
 - ☞ Jesus "**tasted death for every man**" (Hebrews 2:9).

WORSHIP

- ☞ Jesus “*gave himself a ransom for all*” (1 Timothy 2:6).
- ☞ Jesus “*shed his blood for the remission of sins*” (Matthew 26:28).
- ☞ Jesus “*became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:8).
- ☞ Jesus “*hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God*” (Ephesians 5:2).
- ☞ Jesus was “*despised and rejected of men*” (Isaiah 53:3).

☞ Jesus “*hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*” (Isaiah 53:4).

☞ Jesus “*was wounded for our transgressions*” (Isaiah 53:5).

6. As we partake of the Lord's Supper, let us examine ourselves — our lives and our commitment to God (1 Corinthians 11:27,28). And let us discern (see) the Lord's body as it hung on the cross, realizing that it was for us, — and in our stead — that He died there in atonement for the crushing burden of the sins of the ages. Let us remember also that He overcame death in the victory of the resurrection. †

Randy Kea is the preacher for the church of Christ in Forest Park, Georgia, USA.

Empty Tomb

**On a ghostly hill — gaunt, grim, a cross,
Looms 'gainst a dark'ning skyl
They lead our Lord in shame and loss,
And nail Him there to die.**

**Deep in the rock a grave is made,
Where warm heart throbs no more;
And there in the gloom our Lord is laid,
With a stone rolled o'er the door.**

**But Life is Lord, and God is Light!
There comes another day,
And Morning breaks the power of Night,
And shadows fly away.**

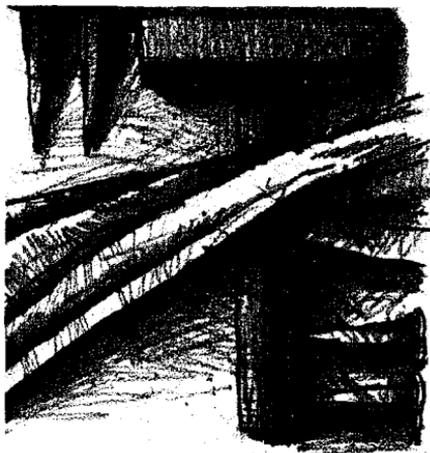
**That cross is now a guiding mark
Upon the road of time;
And He who died there in the dark
Has made its name sublime.**

**For Death was there defeated,
Upon that gloomy slope,
And a tomb evacuated
Was made the door of hope.**

— G.C. Brewer

We hear a great deal today about “the worship experience.” Just what is meant by this expression?

An all-out effort is being made in many places to make certain that the worship hour does not become, of all things, **boring!** These folks go to great lengths to see that each service is different. Like some theatrical production, they are constantly changing “the stage”. Indeed, their concept of worship is



The Worship Experience

Hershel Dyer

man-driven: whatever will excite and titillate the crowd becomes the goal. Hence, musical performers, stage productions, interpretive dancing, standup comics, etc., are utilized.

Erasmus, the Dutch scholar-reformer, complained back in the Middle Ages, “Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled.” This he said regarding the introduction of instruments to accompany the singing, which he referred to as “operose and theatrical music.” What would Erasmus say now, if he were to witness the entertainment craze which has captivated many worship planners?!

We are told that the television generation, baby boomers, etc. will

not tolerate the dull, listless worship services of past days. These modern souls are geared to that which thrills, excites, and avoids monotony.

Far be it from me to encourage “dull, listless worship services.” But, are we left with no choice between such languid service and an ever-changing pulpit-stage presentation? Have spiritual singing, fervent prayers, Biblical sermons, and the sacred supper lost their power to stir and refresh human hearts? Not in my book, and I know that I speak for countless deeply spiritual souls when I say this. †

Hershel Dyer is the preacher for the Tenth & Rockford congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

There I Am in the Midst

J.A. Thornton

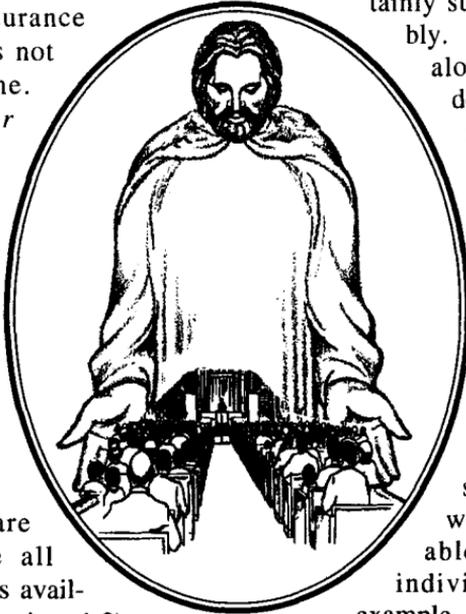
Yes. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). This is a wonderful thought and assurance because Jesus is not with everyone. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

Those who are in Christ have all spiritual blessings available to them (Ephesians 1:3). One of these blessings is salvation and this salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). One enters Christ by believing and being baptized (Galatians 3:26,27). Then we are to walk in Him (Colossians 2:6). Then if we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus keeps us clean (1 John 1:7). These things are essential if we would have the assurance of Jesus being with us.

Suggests an Assembly

The expression "where two or three are gathered" most certainly suggests an assembly. One may worship alone and should so do. This in no way removes the need for worship in the assembly, nor does assembled worship in any way minimize the need for personal devotion. It may also be pointed out that in the worshipping assembly, worship is acceptable to God on an individual basis. For example, all should be participating, even in unison, but God judges individually.

The writer of the Hebrew epistle said, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" and this is a part of holding fast the profession of our faith (Hebrews 10:23-25). In a time of heavy persecution, slavery and difficulty of assembly that we cannot imagine, Christians were told not to forsake the assembly.



WORSHIP

How much more should we be faithful to assemble in our time of great convenience.

In the Name of Jesus

Jesus said, "*When two or three are gathered in my name.*" We are told to do a number of things in His name: to be baptized, pray, sing and give thanks. "*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*" (Colossians 3:17). What does it mean to do a thing in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38)? Thayer's Greek Lexicon says it is to act by His authority. This is like the law officer saying "stop in the name of the law". That is, "I have the authority to stop you."

Therefore, when Jesus said, "*where two or three are gathered in my name*" He was simply saying where two or three are gathered "by my authority". Recognizing the meaning of "*in Jesus' name*" will help us to understand some other passages. In Mark 9:38 John said, "*Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followed not us and we forbade him...*" Jesus told them not to forbid him; then he observed, "*He that is not against us is for us.*" This principle applies only to those who do things *by the authority of Christ* and not to religious people who act *without His authority*. Those who are teaching, as "believers" in Christ, things which are not taught in His word are "against" Him, not "for" Him.

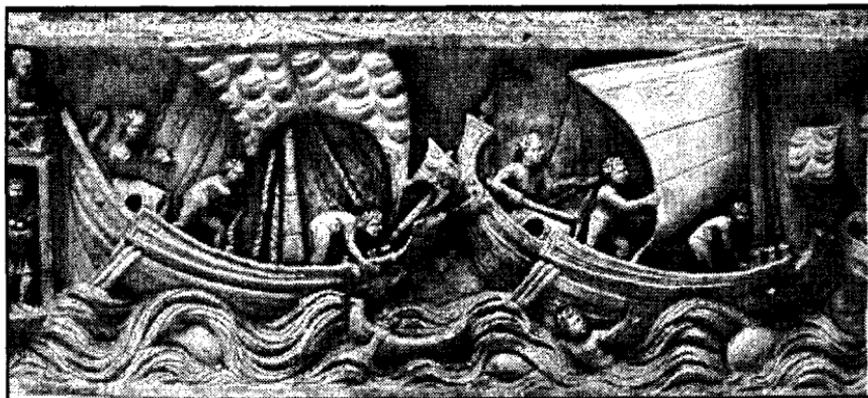
There Will I Be in the Midst of Them

This is a wonderful assurance. Does it not thrill us to know that when we assemble to worship, Jesus is there with us, not physically but spiritually? He is not in every assembly, but He is in the meeting that is *in His name*.

I am afraid that we are not conscious enough of His presence. He is the unseen guest. To help us visualize this better, **just suppose when you came into the meeting place Jesus, visibly, came and sat beside you. How would you feel? When the song service began would you sing if He were there? Would you day dream during the prayer? What about the preaching? Could you relax enough to doze off? Would you be thinking about lunch during the Lord's Supper if He were there? When you came to give, if Jesus actually sat by you, would you give more? When the service ended and Jesus walked out with you, would you rush out and ignore your brothers and sisters? Honestly, what would you do?**

You cannot see Him, but He sees you. He is right there beside you for "*where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18:20). †

J.A. Thornton is a long-time preacher of the Gospel living in Booneville, Mississippi, USA.



LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Doug Allee

The story is told in history of a Persian king, Xerxes, whose Navy was about to do battle with the Athenian Navy. So confident was Xerxes that his Navy would win, that he had a throne built on the shore of the mainland to watch the victory. To his disappointment, the Persian Navy sailed into a narrow inlet and was captured and destroyed by the Athenian Navy. This has come to be called the Battle of Salamis which occurred in 480 B.C.

Christians in some cases are like Xerxes. We go about building beautiful buildings and setting up elaborate worship services as if to watch Christ come and victoriously battle Satan. Yet, we, like Xerxes, are building thrones for defeat. We must be a part of the battle if victory is to be ours. Victory comes through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:58), but only if we are, in truth, soldiers.

Paul warned Timothy lest he become too involved with affairs of this world to be an effective soldier for Christ. Many have done that very thing today. Having enlisted, they turn their attentions to enjoying life here and making a living. After a short time, they are so entangled they cannot take time out to do battle for Christ.

About the same time as the Battle of Salamis, the Greek city-state of Sparta was being attacked. The news came in the middle of the Olympic

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Games. The Spartans could not take time out from their games to fight a war, so only 300 men went with the ruler of Sparta. Needless to say, they were defeated at Thermopylae Pass.

Will we sit idly by on our thrones while the kingdom of Christ is subjected to every evil device known to Satan? Are we to "play games" while only a small number do battle for Christ? Become a true soldier of Christ today. Remember,

Christ needs YOU.

"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus..... You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:1,3,4). †

Doug Allee is with the 249 Church of Christ in Houston, Texas, USA.



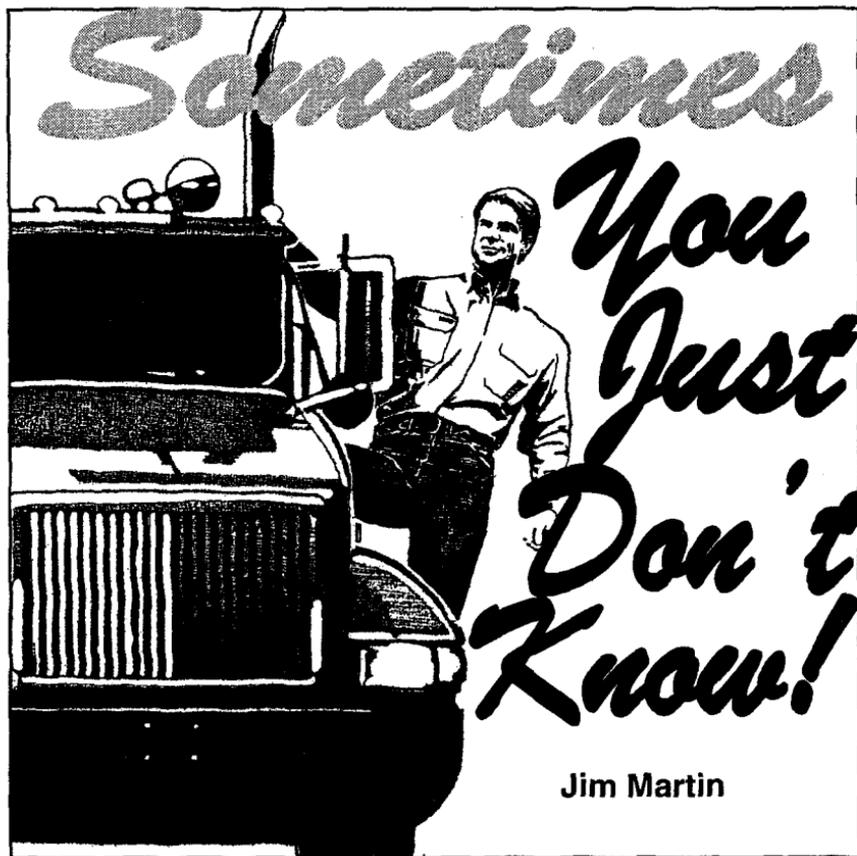
The Forgotten War

Don R. Carroll

America won her independence in the late 18th century but had to fight the same opponent again in the early 19th century to maintain her independence. In fact, most of the wars this country has fought were for the purpose of keeping our freedom.

There's a parallel here with the Christian life. Christians gained their freedom from the bondage of sin when they accepted and obeyed the commands of Jesus and were baptized into Him. But just as America had to fight again in 1812 to ensure her freedom, so Christians must continually fight the devil to ensure the freedom which we have in Christ. If we drop our guard, our defense, Satan will be right there to take us captive again under sin.

As Peter warns us, *"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that you have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*



One of the dorm counselors helping with the boys was a young man by the name of Chip Campbell. Chip had an interesting story to tell concerning his conversion. He grew up in Jack's Creek, Tennessee, just seven miles from Henderson — almost in the shadow of Freed Hardeman College. Yet, he didn't learn the truth from a college professor; he didn't hear a preacher proclaim the gospel; he was not even contacted by a Freed-Hardeman student.

No, in this college town, home of at least 50 faithful gospel preachers, with a Christian college where hundreds of young men and women are preparing for a life of Christian service, Chip Campbell heard the gospel from a truck driver!

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Chip was at the local Western Auto Store when an eighteen wheeler rolled in for delivery. During the unloading the subject of religion was brought up and the driver began to explain the New Testament teaching concerning the one church. Chip, who belonged to a denominational church, began to argue. Raising his voice, he vowed to the trucker that by the next delivery, he would prove him wrong by the Bible.

But the more Chip studied, the more the things this truck driver had taught made sense. After several days Chip contacted the preacher at the Jack's Creek congregation and with some more teaching was baptized into Christ. This fall, he plans to enter Freed-Hardeman and study to become a gospel preacher.

And the driver? For some reason he has never been sent back to Henderson — or at least Chip has never been able to make contact. Out on the road somewhere is a trucker who dared share his faith. He doesn't know what a part he

played in winning this soul to Christ. But that's the point. Sometimes you just don't know! †

Rescue

A loud alarming in the night
Of clanging bell and engine roar
And startled people, pale with fright
Watch as the raging flames up-soar.

Aghast, the friendly neighbors stand
And gaze upon the holocaust;
They offer many a helping hand
In sympathy for what is lost.

A raging flood and lives adrift
A cry for help rings in the air,
And kindly hands reach out to lift
As rescuers rush from everywhere.

Who could look on such a scene
With casual eye and easy breath,
Nor strive at once to intervene
And save one's fellowman from death?

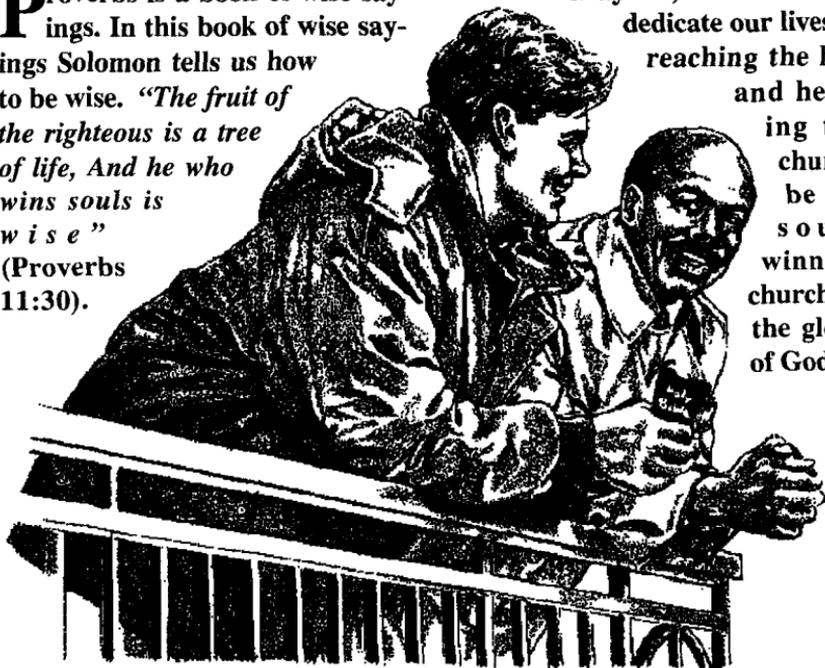
In darkness grope benighted souls
In paths of sin and death they stray,
While many a saintly soul beholds
And goes complacent on his way.

The Shepherd calls: "Go find My sheep
In desert drear or mountain high."
Shall we in selfish comfort sleep
Or shall we rise and heed that cry?

— Charles R. Brewer

Proverbs is a book of wise sayings. In this book of wise sayings Solomon tells us how to be wise. *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise”* (Proverbs 11:30).

May we, as Christians, dedicate our lives to reaching the lost and helping the church be a soul-winning church to the glory of God.



Soul Winning: A Way of Life

Charles Box

WHEN SOUL-WINNING BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE FOR YOU, NO ONE WILL HAVE TO TELL YOU TO STUDY THE BIBLE MORE. As you study the Bible with others you will naturally study more for yourself so as to be able to answer for your personal hope. *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* (1 Peter 3:15). Evangelism and personal Bible study go hand-in-hand.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

WHEN SOUL-WINNING BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE, WE ARE FORTIFIED AGAINST BACKSLIDING. Soul-winning is not an absolute guarantee that you will not fall away from God. The soul-winner will, however, be more likely to stay with the fight. He knows how easy it is to fall. He even understands that a part of his work is to restore those who have fallen. *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any 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).

WHEN SOUL-WINNING BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE, CHRISTIANS HAVE A PURPOSE WORTH LIVING FOR. Let us never forget who we are and why we are here! Christians are ambassadors for Christ. *“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God”* (2 Corinthians 5:20). What is my reason for existing, my purpose? My reason for existing is the winning of the lost!

The greatest challenge before us is to be a Christian and, out of an unselfish heart, to win others for Christ. Soul-winning will bring joy, happiness and contentment to your life. *“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”* (Daniel 12:3.)

Those Christians who have had the experience of cultivating a relationship with another soul, arranging occasions for a study of God’s word together, and prayerfully exploring those truths to the extent of seeing that soul respond to God in baptism have known one of the greatest joys in life!

WHEN SOUL-WINNING BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE, WE FULFILL OUR LORD’S REQUIREMENT, THAT WE BEAR FRUIT TO GOD. *“I am the true vine and My Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ... Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned”* (John 15:1-6). †

Charles Box preaches for the Walnut Street Church of Christ in Greenville, Alabama, USA.

BE STRONG!

BE STRONG!

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

BE STRONG!

Say not, "The days are evil. Who's to blame?"
And fold the hands and acquiesce — oh shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

BE STRONG!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not — fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

— *Maltbie Davenport Babcock*





On the walls of a large university is written: "On the plains of hesitation lie the blackened bones of countless millions, who, at the dawn of victory, sat down to rest and resting, died."

Charlie Tutor

"O FOR A FAITH THAT WILL NOT FAIL"

It is so very sad to see some soul, once fervent and zealous in the work of the Lord, and following the steps of Christ, turn aside from the holy commandment and forget his cleansing from sin. Over and over again Jesus teaches us the need for faithful perseverance on our part, that we may maintain that living hope to which we have been begotten.

Be faithful, endure, be steadfast, overcome — these and many more expressions are employed in the New Testament urging children of God to walk by faith and not to fizzle. Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia, "*You were running well*" (Galatians 5:7). Note the past tense. And we know that they faltered because Paul continued, "*Who hindered you that you should not obey the truth?*" A good ending following a good beginning demands constancy and consistency. Those

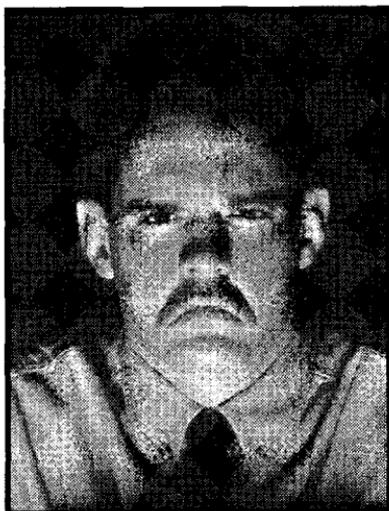
Christians in Galatia allowed someone (or something) to distract them and detour them from the way, the truth and the life (which is Christ) that leads to the Father.

On the other hand there are those who come into Christ, whose lives are in a constant state of change as they grow and develop more and more into the image of Christ. The words "falter" and "fail" are not in their vocabulary. They just keep on keeping on. It is not that the devil does not *tempt* them to turn aside; but it is that they do not *yield* to temptation. They exercise themselves unto godliness. Let's see the Lord's church grow from strength to strength as we grow individually, being truly the living stones in the spiritual house of the Lord which is of course, His church. †

Charlie Tutor is a preacher of the Gospel in Rapid City, SD, USA.

The Sin of a Bad Attitude

Bill Dillon



Men and women of God who would not think of gambling, drinking or committing an act of fleshly evil, may otherwise be guilty of a sour disposition with an envious, bitter or negative frame of mind. An individual may quote scripture, pray fervently and have an unblemished attendance record at worship services, yet, may possess such a critical and negative attitude about life that others actually wish to avoid them.

Are sins of the flesh less harmful than sins of the spirit? The sin of a bad attitude can cripple, if not kill, the progress of the Lord's church in any community.

Regardless of daily news, sorrowful circumstances or stormy weather, each of us has a duty to show ourselves true men and women of God and be of good

cheer.

The Bible says: "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4,5)

Jesus also said; "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

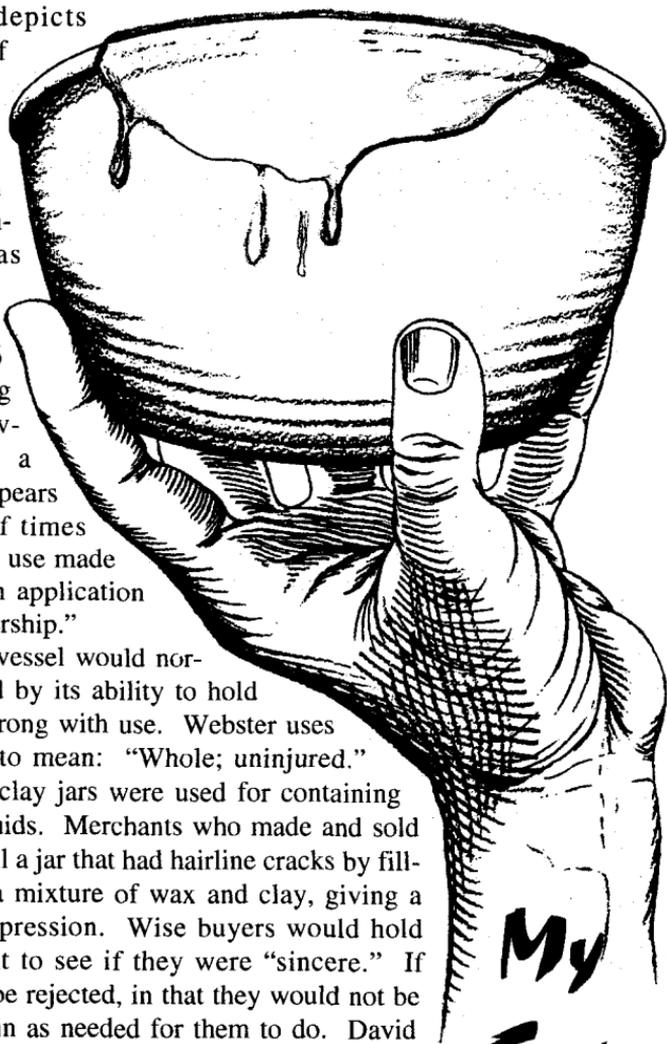
May our faith in God cause us always to see all circumstances in as favorable a light as possible and let us have a happy readiness to go onward in life. †

Bill Dillon is editor of *Gospel Gleaner* and preaches for the church of Christ in Mountain Home, AR, USA.

The Bible depicts followers of God as "vessels."

It seems as if there have always been those who were beneficial, as well as those who were of little value. The term is used 146 times in the King James Version, having reference to a "receptacle," but appears an equal number of times by other terms. The use made in many places is in application to spiritual "containership."

The value of a vessel would normally be determined by its ability to hold content or remain strong with use. Webster uses the word "sincere" to mean: "Whole; uninjured." During Bible times clay jars were used for containing and transporting liquids. Merchants who made and sold them would often sell a jar that had hairline cracks by filling the crack with a mixture of wax and clay, giving a good superficial impression. Wise buyers would hold them up to the light to see if they were "sincere." If flawed, they would be rejected, in that they would not be serviceable or contain as needed for them to do. David expressed the feeling that "*I am like a broken vessel*" (Psalm 31:12). The context seems to indicate that he felt useless and was being rejected even though he was a man of God. Jeremiah toured the shop of a potter and observed his work. The potter had his



**My
Cup**

Runneth Over

Michael L. King

vessel to become marred, so he made it again. Jeremiah talked with the Lord about doing Israel the same way — making them recreated vessels because of their being marred (Jeremiah 18:1-10).

Paul instructed Timothy that men are like vessels. Some will be “*vessels unto honor*,” others “*vessels unto dishonor*” (2 Timothy 2:16-21). Many homes today have gotten away from the practical use of vessels and possess them for ornamental purposes.

In the Lord’s church (great house) we are to be vessels unto honor, sincere, whole and uninjured! “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*” (Colossians 3:16). We are containers of the Word of God, carrying and dispensing His “*precious ointment*” to peoples far and near for the healing of the soul.

As God’s vessels, what if we are “insincere” or spiritually flawed, causing our message to dissipate? The healing of sinful wounds cannot occur for others and our worth is diminished because of a lack of utility for heaven’s benefit! The Lord told Ananias, just prior to his conversion, that Paul was His “chosen vessel” to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). The Lord’s church today should be eternally grateful for Paul having been a vessel unto honor and a dispenser of eternal truths.

The great Psalmist saw himself as having the ability to be a receptacle. He declared, “My cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5). He acknowledged God’s ability to abundantly give, but he also saw himself as a receiver. On one occasion Jesus called His twelve disciples together and instructed them concerning their mission. He challenged them thusly, “*Freely ye have received, freely give*” (Matthew 10:8). Does your “cup” overflow? Are you “sincere” and able to contain with an intent and purpose for life of pouring God’s blessings from one container to another?

Let me suggest some things that should be “running over” in our lives, characteristics which can bless others and enable their lives to be full and running over.

◆ God wants our **JOY** to be full. “*These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full*” (John 15:11).

◆ God desires His people to be receptacles of **PEACE**. He has made every provision for us to have a full measure of His peace. “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14:27).

◆ When Jude penned the words which he received by inspiration, he

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wrote that he desired for them to be filled with **LOVE**. *"Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied"* (Jude 2).

◆ Every Christian has the wonderful potential of being filled with God's **POWER**. We are to be powerfully strong as vessels of God in order to contain a powerful message! Paul gave the Christians at Ephesus charge following a dissertation on their responsibilities to their families and to God. He told them to *"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might"* (Ephesians 6:10).

◆ It does not come as a surprise that David would give great emphasis to **PRAISE** for God. He was a vessel full of respect and adoration for His God and he admonished his readers to do the same. He said,

"Praise ye the Lord, I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation" (Psalm 111:1). We should be filled with worship!

◆ Finally, while we are overflowing with the above blessings, we must reach down deep into our souls and find a **ZEAL** for doing something with what we have! We anticipate the great coming of the Lord *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:13-14).

Are we **sincere** vessels unto honor for Christ's cause and the salvation of others? †

Michael L. King preaches for the Grant Street Church of Christ in Decatur, AL, USA.



- ✿ The fault-finder reveals no one's faults more clearly than his own.
- ✿ The house of God can't be built with stumbling blocks.
- ✿ The only thing to lose by an honest investigation of the truth is error.
- ✿ Room for improvement is the largest room in the world.
- ✿ You are not ready to live until you are ready to die.
- ✿ Someone told you about Christ. Have you told anyone about Him?
- ✿ One reason for doing the right thing today is tomorrow.
- ✿ Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can break my heart.
- ✿ A pint of example is worth a barrelful of advice.



How do you measure up?

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of workers of iniquity,

...Trust in the Lord,
and do good;

Dwell in the land,
and feed on His faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your
heart.

Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,

And He shall bring it to pass...

Rest in the Lord,
and wait patiently for Him;

...Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;

Do not fret – it only causes harm.

Psalm 37:1-8

LIVING TOGETHER BEFORE MARRIAGE

Max Patterson

For a long time there have been individuals who championed the idea that if a man and woman would live together before they get married, it would allow them to know whether they are compatible for marriage. Many people have bought into this idea. We know that many households are made up of unmarried couples. But, alas, all is not well in such situations. Consider the following:

- A woman who lives with a man before marriage is more than two times as likely to be a victim of domestic violence (Washington State University researcher Jon Stets).

- Women who live with men outside of marriage suffer depression more than three times that of married women (National Institute of Mental Health).

- Those men and women who live together and then get married report less satisfaction in marriage than other couples (National Institute for Health Care Research).

- Couples who live together and then get married have a significantly higher divorce rate than those who did not live together first (University of Denver researcher, Scott Stanley).

Are you surprised at the above? I am not at all surprised. There is no way that man has found that is better than God's way. The research given above seriously challenges any value of living together before marriage.

Further, in the work, **Why Marriages Succeed or Fail**, University of Washington researcher John Gottman makes the argument that many couples who live together do so because they already suspect that more permanent commitments are doomed to failure, and they simply fulfill their own expectations. Whatever the reasons are, it is plain that God's way is best. *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Genesis 2:24). †

Max Patterson is the preacher for the Hillcrest congregation on in Neosho, Missouri, USA.

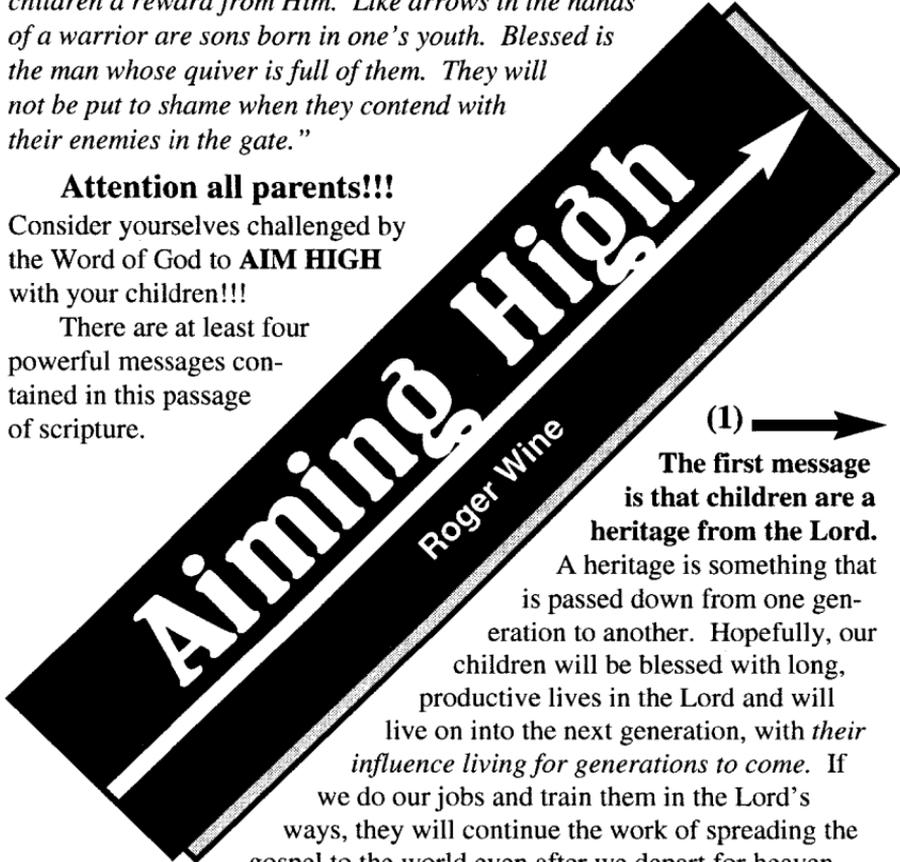
THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Psalm 127:3-5: "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate."

Attention all parents!!!

Consider yourselves challenged by the Word of God to **AIM HIGH** with your children!!!

There are at least four powerful messages contained in this passage of scripture.



Aiming High
Roger Wine

(1) →

The first message is that children are a heritage from the Lord.

A heritage is something that is passed down from one generation to another. Hopefully, our children will be blessed with long, productive lives in the Lord and will live on into the next generation, with *their influence living for generations to come*. If we do our jobs and train them in the Lord's ways, they will continue the work of spreading the gospel to the world even after we depart for heaven.

This is truly a heritage that we want to pass on!!!

(2) →

The second message is that our children are a gift from God. How often do you look at your children and thank God for His precious gifts? This thanksgiving should be part of our "prayer without ceasing". But, as is true with all the gifts from God, children are not given for our own possession, to be kept selfishly to ourselves. Rather, we are blessed so abundantly that there is always enough to share!!! The labor we put into training our children will benefit our family, their families, and so many others, if we truly train them in God's ways. The tragedy of tragedies occurs when parents neglect the spiritual guidance of their children and lose their souls.

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(3) →

Third, there is a message here about being intentional. Our children are like *arrows which are to be aimed*. Everything we do should be with the focus and mindset of aiming our children toward Jesus. That is the determining factor in what we should and should not do, with and for our kids. Consider the target — Jesus — and aim your children accordingly.

(4) →

The final message I see here is that we are the warriors God is speaking about, and we are to train our children for battle. We are to train them in the ways of God and equip them to fight with the weapons of righteousness, not the weapons of the world (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). If we train them well, they will fight alongside of us as we “*contend with our enemies in the gate*.” An added blessing is that as we go to *war for them* right now, we are setting an example for them to follow for the future. Someday, the Lord willing, they will contend *side by side with us*, and maybe even *for us!* Consider how, in so many cases today, we see parents who are being cared for by their children in their old age. What a blessing and what a perfect plan! Praise God!!! In these situations, the proverb rings true, “*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it*” (Proverbs 22:6). **AIM HIGH** and point them to Jesus!!! †

Roger Wine is youth minister for the Long Island Church of Christ in New York, USA.

To Shannon

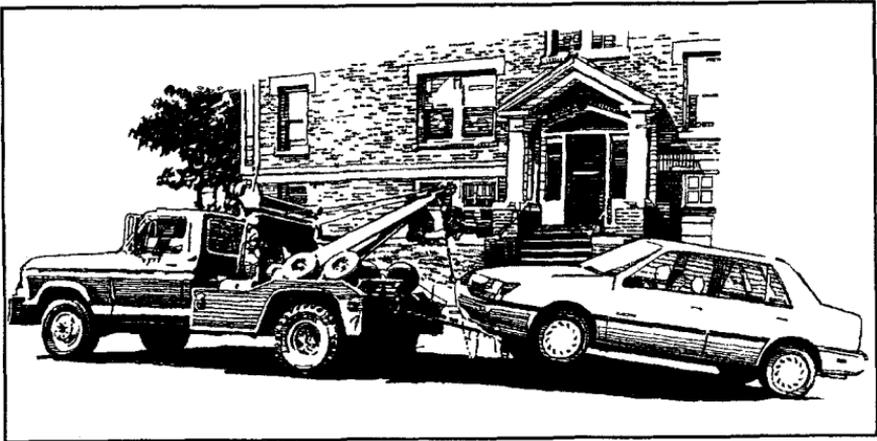
Little Pixie-Face

— Our gift from God —

What thoughts are there
Behind those twinkling eyes
And laughing lips,
Upturned in kisses sweet?
Would that I could have
The pureness of your mind
Unstained by guilt of sin,
Radiant still
With heaven's love
And God's own gentleness;
Would that I could know
That bliss.



— Betty Burton Choate



Look at the Wreckage. . .

Bobby Wheat

Have you ever been in a salvage yard? Several times when I was a teenager, a lack of ready cash forced me to scurry off to the salvage yard to find cheap parts for my beat-up Volkswagen.

It was always rather depressing to walk through those acres of wreckage. Thousands of cars — rows and rows of them — all with broken or missing windows, some with fenders gone, none of them with axles or engines or bumpers. But all of them had once been gleaming, well-tuned, brand-new

cars. Looking at what was, and thinking about what could have been with just a little care, always left me with an emptiness.

I get the same feeling when I look at many people. At one time — back when they were kids — they were delighted to come to Sunday School, to hear Bible stories, to talk about Jesus, and learn how the world was created by God. But then, for some reason, they lost interest. They got involved in other things, like school and sports and cars and friends — and they became

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wreckage. They now reside in the junkyards of human existence — no hope, no future, no promise, no life. They don't know Jesus; to them the church is just a waste of time, and the Bible is a book of fairy tales.

Their parents look through the wire mesh fence which surrounds the junkyard and wonder what happened. Why don't they want to worship God any more? Why are their lives so messed up? Why do they have to be lost? Why are their families broken apart?

The answer is both easy and difficult; easy to say, difficult to swallow.

Those lives are wrecked because of a lack of care. Oh, I know that they had all the physical things a person could ever need — lots of food, a nice house, good education, toys, bicycles, cars, opportunities to participate and excel. They wanted for nothing! I know that. But I still say that there was a lack of care. *There was a lack of concern for things that really mattered.*

● Somewhere along the line, their parents forgot that kids aren't the best decision-makers in the world, and that they need to be told what to do for a long time before they can figure out what's good for them.

● Somewhere along the line, Mom and Dad stopped listening to bedtime or mealtimes prayers.

● Somewhere back there, those

kids just got too big for Bible stories.

● Somewhere along the line, it didn't seem so important whether they dated Christians or not.

● And you do remember that Mom and Dad just had too many things to do and they just didn't have time to be involved in teaching Bible classes or church activities.

● Somewhere back there, someone forgot to take care.

And now — now they have to look at the wreckage of their children, and wonder...

"...fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

"Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction" (Proverbs 19:18)

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). †

Bobby Wheat was a long-time missionary to Zimbabwe, having recently resettled in Bartlettville, OK, USA.



Mother And Home

Jack Gordon

I cannot visit or talk to my Mother. But I can and I do take roses to her grave in Oak Grove Cemetery from time to time. And I can remember so much.

I remember times when Mother kissed those little hurts to make them well. I remember how she prayed and watched and worried and nursed us through the night when there was a more serious problem.

I remember how hard she tried

to fix special meals for those holiday occasions when there was so little to fix. I remember times when she said she had eaten so much she didn't want dessert. And now as I look back I realize that she probably just wanted the rest of us to be able to have more dessert.

I remember dresses she made for my sisters. I remember clothes she altered and clothes she patched for all of us to make them do.

I remember cold winter nights

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

when there was no coal for the furnace and we huddled around a little gas heater while we took turns reading the Bible before we went to bed.

I remember walking to Sunday School and worship every Sunday, rain or shine, hot or cold, when we didn't have a car and there was no money for the streetcar. I remember the Mother's Day when two of my closest friends and I were baptized into Christ.

I remember her words of encouragement when troubles piled up and things didn't go our way. I remember times when I didn't agree with her. I remember her concern and disappointment when our behavior was not what she had taught us it should be.

I remember when we were concerned because so many had more than we did, she taught us that it was not what we had that was important, but how we took care of

what we did have and what we did with it. I remember when we were worried about what others thought, she taught us that people who judge don't matter and that people who really count won't judge.

Memories of home. I can't go home again. Mother is gone. The house we lived in is gone. Some of us don't like to say, "I can't go home again." But these changes are just part of the life that God gives to us. Nothing remains the same. God wants these changes — and He wants them to bring maturity to our souls.

If we strive to grow, if we strive to be what God desires us to be, the time will come when we will truly "go home," to a far better home, in a "land where we will never grow old." †

Jack Gordon is a part of the church of Christ in Arnold, MO, USA.

Parenting

For a parent to require a child to wash his face and keep his body clean, but not require it to learn and obey the Bible, is to teach it that the body is worth more than the soul, that cleanness of body is worth more than a pure heart and a clean and holy spirit.

For a parent to require a child to learn spelling and reading, but not require it to study the Bible is to teach it, by a forcible object lesson, that it is much more important to be qualified to live in this world than to be fitted to live in heaven. There is no evading this truth. The parent who so treats and impresses his child is the worst enemy that child has.

Parents, Beware!



A fellow decided to become a monk. He was assigned to a monastery and took a vow of silence. After 10 years his superior told him that he could say two words. He said, "Bed hard."

After 20 years he was told that he could say two more words. He replied, "Food lousy."

After his 30th year in the monastery he was given permission to say two more words. The monk then said, "I quit." His superior stated, "That's fine. All you've done for 30 years is complain."



An ear doctor was raving about an extraordinary new hearing aid. "I wear it myself, and I swear I can hear better than anyone else."

"Oh, really? What kind is it?"
"About 11:20."

My doctor explained the difference in the pills that he prescribed for me. He said, "The little red pills are for your condition, and the little white ones are for when you find out how much the little red ones cost."



An Indian attended church one Sunday, but was unimpressed. When asked about the preacher's sermon he said, "High wind, big thunder, but no rain."



Sam suspected that his wife might have a hearing problem. One night he positioned himself across the room from her as she sat with her back to him in her favorite chair. He softly asked her, "Can you hear me?"

When she didn't answer, he moved closer and repeated, "Can you hear me?" Still there was no answer.

He then moved closer and again asked, "Can you hear me?" No reply.

Finally, he repeated the question from directly behind his wife's chair, whereupon she responded, "For the fourth time, Yes!"

PROVERBS 17:22

A big game hunter went on safari with his wife and mother-in-law. One evening the wife awoke to discover that her mother was gone. Rushing to her husband, the wife insisted that they both try to find her. The hunter picked up his rifle and started to look for her. In a clearing not far from the camp they came upon a chilling sight. The mother-in-law was backed up against a thick, impenetrable bush, and a large male lion was facing her.

The wife cried, "What are we going to do?" "Nothing," said the husband. "The lion got himself into this mess, let him get himself out of it."



Customer in restaurant: "Call the manager — I can't eat this awful stuff."

Waiter: "I can call him, but it's no use. He won't eat it either."



Father to son: "When Abraham Lincoln was your age, he used to walk 10 miles every day to get to school."

Son's reply: "When he was your age, he was president."

The taxi driver answered a call one day. A lady came out of the house with three small children, put them in the cab and said, "Start the meter. I'll be back in a few minutes."

The driver sat waiting, and the children bawled and yelled. Fifteen minutes later the mother came back out of the house and asked, "How much do I owe you?"

The driver asked if she wasn't going any place. "No," she said. "But I had a long distance phone call to make, and I needed peace and quiet. Here's the fare, and thanks for waiting."



Diner: "Waiter, this steak is small."

Waiter: "Yes, it is, sir."

Diner: "On top of that, it's tough."

Waiter: "Then you're lucky it's small."

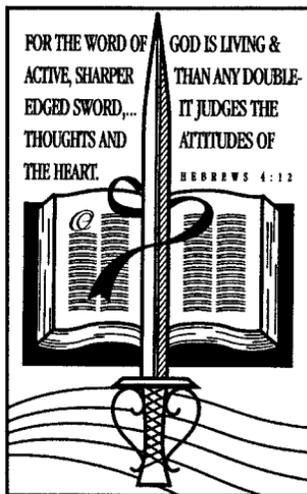


I asked my brother-in-law what color eyes his preacher has. He said, "I don't know. When he prays he shuts his eyes, and when he preaches I shut my eyes."

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD!

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." —Heb. 4:12

- Converts the Soul.....** Psa. 19:7
- It is Able to Save.....** Jas. 1:21
- Saved by Gospel.....** 1 Cor. 15:2
- The Power to Save.....** Rom. 1:16
- Begotten by Gospel.....** 1 Cor. 4:15
- Born by the Word.....** 1 Pet. 1:23
- Quickened by Word.....** Psa. 119:50
- Saved by Words.....** Acts 11:13-14
- Seed of Kingdom.....** Luke 8:11
- Sword of the Spirit.....** Eph 6:17



- Word Gives Light.....** Psa. 119:130
- It Produces Faith.....** Rom. 10:17
- Sanctified by Word.....** Jno. 17:17
- Cleansed by Word.....** Jno. 15:2
- Word Makes Free.....** Jno. 8:32
- It Works In Us.....** 2 Thes. 2:13
- Saved by Preaching.....** 1 Cor. 1:21
- Word is Complete.....** 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- Gives All Needed.....** 2 Pet. 1:3
- Needs No Revision.....** Gal. 1:6-8

Dillard Thurman

Do Not Quench the Spirit

Don L. Norwood

1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30



Introduction: God does not save mankind and then leave him to his own resources. He abides with the person who will obey His will and helps him in his struggle against sin within and without. This help comes from the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of every child of God (John 14:23; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

I. The Fact of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- A. The fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian is very clear in the New Testament Scriptures (Romans 8:9-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16).
 - 1. In this passage to the Romans the Apostle affirms two main things:
 - (a) The Spirit's presence in the person is a proof of sonship.
 - (b) It is God's pledge of a resurrection to immortality.
 - 2. In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 the Apostle shows that the human body of the Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit of God. He also said the same thing to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:19-22).

II. What Is the Function of the Indwelling Spirit?

- A. First, let us be clear on a very important point: *the Holy Spirit communicates with our human minds through the written word of God, the Holy Scriptures. He does not make new revelations, as is so often claimed, which contradict what He has already said in the Bible.*
 - 1. This is why the Apostle said in Romans 8:14,16, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God...."

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

2. Everything that one knows about Christ and His will for mankind has to be learned from the Scriptures.
- B. Yet without the Holy Spirit dwelling within to help the Christian obey the teachings of the Scriptures, the person could not be successful (Romans 7:14-25; 8:1, 9-14). Especially notice what is said in verse 13: "...for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
 1. We also learn from the Scripture that the Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers to God (Romans 8:26). We humans can reach our limit in knowing how to communicate our deepest yearnings to the Father. This Scripture assures us that God's Holy Spirit knows our hearts and helps us deliver these things to God.
- C. We Christians received the gift of the Holy Spirit at the time of our baptism into Christ, as recorded in Acts 2:38.
 1. This means that the Holy Spirit would indwell us from that time forward, and it also means that we could be recipients of all the spiritual blessings which would come from learning and obeying the teachings the Holy Spirit would and did deliver.
- D. Therefore when one of us, who is a Christian, refuses to be obedient to the word of the Lord, we do despite to the Spirit of grace; we grieve the Holy Spirit; and we quench His help and influence in our life (1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 10:27ff).

III. The Human Will and the Holy Spirit of God.

- A. Even though the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian, He does not tamper with the person's own will. As long as the human lives in the flesh he has the liberty to *choose* to have the mind of the flesh or a mind that is centered upon obeying the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1,14; Galatians 5:16-21).
- B. In summation, here is what the Holy Spirit can and will do for the Christian, unless the Christian refuses to be led by the Spirit:
 1. He helps us overcome in our struggle with the lusts of the flesh (Romans 8:11-14).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

2. He helps us communicate our deepest longings to God (Romans 8:26,27).
3. He will resurrect us from the dead one day.
4. The knowledge that we have of His indwelling presence is the greatest incentive to our living holy lives (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). If we will make our own spirit follow the leading of the Holy Spirit through obedience to His word then we will truly be God's spiritual children and will inherit with Christ (Romans 8:14,16,17).

IV. Invitation:

- A. No one can have the gift of the Holy Spirit unless he or she is willing to obey the gospel of Christ. One must believe the gospel facts, repent of sin, confess Christ as Lord and be baptized into Christ. Have you done this from your heart? What will you do? †

Don L. Norwood is involved in full-time missionary work in behalf of the country of India.

Reconciliation

Owen Cosgrove

Sin cried out, "I'm sorry!"
Grace answered, "I forgive."
Wrong said, "I deserve to die."
Love said, "Repent and live."

Guilt said, "I am torn inside."
Truth said, "Confess and be made free."
Life said, "I am heavy laden."
The Lord said, "Come to Me."

The weary said, "Where can I go
With evil's burdens sore?"
God said, "My child, obey My word,
And live forevermore."

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

2 Timothy 4:2

God has always chosen the means of preaching to save people (Titus 1:3; Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18; Luke 24:47; Acts 11:14).

"The" is a definite article meaning the specific word of Christ, the apostles' doctrine (John 14:6; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 4:11,12).

In times when the gospel is well received and in times when one will be persecuted for preaching it.

Preach the word;
be instant in season,
out of season;
reprove, rebuke, exhort
with all longsuffering
and doctrine.

To censure one for sin and teaching false doctrine; to urge and warn brethren to continue in the faith.

Never, never give up or compromise the teaching Timothy had received from Paul (See Acts 20:28; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-17; 2 Timothy 3: 4:3ff).

Paul was in prison, suffering for preaching the Gospel of Christ. He foresees this for Timothy also and urges him to be willing to die for the faith (Revelation 2:10).

Fenter Northern

John 3:16

Charles E. Burch

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16)

This is a very comforting verse of Scripture in which Jesus stated, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* This verse certainly teaches that one is saved by faith. I do not wish to minimize the importance of faith at all, but to consider the question instead: What type of faith is Jesus speaking of?

Does this verse teach that a soul can be saved by “faith only”? If one says, “Yes, it does”, then he runs into some problems with other Scriptures. To claim to be saved by “faith only” removes the need to do anything else. Those who advocate this doctrine teach that salvation is simply believing in Christ as God’s Son and accepting Him as one’s personal Savior. Certainly, one must believe! Jesus said, *“...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24).

If one places an interpretation on a verse of Scripture which con-

tradicts another verse, then he has used an incorrect interpretation on one or both verses.

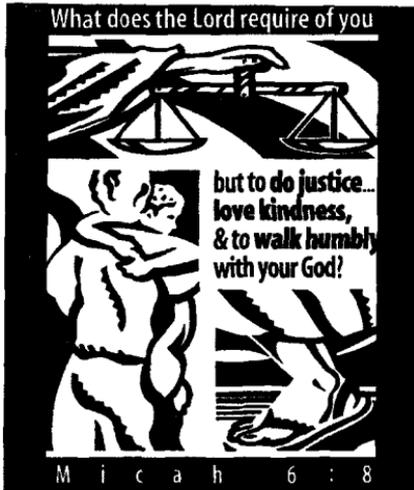
Therefore, let us consider some other passages. It seems that there were those in the first century who felt that “faith only” could save them. James wrote, *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone”* (James 2:17) Again he stated, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”* (James 2:26). Now notice, *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”* (James 2:24). If we could be saved by separating John 3:16 from the rest of the Bible and doing nothing more than believing on Christ as the Son of God, the Holy Spirit would not have guided James in making the above statements, for James contradicts *the theory of being saved by faith only.*

Paul wrote, *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in*

flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Notice what Christ is going to do to those who "obey not the gospel." However, John 3:16 does not teach anything about the Gospel which must be obeyed.

So, what is John 3:16 teaching? **It is speaking of a faith that would move and motivate the individual to do all Christ said in order to be saved.** It is so sad that countless seemingly religious people are unwilling to accept the many other commands in our Lord's teaching. †

Charles E. Burch is the preacher for the Findlay Church of Christ in Sparta, TN, USA.



The Power of God's Word

Mike Bentley

There is nothing in this world quite like the Bible. It says something about every topic, problem, and issue that comes up in one's life. Even when it does not specifically state something, it gives guiding principles for a correct and reasonable solution. Now that, my friends, is **power!**

Paul says that "*the gospel is the power of God unto salvation*" (Romans 1:16). Notice, he says that it is **the** power. If it is **the** power, then there is no other medium through which God intends to convert people and guide them through this life in preparation for the next.

To some people, however, the Bible is a dead letter. But it is most certainly not dead, for the Scriptures say, "*For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*" (Hebrews 4:12).

The word of God is here described as living and powerful, sharp and discerning. It came with power, and it has not lost the power to convict and convert the sinner. Jesus said that if anyone rejects His word, he is rejecting God (John 12:48,49). †

The Lord, **Help for the Troubled**

Gary C. Hampton

Psalm 3, Psalm 4

Most believe the third Psalm was written by David while he was fleeing from Absalom. It has often been called the morning hymn. Of course, these thoughts also apply to the Lord during the time of His betrayal and trial.

The first 2 verses describe the way those around viewed David. The rebels' ranks were growing rapidly, as can be seen in 2 Samuel 15:12,13. They were saying God had abandoned the king and would no longer help him. Since God is the only real source of help, one who is cast away by Him would be in a totally hopeless condition. One of Saul's relatives viewed the events surrounding Absalom's rebellion as God taking vengeance on David for the blood of the house of Saul (2 Samuel 16:5-8).

Reality is much more clearly stated in verses 3 and 4. David ascended the Mount of Olives, weeping and with his head covered (2 Samuel 15:30), but God lifted up

his head! David's calling God his shield is reminiscent of the Lord's words to Abraham when He was making a covenant with him, as well as Moses' final blessing on the children of Israel (Genesis 15:1; Deuteronomy 33:29). God had not abandoned David, but He had heard his prayer!

It is interesting to observe that David required Zadok to carry the ark of the covenant back into the city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 15:24,25), so the king was separated from, as Keil and Delitzsch put it, "the resting place of the Divine Presence. But his prayer urged its way on to the cherubim-throne; and to the answer of Him who is enthroned there, there is no separating barrier of space or created thing" (page 106).

As he looked back at the previous night, in verses 5,6, David was able to thankfully say he fell asleep without fear and was protected by God. No matter how great the num-

TEXTUAL STUDIES

bers of people that joined Absalom and surrounded him, David was not afraid! Keil and Delitzsch say David's lack of fear "is not uttered in a tone of triumph, but is only a quiet, meek expression of believing confidence" (Page 107).

The song closes in verses 7,8 with David's confident request for help. He portrayed his enemies as wild animals using their teeth to cut and tear at him. However, he also recalled that God had always struck the jaw of his enemies and caused their teeth to be broken out. He recognized God as the one, and only one, who was able to save him. Then, he asked God's blessing upon those people who had been deceived and led astray in the rebellion. Here, there seems to be an obvious prophetic reference to the words of Jesus on the cross, when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

The fourth Psalm is called the evening song and is thought to have been written about the same time. David, likely with the help of Asaph, the singer, opens with a confident call for God to hear him in his time of distress (Psalm 50:15; 91:15,16). God not only possesses righteousness but also protects those who are righteous, which David knew from past experience.

David questioned how long the

sons of men, in contrast to the sons of God, would seek to find some dirt to ruin him. He thought they should know that God had set him apart to protect him, so his enemies should have stood in awe of the Almighty and offered righteous sacrifices. As Roy Lanier, Sr. wrote, "No one can offer such sacrifices while he is living contrary to God's will" (1956, P177).

While others might have questioned the source of good, David asked God to bestow His blessings upon him (Numbers 6:24-26). David had known greater blessings from God than a farmer receiving a bountiful harvest. He acknowledged that God had enabled him to rest peacefully at night and had caused him to live in safety. †

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"Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people" (Psalm 3:8).

"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).



Do any
today

have Holy Spirit baptism?

Maxie B. Boren

The reason the apostles received “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” was twofold: (1) to be inspired to preach God’s word inerrantly, and (2) to be enabled to confirm the message proclaimed by miraculous means. The com-

BIBLE QUESTIONS

plete revelation of God was not finished until the end of the first century, so the apostles needed Divine help in those intervening years to insure total accuracy in their preaching and writing, and they needed to be able to convince the people to whom they preached that they were indeed spokesmen of God. Thus, Christ promised them the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" that they might be miraculously empowered as His witnesses. Read carefully Luke 24:46-49, Acts 1:1-8;2:1-4; and further, read John 14:26; 16:13.

In Mark 16:15-20, we find our Lord commissioning the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, and we are informed that they went forth *"and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed."* The sacred record emphasizes this in Acts 14:3, concerning Paul and Barnabas: *"Long time they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands."*

In another place, the Scriptures inquire, *"how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by*

manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:3,4).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were designed of God to assist the church in its infancy. But He never intended for these miraculous empowerings to continue indefinitely. They were to serve their purpose, then cease. That is precisely what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. *"That which is perfect"* in verse 10 undoubtedly refers to the complete revelation of God's will. This was accomplished by the end of the first century A. D. The word of God had been revealed, and confirmed by that time, and the early church had been cared for in a special way during its infancy. When the need was no longer there, the supernatural aid stopped.

It was true in the first century, as it is true today, that Satan uses the seeming miraculous to confuse and distort the simple truth of the Gospel. To have the written word for guidance is safer for us by far.

I affirm that no one living today has any miraculous power given by the Holy Spirit. No one today has "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," nor any miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, all the claims to the contrary notwithstanding. †

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

It is not surprising that some cultists who deny the deity of Christ would eschew the worship of the Lord. But is it a valid practice to worship Jesus? We confidently affirm that it is.

A divine being, i.e., one who possesses the nature of Deity, is wor-

show that some merely “reverenced” Jesus in much the same way one would honor any important dignitary. Consider, for instance, the case of the disciples’ demeanor after Jesus had walked upon the Sea of Galilee. When the Lord entered the boat, these men “worshiped him,

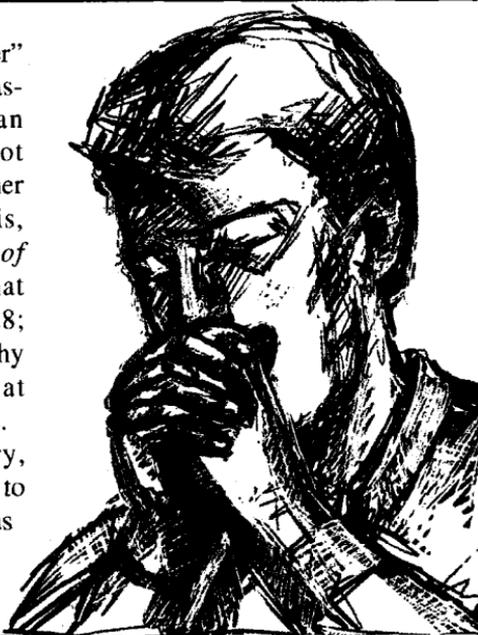
Is it appropriate to worship

thy of worship. Both Testaments repeatedly affirm this concept (see Psalm 18:3; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 22:9).

If it is alleged that only “the Father” is under consideration in such passages, we reply that such is an unwarranted assertion which not only lacks proof, it contradicts other biblical references. The truth is, *God, as a being, is deserving of praise.* If it is thus the case that Christ is divine (John 1:1; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8), and if Deity is worthy of worship, then it follows that Christ is worthy of Christian praise.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus frequently allowed Himself to be worshiped. There are numerous passages which portray the Lord in this light (see Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; Mark 5:6,7; John 9:35-38). It will not do to argue that these texts only

Jesus?



Wayne Jackson

BIBLE QUESTIONS

saying, *Of a truth you are the Son of God*" (Matthew 14:33). That they were honoring Him as a divine being is beyond dispute. Further, it is of tremendous significance that on these occasions when folks bowed before the Lord and worshiped Him, there was not a single case in which Christ rebuked the worshippers or suggested in any way that He was unworthy of such adoration. Our Lord thus stands in dramatic contrast to Peter, who refused worship (Acts 10:25-26), and even to angels, who similarly did not allow themselves to be so revered (Revelation 19:10; 22:8,9).

Even the angels worship Christ. In one of His foundational arguments designed to show the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old, the writer of Hebrews affirms that all of the angels (through whom the Mosaic law came) worship Christ (the author of the new law).

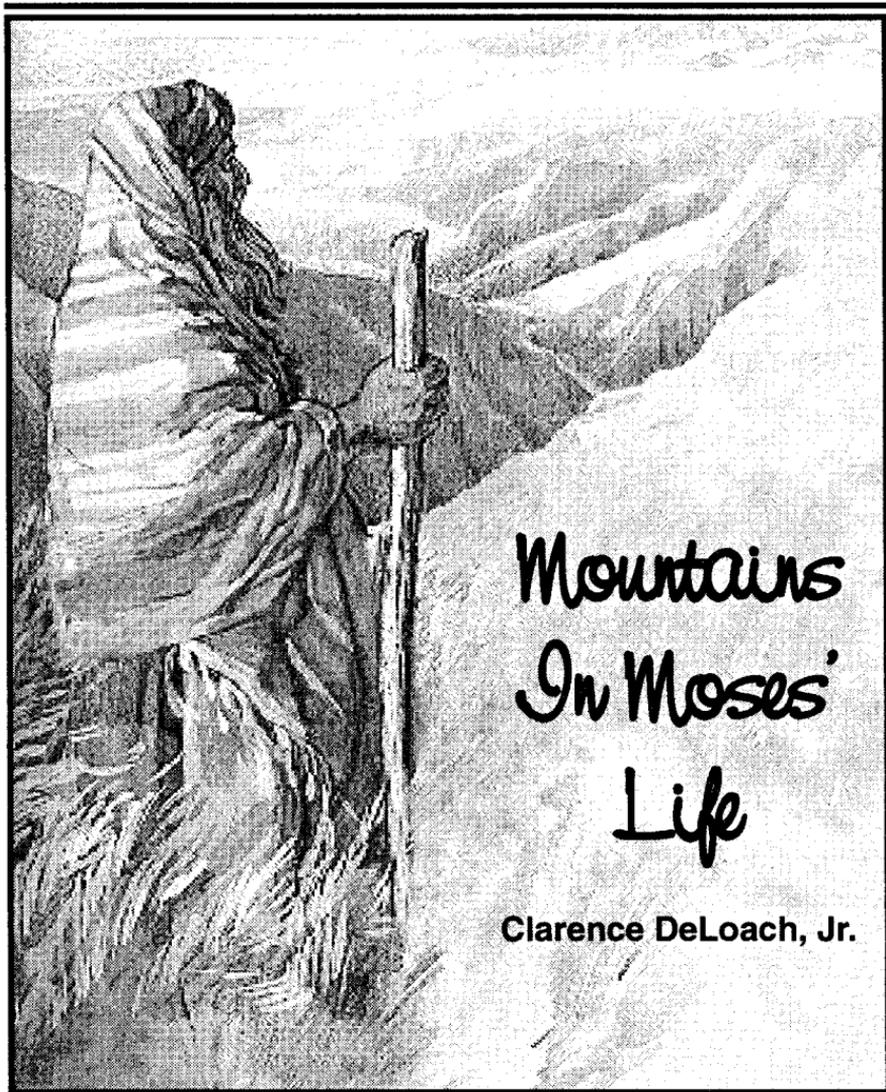
"Let all the angels of God worship him" (1:7). Since angels worship Christ, and as we are "lower" than they (Hebrews 2:76), it follows that our worship of the Lord is entirely appropriate. Surely no one can carefully study the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation and not see that the Lamb of God is worthy of the worship of the entire creation. In fact, in the heavenly setting, Jesus is given the same sort of adoration as the Father (see 5:13b).

Paul explicitly states that Christ is so exalted that it is at His name that *"every knee should bow"* and *"every tongue confess that he is Lord"* (Phil. 2:10,11). The reference to bowing the knee is an obvious allusion to worship (cf. Isaiah 45:23; Romans 11:4). Clearly, Christ is worthy of worship. †

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Facts Regarding the Recognition of Jesus Christ as Deity.

- * Jesus was born into a Jewish setting, among people who were expecting the Messiah but whose conviction was expressed in the proclamation, "The Lord our God is One!"
- * By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament writers clearly identified and explained Jesus' Deity and Sonship, as One worthy of worship.
- * Humanity — and even the church — lies always in varying degrees of knowledge and understanding. Overlooking the clear teaching of the New Testament, and turning to human logic for answers, believers met in Nicea in 325 A.D. for the purpose of deciding if it was appropriate to worship Jesus! The doctrine of "the Trinity", worded in the Nicene Creed, was the result. But the Scriptures themselves had already declared His divinity!



*Mountains
In Moses'
Life*

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

Moses was an old man: 120 years as a matter of fact. He had brought Israel to the border of the promised land. He had patiently endured while leading hundreds of

thousands of people — a rebellious nation. He had seen one generation die and another rise.

One of God's final orders to Moses is recorded in Numbers

BIBLE CHARACTERS

27:12: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel."

Mountains play a prominent role in the Bible. Great things were done on mountains. Perhaps this has given rise to our expression "mountaintop experience." Look at three mountains in Moses' life:

First: The Mountain of Calling. It all began with Moses on a mountain. It was from Mt. Sinai that God called to Moses out of the "burning bush." There he met God in a marvelous way. There his mission was set out! There he was commissioned and called to service. There he stood on holy ground. His was a mountaintop experience, but so was ours when we were called to be Christians.

Second: The Mountain of Service. Again the Lord called Moses to the mountain. Here God communicated His law to Moses with the command, "Go and tell the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:3). This was the mountain of service. God revealed the manner in which

His people could serve and obey Him. These were the conditions of blessings in their lives.

There is no greater joy or blessing than serving God. It brings the greatest satisfaction and purpose to life. It is indeed a mountaintop experience to live and serve as Christians.

Third: The Mountain of Death. Moses is now an old man. He has served well. Again, he is called to the mountain. God wanted him to see the land and then he would be gathered to his people. Moses didn't enter Canaan, but God had something better for him. How appropriate: Moses would appear on another mountain many centuries later to encourage Jesus (Matthew 17:1-5).

Death need not be in the valley. For the true servant, it is his finest hour. For the Christian, it is a "mountaintop experience." Paul said it was gain: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). †

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. preaches for the Walnut Street church in Dickson, TN, USA.

God always hears the prayers of His Son, and if the Son of God is formed in me the Father will always hear my prayers.

— Selected



Naaman was the commander of the armies for the King of Aram in Syria (2 Kings 5:1). His name means pleasantness, and he seems to have been a kind, approachable man from what we learn of him in the text. A valiant soldier, Naaman was great in the sight of his master, and highly regarded. Although Syria was an enemy of Israel, God had given Naaman victory because of Israel's unfaithfulness to Him.

But Naaman had a problem; he was a leper. In response to his sad plight, a little servant girl from Israel told him of a prophet in her country who could heal him. It is indicative of his humility that Naaman listened to the advice of such an unimportant person.

Naaman

Frances Parr

BIBLE CHARACTERS

The story of Naaman contains a whole spectrum of feelings and emotions. First, there is the *forgiveness* and *desire to help* on the part of the captive servant girl. Naaman showed *humility* when he accepted her advice to seek help from a prophet in Samaria, an enemy country over which he had won a victory. There was a *misunderstanding* when Naaman arrived in Samaria and presented a letter from his own king. The king of Israel was *alarmed*, thinking this was a trick to start a war.

Elisha, the prophet, heard of the problem and calmly told the king to send Naaman to him. It seems rather strange that Elisha would not go out to meet such an important man but sent a servant with a message instead.

It isn't surprising that Naaman showed a bit of ego and became enraged. He felt cheated that Elisha didn't come out, stand, and call on the Lord and wave his arms about (vs. 11). What the prophet suggested seemed almost foolish. Naaman's servants, however, convinced him that he should at least try the prophet's remedy. And it worked! Naaman was cleansed.

Here we see the man make an about-face. Naaman returned to Elisha, completely convinced that Elisha's God was the one true God. He offered gifts, which Elisha refused. He then asked for enough soil from Israel to erect an altar in his own country. Naaman vowed to never offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to any other god.

To further show his repentance and intentions, Naaman confessed that in his line of duty to his king, he was expected to go into the temple of an idol and kneel, physically supporting the king. Elisha assured him there was no problem with this (vs. 18,19). Naaman's heart had changed and he was right with God.

Points to ponder:

- ✓ If Elisha had healed Naaman in the manner expected, would it have made an instant believer of him?
- ✓ Even though Naaman was egotistical, consider his taking the advice of a captive servant girl, as well as his quick behavioral change when he realized the truth.
- ✓ Are you and I as willing as Naaman to admit we are wrong and change courses? †

Frances Parr is a Christian writer living in Eldon, MO, USA.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE 20TH CENTURY: IN THE U.S. AND AROUND THE WORLD

Earl D. Edwards

To understand the scenario of the churches of Christ in the twentieth century one must have at least a schematic idea of what had preceded in the nineteenth century. The earlier part of that century was a glorious time in the history of churches of Christ. The cry of "Back to the Bible" was heralded far and wide and so many were baptized from various denominational groups and from among the non-churched that the waters of many rivers and creeks were kept agitated by preachers who were immersing those who requested it. For example, in



**Thomas
Campbell**



**Alexander
Campbell**

Indiana the number of Christians identified with the Restoration Movement grew from 7,701 in 1839 to more than 20,000 just four years later.¹

But

even as early as that date in 1839, some threatening clouds were hanging heavy on the horizon. Two in particular were ominous. The first was the discussion, particularly intense in the 1840's, which led to the formation of the American Christian Missionary



**Walter
Scott**

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Society in October of 1849 in Cincinnati, Ohio. A supra-congregational body was created which was separate and apart from any local congregation and it was made up of delegates who were elected as the representatives of local congregations. It was organized "to pro-

mote the spread of the Gospel in destitute places of our own and foreign lands."² The Society seemed an innocent thing to many. After all, its proponents argued "It certainly is scriptural to spread the Gospel." And it did send out missionaries to Jerusalem, Jamaica and



In 1807, settlers from Warren County, Tennessee moved to the territory of North Alabama. Though of a denominational background, in Tennessee these pioneers had studied the Scriptures together, had united in one body, calling themselves Christians and identifying the group as the church of Christ.

Among those who settled in Alabama was William J. Price who had been baptized in 1811 in Tennessee, and his wife and a slave called Moses. The community they established was named "Antioch", and a congregation of the Lord's church was begun. In 1847, a new building was constructed at "Rocky Springs", with a membership of eighty-two. This was the first organized group of Christians in Alabama, as far as known records are concerned.

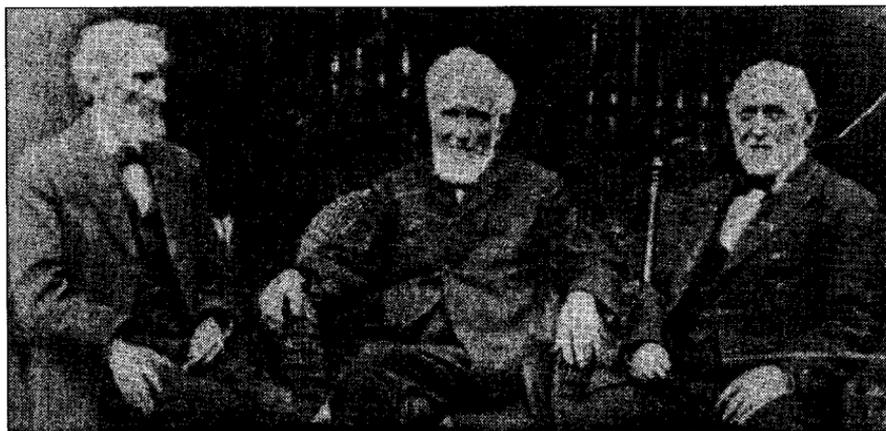
FROM THE HEART OF . . .

elsewhere. But, it was not scriptural because it took over the work of evangelization that God had given to local congregations.

The second ominous cloud hanging on the horizon of churches of Christ was the heated discussion about the use of instrumental music in worship which led to the church in Midway, KY being the first to introduce it in 1859.³ As late as 1868, the well-known preacher and editor Ben Franklin estimated that not over 50 of the brotherhood's 10,000 congregations used instrumental music in worship,⁴ but by the end of the century many others had taken up the practice. And by that time *theological liberalism and fraternizing with Protestants were also pretty much the order of the day*. All of these problems were causing great tensions as the twentieth century opened for churches of Christ.

The Division

Though the division was practically there a decade or so before the new century opened, it was technically recognized by the United States government in the first decade of the new century. In 1906 the census officials listed two different groups. They numbered the liberal element of our brotherhood (Christian Church) at over 1,000,000 members who controlled 35



L to R: I. B. Grubbs, C. L. Loos, and J. W. McGarvey, pioneer preachers who worked together many years in Lexington, KY. "The Apostolic Times" was a brotherhood paper in which divisive issues were discussed, including the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

major institutions of higher learning (including Drake, Butler, etc.) while the non-instrumental wing (churches of Christ) numbered 159,658 Christians mostly in the South and Southwest, who controlled only seven struggling colleges. Roughly 85% of the brotherhood had been lost! Further, most of the 2,649 congregations that remained true to the Lord's Word were congregations of 100 or less.⁵

Missions in Churches of Christ 1906-1947

So, churches of Christ in the U.S. were rather small and somewhat demoralized from the split when they "started over again" in missions in 1906 and years following. Progress was slow. The following table⁶ compiled by Philip Elkins is an effort to give an estimate of the numbers of overseas missionaries supported by them in this period.

Year	Missionaries	Total Members	Ratio: Missionaries to Members
1906	12	159,658	1 to 13,304
1916	16	317,937	1 to 19,871
1926	33	433,714	1 to 13,142
1946/47	46	682,172	1 to 14,829

Elkins makes it clear that a missionary is any member of the American churches of Christ who goes overseas to reside with the primary purpose of doing evangelistic work whether the person is self-supporting or assisted by local congregations. In fact, outside support was exclusively by local congregations because it was viewed as "God's only authorized sending agency."

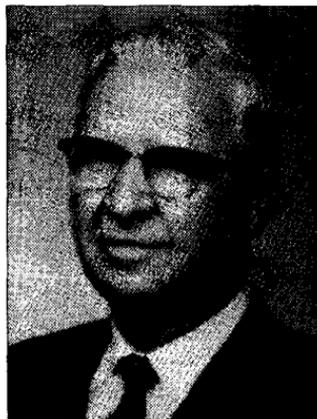
Missions in Churches of Christ 1947-1953

World War II began officially on September 1, 1939 and in the months following that date some American-based religious groups called hundreds of their missionaries to Germany and other European countries back to the United States. But the churches of Christ called none home because none had been sent to Europe.⁷ Further, not only were there no missionaries from the United States, there were no national members of churches of Christ, so

far as brethren in the United States knew at that time, except in Great Britain.⁸

However, thirty-eight years later in 1977 there were, according to one directory, four congregations in Austria, eight in Belgium, three in Denmark, two in Finland, seven in France, forty-seven in Germany, three in Greece, one in Ireland, eleven in Northern Ireland, forty-eight in Italy, one in Malta, four in the Netherlands, four in Norway, twenty-four in Poland, one in Portugal, five in the European part of the Soviet Union, fourteen in Spain, two in Sweden, five in Switzerland and one in Yugoslavia.⁹ This added up to one-hundred ninety-five congregations in twenty of Europe's thirty-five countries. Surely no objective person would try to deny, despite the mistakes that had been made, that significant progress was evident in Europe as well as in Africa, Japan, the Philippines, and other parts of the world.

And what motivated this new mission thrust in members of churches of Christ which resulted in the establishment of many congregations in Europe and elsewhere? It was, at least in part, the personal contact and concern of many Christian soldiers with individuals of the vanquished countries of Europe and Asia, during and after World War II.



George S. Benson and his family did mission work in China and the Philippines, from 1925.



J.M. McCaleb preached the gospel in Japan for more than 50 years, during the first half of the 20th century..

This personal contact led brethren to observe the great spiritual needs of these people. It is always true that faces one has seen mean more to him than statistics. To speak of "the lost of Italy" now says much more to this writer than it did before spending 16 years in Italy as a missionary, because he now thinks of specific persons like Piero and Giovanni, etc. Some soldiers who were members of the church of Christ left their Lord completely when exposed to the brutality of modern warfare, but others were drawn closer to their God

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as a means of coping. These soldiers met regularly to worship their God even while on foreign soil.¹⁰ Further they began thinking of doing something other than destroying, particularly as they saw the material and spiritual needs of the people who were being vanquished. Their hearts were touched. In Rheims (France) the little military congregation started "distributing tracts" to the French people of the town.¹¹ Marseilles (France) is one example of many places where nationals were reached by the soldier Christians. A Daniel Dreyes (of a prominent family), his wife and mother-in-law, all obeyed the gospel in January of 1946.¹²

As these Christian soldiers became more and more involved in the lives of their converts, they began thinking of what might happen to them if left to fend for themselves after the war. Thus they began writing back to parents, to preachers, and to Christian papers begging for missionaries to come after the war. For example, a Sergeant Willis Page wrote from Germany asking, "Do we really love our enemies?" He commented that there were no churches of Christ in Germany at the time of his writing in 1945.¹³ This personal contact with people by Christian soldiers who then stirred up brethren back home was one of the major reasons for a new upsurge in the number of mission efforts after the close of the war.

MISSIONS IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST 1947-1999

The following table is an effort on the part of this writer to give approximate figures of the number of members of US churches of Christ and missionaries supported down through this period.¹⁴

Year	Missionaries	Total Members	Ratio: Missionaries to Members
1953	229	1,000,000	1 to 4366
1967	350	1,100,000	1 to 3143
1979	427	1,240,820	1 to 2906
1990	660	1,284,056	1 to 1945
1994/97	1019	1,255,834	1 to 1232

Several observations are in order here:

- ✦ The number of members in the US has increased very little since 1979.

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Instead, in the period of 1906 to 1953 it increased from 159,658 to over 1,000,000. We must accelerate evangelism at home among our neighbors in the 13,080 congregations existing in the United States.

✦ The number of missionaries supported has increased rather significantly since mid-century. It was 46 in 1946/47 as compared to 1019 most recently. The number is not as high as it should be but it has gone up significantly. Also please note that the ratio of missionaries to members is much better: it was one missionary supported for every 14,829 members in 1946/47 and now it is one missionary for every 1232 member which is a very significant change.



J.D. Merritt entered the mission field of Zambia in 1926 and served there as a pioneer gospel preacher for more than 30 years.



Gospel meetings, temporary schools, and preacher training schools continue to be used as tools for evangelism throughout the world.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OUTSIDE THE US

A "World Survey"¹⁵ was done in 1994 which showed the following about churches of Christ outside the US.

Number of members	653,775
Number of congregations	11,712
Total number of countries in the world	242

Countries where churches of Christ support evangelists	<u>133</u>
Countries with no evangelists supported by churches of Christ	109

This is the same survey which counted 1019 missionaries (husbands and wives) supported by churches of Christ. The brightest spots in the world scene, for churches of Christ were/are:

Africa (sub-Sahara)	7,706 churches	428,908 mbrs, 227 missionaries
Asia	1618 churches	121,532 mbrs, 144 missionaries
Europe	435 churches	12,970 mbrs, 310 missionaries.

Conclusion

So, again some progress has been made. Praise the Lord! However, as we face the new century, if we take God's Word seriously, we must "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19) also in those nations where there are none, as well as "strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23) in those nations where churches of Christ exist.

And as we go to preach, let's avoid the pitfalls of deviation from the true pattern which plagued our brethren (and sabotaged their mission efforts) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Such a warning seems necessary because there are some frightening parallels between what is happening doctrinally now in our brotherhood and what happened one hundred years ago. Some are advocating instrumental music, while others are doubting the essentiality of baptism and advocating fellowship with Protestants.¹⁶ God help us to resist this erosion of biblical doctrines. First we should resist such because it is non-biblical. Second, we should oppose it because such erosion will again sabotage our mission efforts. God help us to be faithful to His word and to reach out with the purity and power of that word to those who are lost in sin.

Notes

¹West, Earl. The Search for the Ancient Order. Vol. 1. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1974. p. 136.

²West, Earl. The Search for the Ancient Order. Vol. 1. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1974. p. 176. The Language quoted is from Article II of the constitution of the Society.

³Cf. Benjamin Franklin, "Instrumental Music in Churches." American Christian Review 3:9 (28 February 1860): 34.

⁴West, Earl. The Search for the Ancient Order. Vol. 1. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1974. p. 46.

⁵Garrison, W. E. and Alfred T. DeGroot. The Disciples of Christ: A History. Rev. Ed. St.

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Louis: Bethany, 1948. pp. 40-41 and Banowsky, William S. The Mirror of a Movement. Dallas: Christian Publications, 1965. pp. 6-7.

⁶This is a part of a table from Elkins, Phillip W. Church Sponsored Missions. Austin: Firm Foundation, 1974. p. 6. Elkins' figures for total members in US churches of Christ in 1906, 1916, and 1926 are taken from Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. II. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1930. p. 395 and similar figures for 1946/47 are from "Statistical Abstracts from the United States, 1951." Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1951. p. 27. His figures for numbers of missionaries supported by churches of Christ in that period are taken from his own reading of various journals and directories in which single names or lists of missionaries of churches of Christ were given. See his appendices E (pp. 94-97) and F (pp. 98-99) for more details.

⁷Otis Gatewood, Preaching in the Footsteps of Hitler (Nashville: Williams Printing Company, 1960), p. 20, tells of his feeling of shame when the Mormons, among whom he was working in Salt Lake City, brought back "about five hundred missionaries of their church from Europe" and churches of Christ, which he was serving as an evangelist, brought "not a single missionary" back.

⁸Cf. Hans Grimm, Tradition and History of the Early Churches of Christ in Central Europe, trans. H.L. Schug (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, n.d.) pp. 40-42, in which Grimm speaks of himself and a few other believers as members of the "churches of Christ" who were "rebuilding" a "destroyed brotherhood." Grimm and the few believers came in contact with American missionaries of churches of Christ for the first time in March 1955 and began a close collaboration with them. There were other cases of "discoveries" of a few New Testament Christians already worshipping in Europe but the existence of these brethren was unknown to American churches of Christ when the war broke out.

⁹Where the Saints Meet: A Directory of the Congregations of the Churches of Christ (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing Company, 1977). pp. 179-84.

¹⁰"Brethren Meeting in Europe," Christian Chronicle III no. 6 (July 4, 1945): p. 4 reported military churches of Christ meeting in Cherbourg, Paris, Rheims, Rouen, Verdun, and Liege. And this was certainly not an attempt at a complete list.

¹¹"Servicemen Meeting in Rheims," Christian Chronicle III, No. 2 (June 13, 1945): 1.

¹²"First-fruits of Soldiers' Labors Gleaned as French Family Baptized," Christian Chronicle III, No. 29 (January 23, 1946): 1.

¹³Page, Willis "What Will the Churches of Christ Do About Germany?" Christian Chronicle III, No. 23 (September 26, 1945): 2.

¹⁴In this table the number of missionaries of 1953 is taken from Elkins (p. 99). The 1967 figure is an estimate, the 1979 is taken from Yocum, Christian Chronicle. No. 9. (1984): p. 1, the 1990 figure is from Lynn, Churches of Christ Around the World. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1990. p. XX, and the 1994 figure is from an unpublished "World Survey" of Gaston Tarbet (1994). The number of members figures were derived as follows: 1953 and 1967 were estimated and the other three (1979, 1990, 1997) were taken from Lynn, Churches of Christ in the U.S. Nashville: Twenty First Century Christian, 1997, p. 15. It is recognized that the number of member estimates given by the writer for 1953 and 1967 are lower than other printed figures for the period but there is reason to believe that those were very exaggerated estimates that projected a 10% per year growth. Please note that the "number of missionaries" figures counts a man and his wife as two missionaries, which is the usual method in other religious groups.

¹⁵This unpublished "World Survey" was done by Gaston Tarbet of Abilene Christian University in 1994 and is probably fairly accurate.

¹⁶Cf. Earl Edwards. "The Work of the Restoration Movement Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." Eighteenth Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship. Ed. Jim Laws. Memphis: Getwell Church of Christ, 1993. pp. 149-63.

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 24 (from page 43)

1. Peter and John.
2. *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*
3. They were filled with wonder and amazement, and they all ran together.
4. Christ; Holy One; Just.
5. They had killed the Prince of Life.
6. He had raised Him from the dead.
7. They were eye witnesses.
8. Through faith in the name of Jesus.
9. Probably the faith was on the part of Peter and John, not the lame man, because nothing is said about his knowledge or understanding of Jesus.
10. (C) He was healed completely and instantly.
11. Ignorance.
12. By the mouth of all of His prophets.
13. *"Repent therefore and be converted..."*
14. *"...that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*
15. That God would raise up a prophet like himself, and that they were to hear Him.
16. *"In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*
17. To the Israelites.
18. The response people make to the Gospel, *"In turning away every one of you from your iniquities."*

Who Am I? (page 15)



The Angel of the Lord

The Book of 2 John, page 36

Father; Doctrine;
Children; Love; World;
Reward; House;
Deceiver; Sister;
Rejoice; Forever;
Mercy; From; Grace;
New; Elder; Many;
Peace; Beginning;
Truth; Jesus

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