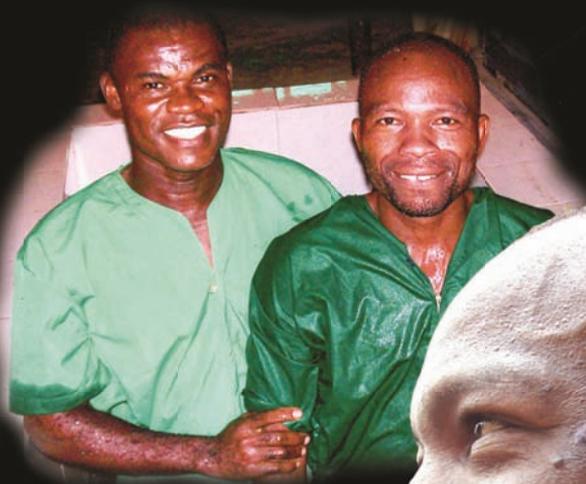


VOLUME SIXTY-FIVE

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



**GLOBAL
HARVEST**

Page 105

We Choose

Tommy Durden

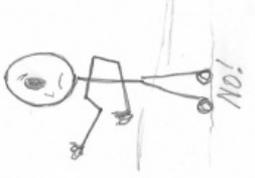
Some folks count their blessings,
Some will count their woes;
Some will see the sunshine,
others see cold snows.
We determine destinies
as we determine goals:
Some will dwell on weakness,
others seek lost souls.

Some folks smile most all the time,
Some will mourn their pain.
Some will see the rainbow,
others see the rain.
We determine attitudes
as we determine aims,
Yet some declare they're losers
before they start the games.

Some folks see a glowing moon,
Some will see dark night;
Some will give up every time,
others see to fight.
We determine who we are,
not by those crystal balls,
But by the way we choose to live
before the Master calls.

Obeying a Form of the Gospel

Romans 6:17; 10:16



Repent —
Turn away from sin;
die to sin



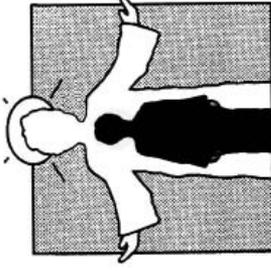
Be buried with Christ
in baptism



Be resurrected from
the burial in baptism to
walk a new life
with Christ



*For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ
have put on Christ.*
Colossians 3:27



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Cost: **\$4.00** for single issues; **\$12.00** for four issues; **\$20.00** for eight issues. Please make checks payable to **World Evangelism Foundation**, and mail to **Byron Nichols, (Editor) P.O. Box 11218, Springfield, MO 65808**; Telephone: **417-823-4918**.

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

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL is published by churches of Christ as a non-profit effort. Write to us at **World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, Mississippi, 38967, USA**. Phone: 662-283-1192; E-mail address: Choate@WorldEvangelism.org.

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

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Byron Nichols



There are three major emphases embodied in the name, *The Voice of Truth International*, and each of these is worthy of our attention and careful contemplation.

The VOICE of Truth International

Truth is a tremendous commodity, but only if it is dispensed and dispersed. Truth loses its benefit if it is just stored up as if it were money in a bank vault. Its value is in its application. Truth must be made known.

The Gospel is the truth of God. From the beginning of the Gospel, there were brave men who quickly came to understand the value of it, so much so that they

felt compelled to share that Good News with all who would lend an ear. They knew that *they* had to be the *voice* of the truth, the propellant that would get the message of salvation out. They were able to see that their role was to go and tell the truth.

Paul testified that he and others were bold to be the voice the Gospel of God even in the midst of great conflict (1 Thessalonians 2:2). He said that he had been able to serve as a voice of the truth even as he encountered significant obstacles. He wrote in Philippians 1:12, “*But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.*” Paul told the elders from Ephesus, “*...I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:24). The truth was given a voice by Paul and others like him.

It is imperative that the Lord’s church today accept the responsibility of being God’s **voice** of the truth. *The Voice of Truth International* is the product of a dedicated effort to publish and proclaim the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Voice of TRUTH International

There has been an increase in the number of people who have somehow

concluded that *truth* is flexible, very subjective, and is definitely situational. What makes this particularly remarkable is the fact that there are even religious leaders who concur with such thinking and apply it even to *truth* as it relates to the Bible.

Just a few of the numerous references in God's Word to the reality of truth and that it can be and is known include John 8:32, John 17:17, and Proverbs 23:23. Additionally, truth and Jesus Christ cannot be separated. John 1:14 states that Jesus (the Word) became flesh and was "*full of grace and truth*". John then says in verse 17 that "*...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*". Of what possible value is any of this if truth is not real and absolute? What does that do to the person of Jesus Christ? He claimed in John 14:6 to be "*the truth*". If this is not so, then Jesus becomes a liar, an imposter, and a fraud.

The apostle Paul had a deep conviction regarding truth, made quite evident in Galatians 2:5,14 as he refers to "*the truth of the gospel*," as well as in Galatians 3:1, where he says, "*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth...?*"

The Voice of Truth International is firmly committed to being a voice of **truth**. We believe wholeheartedly in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, meaning that the original manuscripts of the entire Bible were totally inspired, written exactly as God wanted them; they were from the mind of God, not that of man; and they were without error, containing the truth which is certain, unchangeable, and eternal.

The Voice of Truth INTERNATIONAL

This magazine is making a real effort to duplicate the scope of the Gospel itself. Possibly the best-known verse in all the Bible is John 3:16, "*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.*" We cannot fail to notice the scope of God's love... "**the world**". Christ died for all people of every nation who have ever lived or will ever live. This explains why Jesus said to take the Gospel to every creature in every nation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47). The Gospel of truth is the only remedy for the spiritual ills of the world. We just have to get His message out. Why? Because Jesus will one day be "*...revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

With the aid of many brethren, ***The Voice of Truth International*** is indeed **international** in its scope, taking the Gospel of truth into approximately 80 countries of the world. †



“THEY FORSOOK ALL AND FOLLOWED HIM”

Jerry Bates

The above words are found in Luke 5:11 in regards to Peter, Andrew, James, and John leaving their fishing boats to become fishers of men. From a material standpoint, they gave up a great deal to become followers of Jesus. They left family, a respectable, thriving occupation, and security to follow a Man who did not have a place to lay His head (Luke 9:58). Of course, they gained something far more valuable. We certainly commend them for their faith and courage to follow Jesus.

While we admire and commend them for their wholehearted commitment, we usually defend our lack of commitment by saying that Jesus does not require us to forsake all and follow him as He did these fishermen. It is true that we find no specific command telling us to give up everything or sell everything in order to be a disciple. Since we find no command, many go through life fully convinced they are faithful disciples of Christ, while maintaining little dedication and being more devoted to the things of this world than they are to Christ.

What does Jesus expect of us? Does He expect much less of us than He did of those great men? At first glance, we might think the answer is yes. Surely, Christ would expect less from us. After all, we have not been called to be “apostles” of His kingdom. We have not been asked to personally accompany Christ as He teaches the saving Gospel to a lost world and prepares for the final sacrifice, His death.

However, as we search the Scriptures a little more closely, I think the answer to that question is no, He does not expect less of us than He did of the disciples. In order to be His follower, we must be willing to do as Peter, Andrew, James, John, and all the other apostles did. For example, notice Luke 14:26,27. *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be My disciple.”* Verse 26 emphasizes that there is no relationship on earth, including our closest family members, which should be more important than Jesus. Verse 27 highlights the sacrifice we must be willing to make, by comparing it to taking up our cross. This cross is unquestionably not a symbol we wear around our necks or wrists. The cross of the first century was a symbol of suffering, shame, humiliation, and death. It was an icon of the greatest possible sacrifice. If we are not willing to sacrifice to that extent, we cannot be counted as one of Christ’s disciples. So says Jesus, Himself!

Jesus then gives a few examples of counting the cost, implying that there is certainly a cost involved in following Him. He compares becoming a disciple to a man building a tower or a king contemplating going to war. In each case, the man would count the cost to see if he could continue the project to a successful conclusion. Next, Jesus summarizes this section by these words, *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 4:33). Those are chilling words to think about. No, we do not literally have to sell everything, but we must be *willing* to commit everything to Jesus. It doesn’t really matter how much faith we have, how many services of the church we attend, or how much we claim to love God and Jesus. The question is, “Who is the most important person in my life?” If Jesus is first, then everything else will follow.

No, we do not have to literally sell all our possessions and give them to the poor in order to be a disciple of Christ. Nevertheless, Jesus does demand our wholehearted commitment. The apostle Paul said that our very lives should be a living sacrifice to Christ (Romans 12:1). Paul illustrated this when he noted that he counted all his former fleshly privileges and attainments as nothing but garbage (Philippians 3:7,8). It seems that few could say that about their past accomplishments. The things of this world occupy a far more significant place in the lives of too many Christians than they ought to. Nothing should be more important to us than Jesus. Don’t be deceived into thinking we can get by with less. Yes, He requires much from us, but He promises even more.

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). †

Things!

Louis Rushmore

V.P. Black wrote four very unusual Bible study books. They are not unusual as though they teach something that either is not in the Bible or that they teach about something that is in the Bible but teach it incorrectly. As a matter of fact, these four titles teach about a subject that may be addressed more than any other subject in the Bible. So, what's the problem? The problem is that even Christians find the subject repulsive, and therefore, they avoid it like the plague. Just the introduction of any one of these class books in some congregational settings makes some Christians literally **red-in-the-face angry**, while others of similar ilk **boycott the Bible classes**. Though these sorts of persons may think that their tempered rage is directed toward the class teacher or other responsible congregational persons, is not their misplaced ire truly directed at the Godhead who authored the Scriptures pertaining to *material wealth*? Brother Black wrote *Lord, Teach Us to Give; My God and My Money; Giving VS. Getting; and Rust As a Witness*. Usually, wherever these Bible study books were given a fair use in a church, that congregation, having learned better what the



Bible instructs about material wealth — how we get it and what we are supposed to do with it, evidenced a marked surge in its congregational contributions and subsequent application of those funds to the Lord's work.

Whereas the Bible — God's infallible Word — needs to address any subject only once for it to be God-designated obligatory instruction, the Bible speaks to many topics numerous times. Surely, this Divine redundancy is owing to the fact that humanity has problems with a number of God's rules. Material wealth must be one of these areas wherein Divine repetition massages mankind's reluctant compliance. For instance, "[a]bout one half of the Lord's para-

bles dealt with money. Someone has said that one-tenth of the book of Matthew is on the subject of giving” (Black, *My God and My Money* 17). Brother Black further noted: “In the Book of Matthew the subject of giving is mentioned thirty-three times. In the Book of Mark giving is discussed twenty times. In the Book of Luke giving is discussed fifty-three times. In the Book of John giving is discussed seventeen times. There is not a book in the New Testament where giving is not discussed repeatedly. Even the four books that have just one chapter, giving is discussed. These books are Philemon, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. **The Bible says more about giving than any other subject**” (Black, *Rust as a Witness* 9 emphasis added).

Well, what are some of the more pronounced or obvious biblical passages that generally treat the subject of material wealth? Both testaments of the Bible pound into the human mind the same message of the correct versus the wrong impact of material wealth upon the child of God. The devil knows about the human weakness respecting material wealth, and he misjudged the Old Testament Bible character of Job, thinking he was one so affected by wealth. Yet, despite the sudden removal of all his wealth and all of his children, Job maintained his integrity before Almighty God (Job 1).

A proper perspective of wealth appears in passage after passage throughout God’s Holy Word. “*A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked*” (Psalm 37:16). “*Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith*” (Proverbs 15:16). “*How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!*” (Proverbs 16:16). “*Better a handful with quietness Than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind*” (Ecclesiastes 4:6).

The God-given wisdom of Solomon on this subject resounds loudly in this excerpt from Ecclesiastes. “***He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, They increase who eat them; So what profit have the owners Except to see them with their eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep. There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt. But those riches perish through misfortune; When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a severe evil—Just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?***” (Ecclesiastes 5:10-16 emphasis added).

Likewise, the apostle Paul used some of the same language and gave

it a renewed, New Testament application (1 Timothy 6:6-10). We hasten to add that material wealth is neither morally good nor immoral. However, attitude and conduct respecting acquisition, retention, and dispersing of material wealth has a direct bearing on one's *spiritual health* — the salvation of the soul. That being said, I wonder what the overflowing of America with self-storage facilities says about the common attitude in this country about material wealth?



Cities, towns, villages, rural communities, and wide-spots-in-the-road all have their mini warehouses where behind a garage door one can secret his excess possessions. Yes, I know that these facilities are neither morally right nor immoral, and further, there are many foreseeable reasons for

which one may need extra, temporary storage space (e.g., being in transit, property renovation, inheritance of personal property, etc.). Yet, the country is pimpled with these sites, indicating a countrywide mindset toward material prosperity that runs counter to what God has caused inspired writers to pen in both testaments of the Bible.

One narrative of Jesus Christ (Luke 12:15-21) especially comes close to treating the attitude of people generally about their storage units. Again, it is not necessarily wrong to be wealthy, but with wealth comes several responsibilities, including how we get it, what we do with it, and our attitude toward wealth (whether we have it or just covet it). Consequently, our Lord did not criticize wealth, but emphasized the misplaced emphasis of consuming that wealth on oneself — and neither thanking God nor acknowledging Him respecting that prosperity. Our Lord continued to address His followers about anxiousness toward material wealth in Luke 12:22-34.

It is the personal observation of others and me, upon traveling to what many refer to as third world or developing countries, that the lack of material prosperity, comparable to what most enjoy in America, is no hindrance to happiness. The happiest people I have ever met have little or few of what most of my countrymen consider necessities. Though material wealth is neither good nor bad, often material wealth even clouds the spiritual sight of the children of God. "...give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8-9). †

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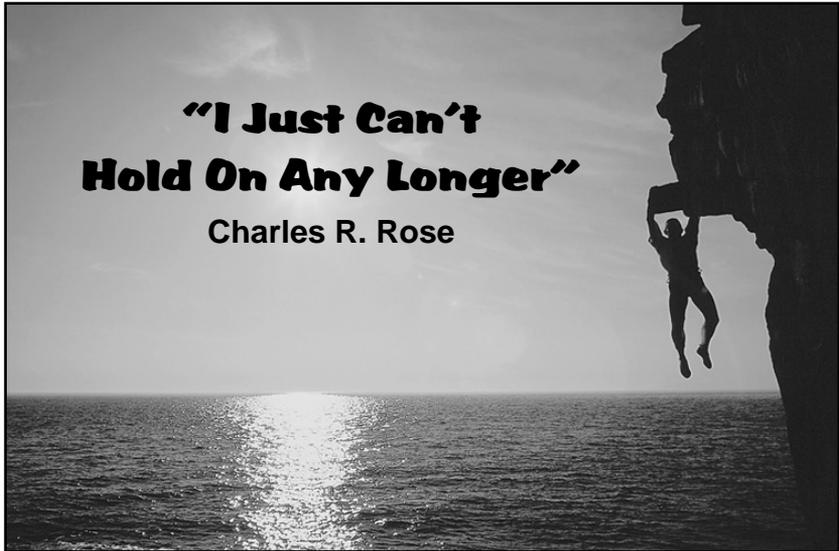
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“I Just Can’t Hold On Any Longer”

Charles R. Rose

It is sometimes hard to keep our heads up with all the troubles of the present world beating down upon us. However, for a faithful child of God, this should not be as difficult as for those who have no hope. Throughout the Bible, our Father has given assurance that when we place our faith and trust in Him and His only begotten Son Jesus, we have the ability to keep going and remain strong in the faith. Consider the following:

1. **God’s hands are beneath you to lift you up:** Like Israel of old, *“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...”* (Deuteronomy 33:27a). Therefore, *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up”* (James 4:10).
2. **God the Father is close at hand:** Paul informed those in Athens that *“... He is not far from each one of us...for in Him we live and move and have our being...”* (Acts 17:27b,28a). The Psalmist asked, *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?”* (Psalm 139:7). He proceeded to suggest that there is no place within the limits of man’s ability to go where one could escape the very presence of God (Psalm 139:8-12).

GOD

3. God the Son will strengthen you: Like faithful Paul, each faithful Christian “...can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).
4. God’s child is kept by God’s awesome power: Peter tells of the heavenly inheritance (1 Peter 1:3,4). He then said the faithful of God’s children “...are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).
5. God is able to keep you from stumbling: Jude gives these encouraging words, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).
6. God will never leave you: You can trust God even in these trying times which we are all facing today. Therefore, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

When you feel that you have reached the point where you just can’t hold on any longer, remember, “...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39). †

Charles R. Rose is the preacher for the church of Christ in Lincoln, Missouri, USA.

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5).

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10).

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

THE SUFFERING SAVIOR

Jack W. Carter

Jesus knew He was marked for death when He came to dwell among His creation. This is an amazing and humiliating expose of the human disposition. The One who created us and came to live among us with love and the promise of a great hope was taken by us and, in a very cruel manner, put to death.

It is so easy for us to conclude that it really wasn't that bad for Jesus because, after all, He was partly divine, and can the divine really feel pain? He *was* truly divine, but He was also fully human, and the excruciating agony was fully experienced.

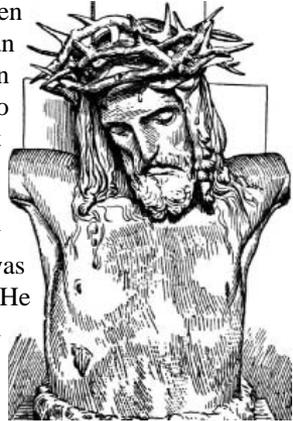
The scenes of Gethsemane should capture our hearts. Would the sweat drops, "*as though they were blood,*" have fallen if it was going to be a walk-over for Him?

Perhaps the greatest testimony of a suffering Savior is the conduct of the apostle Peter. Jesus had warned him that he would deny that he knew the Master before the cock crowed. Peter vowed more than once that he would never do such a thing, and that he was ready to go to prison and death for his Lord.

We have no reason to believe that this great man was a coward. When Peter did, in fact, deny that he knew Jesus, it was not nearly as much a revelation of a weak character on the part of Peter as it was of the horrible and frightening treatment of the suffering Savior that he was witnessing.

Jesus died for me. I must keep this ever before my eyes as a frontlet, and within my heart as a watchword. How He died is a sad and shameful disclosure of the propensity of degenerate humanity. It is also an undeniable affirmation of the love of the suffering Savior and what He was willing to endure at the hands of His creation to provide the hope with which we all now live.

Amazing grace!



Jack W. Carter is a Gospel preacher living in McAlester, Oklahoma, USA.

GOD

That's My God!

Andy Miller

How often do we stop to consider the greatness of the God we serve? We need to take time in our rush-here-and-there lives to contemplate our Lord. The prophets of old gave us vivid revelations and proud proclamations about our God on which we can reflect:

COMPASSIONATE: “In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer.” (Isaiah 54:8).

FAITHFUL: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23).

FORGIVING: “I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.” (Jer. 33:8).

GLORIOUS: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14).

HOLY: “I am the Lord, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King.” (Isaiah 43:15).

IMMUTABLE: “I the LORD do not change...” (Malachi 3:6).

JUST: “For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward [my people] and make an everlasting covenant with them.” (Isaiah 61:8).

LONG-SUFFERING: “For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.” (Isa. 48:9).

LOVING: “... I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” (Jeremiah 31:3).

OMNIPRESENT: “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:23,24).

SOVEREIGN: “I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me ...I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.” (Isaiah 46:9,10).

TRUTHFUL: “... I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.” (Isa. 45:19) †.

GOD

The God of All Comfort

Randall Caselman

What is your view of God? A distorted view of God can inhibit our daily walk with Him. For instance, some see God as their conscience. They view God as that small inner voice that convicts us of wrong and makes us feel guilty. Others see God as a cosmic Santa Claus, one who exists only for the purpose of satisfying our wants and wishes. Still others see Him as a celestial policeman. They view God as one who is just waiting for us to do something wrong so He can punish. Where do we find a proper view of God? The One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known. Jesus came to show us God.

See Him as a friend. There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. God is a Friend that never fails us. As a Friend, He knows the problems with which we struggle. "My God and I go in the fields together, we walk and talk as good friends should and do; we clasp our hands, our voices ring with laughter, my God and I walk through the meadow's hew." Indeed, what a comfort it is to know that God is our Friend.

God is our Shepherd. David saw God as his Guide, Counselor, and Comforter. He is our Provider and Sustainer. He gives us inward renewal. He accompanies us in the valley of death. He uses His resources to care, heal, discipline, and comfort us. He blesses us in this life, and He then brings us home to live with Him forever. As a Shepherd, God never withholds anything that is good for us.

God is our Father. Think of the comfort that comes from knowing that the Creator, Sustainer, Protector, and Provider of the whole universe, is our Father. He knows our needs. He hears our prayers. Even when we don't know what to ask for, He supplies. As a Father, He works all things out to our benefit. All good and perfect gifts come from Him.

God is our Savior. Too many of us have exiled God and His work to the past. We see Him working in the lives of people like Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Mary, Peter, and Paul, but fail to see Him as a present reality in our own lives. God's redemptive power is alive and at work today. John 3:16 is still true. †

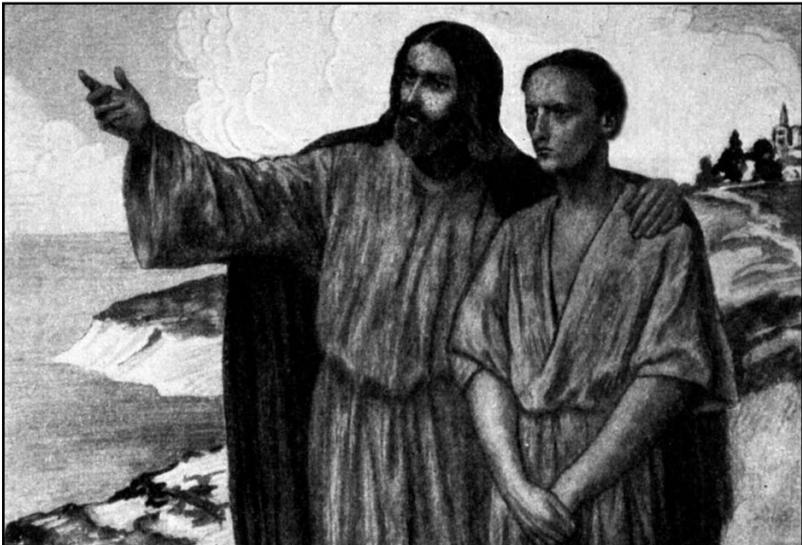
Randall Caselman preaches for the Church of Christ in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.

WHICH CAME FIRST, GRACE OR DOCTRINE?

Glover Shipp

During my growing-up years, the emphasis in preaching and teaching was on doctrine. Grace was seldom mentioned, as playing the Christian game strictly by the rules was emphasized. Doctrine has always been vital, so our forebears were not necessarily wrong in their emphasis. After all, the Lord ordered Israel to obey His commandments and Covenant.

Just before Moses' death, the Lord warned His people, *"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you — They are your life. ... "* (Deuteronomy 32:46-47). This was followed by the Ten Commandments and a long list of other commandments covering every kind of situation to be encountered by His people (Exodus 20-30). Leviticus 19 and 20 are filled with specific commands that deal with personal and moral issues. The Lord told Moses' successor, Joshua, to neither turn to the right nor left from the Law. He was not to let the words of the Law



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depart from his mouth (Joshua 1:7-8). The prophet Samuel denounced the disobedient King Saul that to obey was better than to sacrifice.

Much more could be cited from the Old Testament about obedience to God's laws. Psalm 19 tells us,

*“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
The ordinances of the Lord are sure, and altogether righteous.
They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
By then is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”*

The entire 119th Psalm recites in its 176 verses the many characteristics of God's law. His precepts are right; His laws are righteous. Jeremiah 31:33 says that the Lord would make a new covenant with His people. His law would be in their minds and hearts.

The New Testament on Doctrine

Now what does the New Testament say about law and doctrine? Much, indeed!

Matthew 7:28: *The people were astonished at Jesus' doctrine.*

John 7:16-17: *Jesus' doctrine was not His own, but of God.*

Acts 2:42: *The disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.*

Romans 6:17: *The Roman church obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which it had received.*

1 Timothy 4:13: *Timothy was to give attention to doctrine.*

2 Timothy 3:16: *All Scripture is profitable for doctrine.*

2 Timothy 4:2: *Timothy was to exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

Titus 2:1: *Titus was to teach the things which become sound doctrine.*

2 John 9: *Whoever continues in the teaching [of Christ] has both the Father and the Son.*

This isn't all, by any means, but should suffice to indicate the absolute necessity of sound doctrine in all that we believe and practice.

Grace, the Other Side of the Coin

Obedience to doctrine is not sufficient in itself, however, nor are works in

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themselves. No human has the capacity to lift himself or herself to Heaven by scrupulous attention to doctrine or good works alone. My own mother worried throughout much of her life that she had not done enough to warrant a place in Heaven. What she never seemed to realize was that none of us can do enough to deserve eternal life.

So what is essential here to lift us to Heaven? Grace. I heard an elderly preacher once say in a short but memorable sermon that there are only three things we need: Grace, gravy and gratitude. We need the Lord's favor, for that is grace. We need gravy, our basic material blessings. And we need gratitude for all that we receive from the Lord. We are right in being concerned about grace because the Bible has much to say about it. Here are some typical passages on the subject:

Genesis 6:8: Noah found grace, or favor, in the Lord's sight.

Exodus 33:12: Moses was granted God's favor.

Proverbs 3:34: The Lord gives grace to the lowly.

John 1:17: Grace and truth came through Jesus.

Acts 14:3: God confirmed the message of His grace through Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 18:27: Apollos helped those who by grace had believed.

Romans 3:24: We have been justified by God's grace through the redemption found in Jesus.

Romans 5:15-17: As in Adam all die, so in Christ is found God's abundant provision of grace.

Romans 6:1: We must not continue in sin, assuming that grace will abound.

Romans 6:14-15: We are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 11:5-6: A remnant has been chosen by grace, not by works.

2 Corinthians 8:1: The Macedonian churches had been given a special measure of grace.

Galatians 1:15: Paul was separated and called by the grace of God.

Ephesians 2:8: We have been saved through grace as a gift from God; not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 4:7: Each of us receives grace as apportioned by God.

Colossians 3:16: We are to sing praises with grace in our hearts.

2 Timothy 2:1: Timothy was told to be strong in the grace that is in Jesus.

Titus 3:7: We are justified by the Lord's grace.

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Hebrews 4:16: *Through Christ we may come boldly before the throne of grace.*

Hebrews 12:15: *We must not miss the grace of God through ungodly living.*

James 4:6: *The Lord gives grace to the humble.*

1 Peter 4:10: *We are stewards or caretakers of the grace of God.*

1 Peter 5:12: *We stand in the true grace of God.*

2 Peter 3:18: *We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.*

Revelation 22:21: *The Word closes with a benediction that the grace of Christ be with God's people.*

Application

Grace — What a marvelous gift! After reading this sampling of passages that describe God's gift of grace and how we are to take advantage of it, we should all stand in awe of its indescribable value. Yet, we often fail to see this.

How many times I have received a gift certificate, only to lose it or let it lapse. Has that ever happened to you? In like manner, we are casually indifferent to the gift certificate called in Scripture grace, totally undeserved, yet available to us. All of us desperately need God's grace, yet we have been notoriously slow in accepting it. Some, however, have discovered grace and have gone overboard on their new "revelation", allowing the pendulum of divine teaching to swing from the doctrinal extreme to the grace extreme. Some of us have begun to believe that doctrine doesn't matter anymore. After all, grace, they say, will cover everything for everyone. So they begin to downgrade such imperatives as baptism, the Lord's Supper and other elements of New Testament doctrine.

When will the pendulum swing back to a balance between doctrine and grace? Even a casual reading of passages on these two subjects should teach us that both are absolutely essential to our relationship with God. For the Lord's sake and our own salvation, we must tolerate no more extreme pendulum swings between doctrine and grace.

Edward R. Lyman once commented, "Principle — particularly moral principle — can never be a weathervane, spinning around this way and that with the shifting winds of expediency. Moral principle is a compass forever fixed and forever true." In like manner, the principles of doctrine and grace ought never to spin around to extremes, but remain forever fixed and forever true. †

Glover Shipp is a preacher of the Gospel and an elder in the church in Edmond, Oklahoma, USA.

The Word Of God

COMPARING THE TWO COVENANTS

Royce Frederick

Two paintings of different scenes by one artist often contain many similarities. Likewise, God's Old and New Covenants contain similarities. For example, both say it is wrong to murder and commit adultery. Both say we should love and obey God, and love others. However, there are also many differences between the two Covenants.

The Old was God's covenant with Israel only (Deuteronomy 5:1-4; Ephesians 2:11-13). The New is God's covenant with people of all nations (Mark 16:15,16; Galatians 3:28).

The mediator of the Old was Moses (Galatians 3:19; John 1:17). The mediator of the New is Jesus (Hebrews 9:15).

The Old was dedicated with the blood of animals (Exodus 24:1-8). The New was dedicated with the blood of God's only Son, Jesus (John 3:16; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15-26).

The Old ended when Jesus died on the cross (Colossians 2:14; Galatians 3:24,25). The New began when Jesus died on the cross (Hebrews 9:15-17).

The Old was "*a yoke of bondage*" upon the Jews (Galatians 5:1-3; see Acts 15:10). The New is "*the perfect law of liberty*" for all nations (James 1:25; Romans 1:16; Matthew 28:19).

The Old included a tabernacle, and later a temple, made of physical materials (Exodus 36-40; 1 Kings 6-7). The New includes a spiritual temple, the church, built on Christ as the foundation, with Christians as "*living stones*" (1 Corinthians 3:11,16,17; 1 Peter 2:4,5).

The Old involved many holy days, sacrifices and feasts, and Israel often had to assemble in one city (Leviticus 23; Exodus 34:24, Deuteronomy 12:1-11,26,27). The New involves only one holy memorial, the Lord's Supper, on the first day of each week, with Christians assembling in places throughout the world (John 4:21-24; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26 with 16:2).

The Old involved "tithing" (requirement to give a tenth), animal sacrifices, burning incense, and musical instruments in worship (Leviticus 3-7;

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27:30; 16:12; 2 Chronicles 29:25). The New does not include any of these, but involves singing, praying, preaching and teaching, the Lord's Supper, and giving as each person decides in his heart (Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 14:15,16; 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Acts 20:7).

The Old allowed men from only one tribe in the nation of Israel to be priests (Exodus 28:1; Numbers 3:1-10; Hebrews 7:5). In the New, there is no separate priesthood, for all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6), with Jesus Christ as our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16).

The Old promised the fruitful land of Canaan as Israel's inheritance (Exodus 6:4; 1 Kings 8:56). The New promises an eternal inheritance in heaven for all Christians who remain faithful (John 14:2; 1 Peter 1:4; Revelation 2:10). †

Royce Frederick is the Editor of *International Gospel Teacher* and lives in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

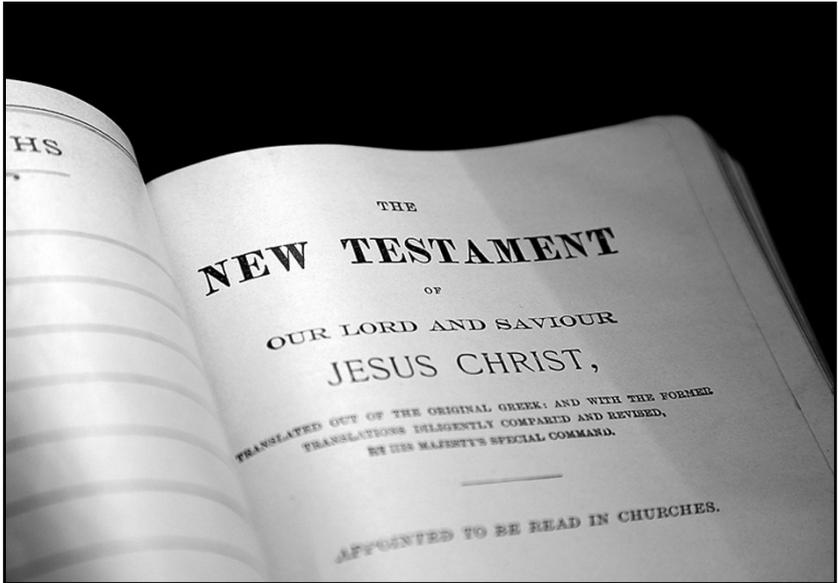
The Best Translation

John Stacy

There is a story about four preachers who were discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the American Revised Version because it is more literal and comes nearer the original Hebrew and Greek. Still another liked Moffatt's translation best because of its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent. Asked to express his opinion, he replied, "I like my mother's translation best of all." The other men expressed surprise. They did not know that this mother had translated the Bible. "Yes, she did," he replied, "She translated the Bible into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw."

*You are writing a gospel
a chapter each day
by the deeds that you do
and the words that you say.
Men read what you write
whether faithless or true
Say, what is the gospel,
according to you?*

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Diary of a Bible

Bascom Allen

Just imagine that a Bible that can talk. Would we hear something like this?

JANUARY: A busy time for me. Most of the family decided to read me through this year. They kept me busy for the first two weeks, but they have forgotten me now.

FEBRUARY: Clean-up time. I was dusted yesterday and put in my place. My owner did use me for a few minutes last week. He had been in an argument and was looking up some references to prove he was right.

MARCH: Had a busy day first of the month. My owner was elected president of the PTA and used me to prepare a speech.

APRIL: Grandpa visited us this month. He kept me on his lap for an hour reading 1 Corinthians 13. He seems to think more of me than do some people in my own household.

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MAY: I have a few green stains on my pages. Some spring flowers were pressed in my pages.

JUNE: I look like a scrapbook. They have stuffed me full of newspaper clippings — one of the girls was married.

JULY: They put me in a suitcase today. I guess we are off on vacation. Wish I could have stayed home. I know I'll be closed up in this thing for at least two weeks.

AUGUST: Still in the suitcase.

SEPTEMBER: Back home at last and in my old familiar place. I have a lot of company. Two women's magazines and four comic books are stacked on top of me. I wish I could be read as much as they are.

OCTOBER: They read me a little today. One of them is very sick. Right now I am sitting in the center of the coffee table. I think the Preacher is coming by for a visit.

NOVEMBER: Back in my old place.

DECEMBER: The family is busy getting ready for the holidays. I guess I'll be covered up under wrapping paper and packages again ... just as I am every Christmas. †

Hosea said it best in Hosea 4:6:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ...”

Bible and Cell Phone

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?

What if we carried it around in our purse or pockets? What if we flipped through it several times a day? What if we turned back if we forgot it? What if we used it to receive messages from the text? What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it? What if we gave it to the kids as gifts? What if we used it when we travel? What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go “Hmmm...Where is my Bible?”

Oh, and one more thing ... unlike your cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected, because Jesus already paid the bill.

Makes you stop and think, “Where are my priorities?”

And no dropped calls!

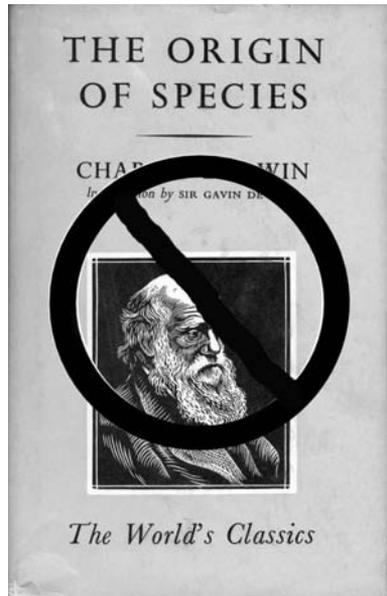
“They Refuse to Know Me” (Jeremiah 9:6).

Rex Banks

More than two and a half millenia ago Jeremiah wept over a people who “*refused to be ashamed*” of their wickedness and who “*did not know how to blush*” even in the midst of their adulteries, lies, slander, and treachery (Jeremiah 3:3; 8:12; 9:1ff). And just how had this happened to the children of Abraham? Basically because they had “*changed their glory, for that which does not profit*” (2:11). In a word, they had traded in their God, “*the fountain of living waters*” for idols, which the prophet describes as “*broken cisterns that can hold no water*” (2:11,13). As a society, we’ve done the same. By and large, we have “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie*” (Romans 1:25); but in our case, we have been seduced, not by idols of wood and stone, but by a world view which seeks to dispense with God and to place man at the centre of the universe. It didn’t happen over night, but the rise of humanism in the west has been remorseless, and its effects upon our society terribly, terribly destructive.

Following the Renaissance with its man-centred focus, the 18th century saw the rapid spread of Deism among many of the most influential thinkers of the age. *The Oxford Companion To Philosophy* has the following:

“(Deism is the) Philosophical belief in a god established by reason and evidence (notably by the design argument) without acceptance of the special information supposedly revealed in, for example, the Bible or Koran. Hence deism involves belief in a Creator who has established the universe



EVIDENCES

and its processes but does not respond to human prayer.”

Men still saw the need for a prime mover to get the universe going, but they wanted a remote, distant figure who made no demands upon themselves and who did not interfere with man’s autonomy. Now, clearly, deism was very fertile soil for the theory of evolution, because Darwinism provided the means of dispensing with God altogether, a very welcome development for those who wanted man to be an independent, self-governing being. Just a few years after the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, David Strauss wrote these words:

“Vainly did we philosophers and critical theologians over and over again decree the extermination of miracles; our ineffectual sentence died away, because we could neither dispense with miraculous agency, nor point to any natural force able to supply it, where had hitherto seemed most indispensable. Darwin has demonstrated this force, this process of nature; he has opened the door by which a happier coming race will cast out miracles, never to return. Everyone who knows what miracles imply will praise him in consequence, as one of the greatest benefactors of the human race.”

Like many others, Strauss welcomed any means of cutting humanity adrift from the notion of a God who was intimately connected with the affairs of men. But we have paid a dreadful price for that freedom. Influenced by his evolutionary views, one leading philosopher of science has described ethics as “an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to cooperate” (Michael Ruse). He adds that “the way our biology forces its ends is by making us think that there is an objective higher code to which we are all subject.” So you and I may think that it is wrong to cheat, lie, steal, murder, and rape, but Ruse is here to tell us that such thinking is illusory. Like many others, Ruse recognises that in the absense of a Divine Lawgiver, concepts of good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral are meaningless.

Brethren, we simply must equip ourselves to be able to teach our children the important truth that “(b)y the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host” (Psalm 33:6). We are not evolved pond scum, but rather creatures who bear the image of God, who have been called to holiness by One who is Himself perfectly holy. We are human beings, with souls, who have the hope of heaven before our eyes. **It really does matter what we believe about our origins because ultimately this belief will affect our eternal destiny.** †

Rex Banks is a preacher of the Gospel, living and working in New Zealand.

EVIDENCES

Oceanography and the Bible

Travis L. Quertermous

Oceanography is the scientific study of the oceans. The father of modern oceanography was a scientist named Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873). Professor Maury is also known as “the pathfinder of the seas”. What many people are not aware of is that his nickname comes from the Bible.

Maury was a devout believer in the Bible. The story is told that one day while he was sick in bed, the famous scientist asked his son to read to him from the Scriptures. His son chose Psalm 8 and began to read it to his ailing father. Psalm 8:8 speaks of “*the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.*” Maury asked his son to reread the verse and then commented, “If the Word of God says there are paths in the seas, then they must be there and

I will find them.”

And so he did, discovering the ocean currents used by marine animals to navigate in the seas and that ships use as shipping lanes. These

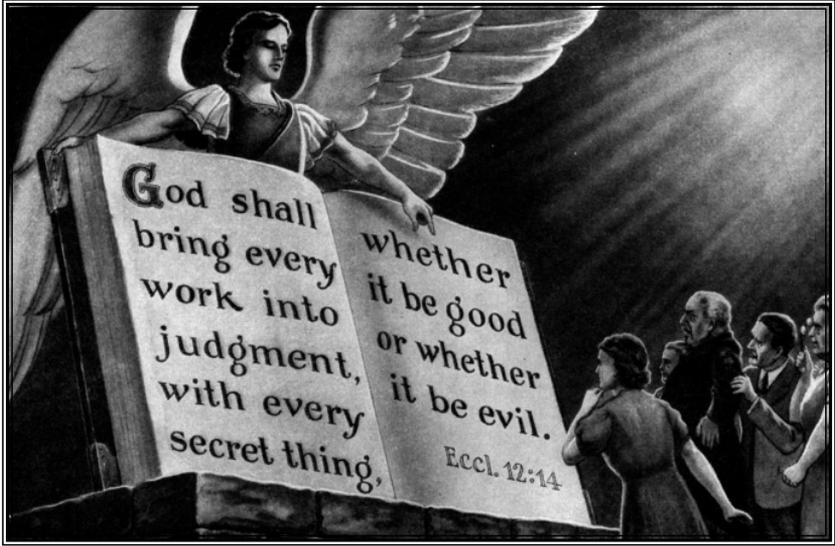


ocean currents are literal “paths in the seas” just as David described them in Psalm 8:8 in 1000 B.C. Here is an entire branch of science that owes

its existence to the Bible!

Such gems of scientific foreknowledge are proof that the Bible is inspired of God, for how else could David have known of the paths in the seas that modern science did not discover until about 150 years ago? Have you been obedient to God’s inspired Word? †

Travis L. Quertermous preaches the Gospel of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.



THE GREAT JUDGMENT DAY

J.C. Choate

The Bible teaches that there will be a judgment day. It will be a great day for several reasons.

1. No human being knows when that day will be — it is a day appointed by the Lord. We read in the Scripture, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (Hebrews 9:27).

2. All who have ever lived, or who will ever live, will be there. That is hard to imagine, but nothing is impossible with the Lord. Paul wrote, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Again, he said, “*So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God*” (Romans 14:12).

3. God will judge all through Christ and His Word. The Hebrew writer said, “*To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of All, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*” (Hebrews 12:23). Paul explained to the Athenians, “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where*

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30,31). Christ said, “He that rejected me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

4. We will be judged by the way we have lived, by our thoughts, and by our words. Christ declared, *“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified: and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:35-37). Also read Revelation 21:12.*

5. The Lord will be no respecter of persons. Concerning God, we are told, *“For there is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11). Paul explained to the Colossian brethren, “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Colossians 3:25). At the time of the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the record says, “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34,35).*

6. The judgment will be final. Once one dies, his status before the Lord cannot be changed. His relatives cannot save him by their prayers, or by paying others to pray that he will be saved. There will be no second chance for anyone. That is why we must prepare to meet God by obeying Him and by being faithful unto death (Mark 16:16; Revelation 2:10).

7. The Lord will send the wicked into everlasting punishment but will give the righteous life eternal (Matthew 25:46). One is just as longlasting as the other. In other words, the lost, sinful, ungodly, and unfaithful will be cast into hell or torment forever and ever. Is that fair? Would a loving God do that? Don't blame God. He loved all and gave his Son to provide salvation for all. If a person rejects that love, grace, and mercy, then he is the one who will have to face the consequences of his actions. Those who do obey God and remain faithful to Him will go to heaven to ever dwell with the Lord.

May we be aware of the judgment, of our need to prepare for it, and the blessings the Lord has promised to give to those who are judged to be righteous. ✠

J.C. Choate was founder and Editor of *The Voice of Truth International* until his death.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Think With Me

Hollis Miller

I believe in being what most people refer to as “nice”, and I believe in being kind, understanding, and gentle to all men. But I also believe in God, and I believe the Bible reveals His will to men. Because I believe these things, I must sometimes make a decision that calls on me to be either obedient to God or “nice” to men. If that sounds odd, please permit me to explain.

The apostle Paul was a great servant of Jesus Christ. He traveled the Roman Empire proclaiming the love, grace, and forgiveness of God. Yet, there were times when men would not permit the apostle to be nice to them. They haunted him everywhere he went. On one occasion, Paul told one such person that he was a child of the devil and an enemy of all righteousness (Acts 13:10). To modern ears, the apostle’s words sound harsh, if not cruel. However, sometimes even Jesus Himself found it necessary to “tell it like it is”. (Read Matthew 23). Surely no thoughtful individual is ready to accuse either Paul or Jesus of being unloving in attitude and purpose.

There is a mind-set hovering over the world today that is spreading its influence with wildfire rapidity. It is a mind-set that is breeding heartache and misery as it makes its way into homes, schools, communities, and churches. That mind-set is this: “I’m going to do my thing and don’t you dare tell me I have no right to do it. If you oppose what I am doing, I will charge you with being a bigoted, narrow-minded slob who managed to survive the Victorian Age.” Sadly, the bluff is working!

In spite of the bluffs, there are some things men do not have a right to do. Men and women do not have the right to sleep with members of their own sex and then demand that others approve their actions. Neither do churches have the right to snub their noses at the Word of God and then demand that others agree with them or face the charge of being labeled ultra-conservative fundamentalists or traditionalists.

It is time for Christians everywhere to rise up and fight the good fight of faith, to contend earnestly for the faith they believe. If such contending makes a “non-nice” person of a Christian, then so be it. Gleason Archer was right when he said, “All who reject truth have no choice but to feed on falsehood.” †

Hollis Miller is a Gospel preacher living in Murray, Kentucky, USA.

Something to Think About

Sunny David

Suppose someone sows seeds in four different soils, in different places, and reaps corn from the first place, peas from the second, cucumbers from the third, and beans from the fourth place. The obvious inference would be that four different kinds of seeds have been planted. But what would be the conclusion if only corn is reaped from every place? That would mean that only corn was planted in every place.

When Philip the evangelist had gone into Samaria, the Bible says that he preached there the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. What was the result? In the same verse, in Acts 8:12, it says that both men and women were baptized.

In the same chapter of Acts 8, a little later, we find Philip preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch. And in verse 35, we read, *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at the same scripture, preached Jesus to him.”* What did Philip preach? It says, he preached Jesus to him. What happened as a result? We read from the very next verse of Acts 8:36, *“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”*



In Acts 16, we read that Paul and Silas were in Philippi, where they met a certain woman named Lydia who worshipped God. Evidently, this was a very religious and God-fearing woman. In Acts 16:14 it says that *“The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”* And immediately, in Acts 16:15, we read that she and her household were baptized.

In the same sixteenth

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

chapter of the book of Acts, we read that Paul and Silas were imprisoned because they were fearlessly proclaiming the way of salvation to all. However, at midnight there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were loosed. The keeper or the jailer of the prison thought that the prisoners had fled, taking advantage of the events. Knowing the severe punishment that he would receive the next day from the authorities, because of the negligence of his duty, in panic he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul saw him, and called with a loud voice, saying, "*Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.*" We can imagine, the happiness the jailer must have felt. And, therefore, we read, "*Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.'* Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house, and he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately, he and all his family were baptized." (Acts 16:25-33).

From all of these instances we learn a very important lesson. That is, in the beginning, in the time of the apostles, wherever and whenever the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ were preached, when Jesus was preached, when God's Word or the Word of the Lord was preached, people everywhere were baptized as a direct result. That is, those who believed in Jesus, and repented of their sins and confessed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God were then baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. (Acts 2:37,38).

Also, it is most important to learn from the above examples from the Bible that one cannot preach the kingdom of God, and Jesus Christ, and the Word of the Lord without preaching what Christ has taught that a person must do to be saved (Mark 16:15,16). One must note the fact that in the passages cited above from the Scriptures, in none of the instances was baptism specifically mentioned as a subject in the lesson. But, in every case, people were baptized immediately after "the kingdom of God", or "the name of Jesus", or "the word of God" was preached to them. Isn't the conclusion obvious and clear? **It is impossible to preach the message of the kingdom of God or the name of Jesus Christ or the Word of the Lord today, in the complete biblical manner, without telling people that they must be baptized in order to be saved.** †

Sunny David, living in New Delhi, is the speaker for the Hindi radio programs broadcast from Sri Lanka for listening audiences in India.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

If...

When Scripturally baptized, you:

1. Have remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
2. Wash away sins (Acts 22:16).
3. Put off sins (Colossians 2:11,12).
4. Have forgiveness (Colossians 2:12,13).
5. Are made free from sin (Romans 6:17,18).
6. Are cleansed with water (Ephesians 5:26).
7. Are sanctified with water (Ephesians 5:26).
8. Are saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
9. Are put into Christ (Romans 6:3; Ephesians 1:3).
10. Are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
11. Baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3; Hebrews 9:22).
12. Put on Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 13:14).
13. Are baptized in the name of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:13).
14. Enter into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 5:23).
15. Reconciled in one body (Ephesians 2:16).
16. Enter the Kingdom (John 3:3-5; Colossians 1:13).
17. Have a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21).
18. Are Abraham's seed, heir, child (Galatians 3:29).

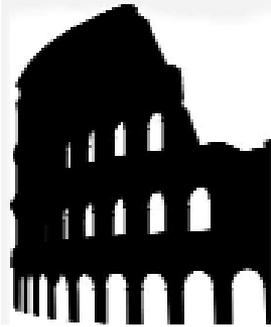
Then...

What is your condition

without scriptural baptism?

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned...” (Mark 16:16). “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

— Author Unknown



Romans 7:13-25

Jerry Bates

1. Did the Law become death to man? (v. 13)
2. What did the Law do in regard to sin? (v. 13)
3. Was the problem the Law or sin? (v. 13)
4. The Law is _____, but I am _____. (v. 14)
5. What part of man wants to do good? (v. 15)
6. In spite of that fact, man often sins. Why is that true? (v. 15-17)
7. When we have a desire to do good, even though we don't, we show that we accept that the law is _____. (v. 16)
8. Nothing good dwells in the _____ (v. 18).
9. If Paul wants to do good, then why doesn't he do it? (v. 18-19)
10. Paul emphasizes the constant battle that is going on within man. What are the two warring parties? (v. 21)
11. Our desires to do good are attacked from two sources. What are the two sources?
12. Due to that battle, we become _____ to the law of sin (v. 23)
13. What does the word "wretched" mean? (v. 24)
14. What is the body of death? (v. 24)
15. Who can deliver us from the body of death? (v. 25).
16. With the mind, Paul served the _____ of God, but with flesh he served the law of _____. (v. 25)

(See inside back cover for answers)

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Note: In this section Paul apparently discusses the constant battle between sin and righteousness that is waged within the Christian. The problem is that the inner man or the spiritual part of man has a desire to do good, but the fleshly part of man does evil. Since we live in the flesh, we often fail to do good, in spite of our desire. Man is powerless to completely conquer sin on his own.

This discussion sounds very bleak, as if man is hopelessly lost in sin, without any deliverance. However, Paul closes this section with a triumphant cry of victory. We do not have to deliver ourselves. Christ can and has delivered us from the guilt of sin. We do not have to win the battle alone, and this section is a humble confession that every person needs deliverance, even a faithful servant like Paul.



What Is Wrong with Denominational Baptism?

Cecil Willis

The word “baptism” with its various inflections occurs 126 times in the New Testament. Hence, one has to say a good deal about baptism or neglect a large portion of the Bible.

So far as I know, all denominations except the Christian Scientists and the Quakers practice some rite that they call baptism. Most people, therefore, have submitted to some ordinance that was called baptism. When these people learn about the New Testament church, they often want to come into the church on their denominational baptism. But if something is wrong with denominational baptism, and I think there is, these people plainly need to be

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told about it. This I shall attempt to do in this short article. Note these things wrong with denominational baptism:

❖ 1. IT HAS THE WRONG AUTHORITY (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17). Denominational councils and creeds authorize denominational baptism. Jesus never authorized it, nor did He ever command anyone to be baptized into any denomination.

❖ 2. IT USUALLY HAS THE WRONG SUBJECT (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:37; 2:38). The Bible teaches, and everyone is agreed, that the penitent believer who confesses his faith is a proper subject of scriptural baptism. But denominations often **sprinkle infants** who cannot meet these requirements. Denominations also baptize **people who think they are already saved**, rather than persons who desire **to be saved**.

❖ 3. IT HAS THE WRONG CONFESSION (Acts 8:37). Persons in the New Testament confessed their faith in Christ as the confessional requisite for baptism. But persons desiring to undergo denominational baptism will be asked to confess agreement with the sectarian creed. One denomination that I know requires a confession consisting of **twenty propositions!** More common is the unscriptural confession wherein one states that **he believes that God for Christ's sake has pardoned his sins, the so-called, "Sinner's Prayer"**. Many who now question their denominational baptism have not the faintest remembrance of what they confessed.

❖ 4. IT USUALLY HAS THE WRONG ACTION (Acts 8:37; Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12). Scriptural baptism entails "much water" (John 3:23), and a coming "unto", a "going down into", and a "coming up out of the water". In scriptural baptism, one is "buried" (Romans 6:3,4). Neither sprinkling nor pouring meets these scriptural requirements. Hence, if you submitted to sprinkling or pouring, your "baptism" was wrong.

❖ 5. IT HAS THE WRONG PURPOSE, (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). These passages teach baptism to be "for the remission of sins", to be "saved", to have one's sins "washed away". Denominations usually assert they are baptizing one into that particular denomination rather than into Christ Jesus, (Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4). So even though one has been immersed, if he was not immersed for the scriptural purposes, that person's baptism was wrong.

Most sectarians teach that one is baptized to show that **he has already been saved** rather than **in order to be saved**. Were you so baptized? If you

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will remember whether you confessed that you HAD BEEN SAVED (which you very possibly may have done), you will be able to ascertain whether your immersion was “for the remission of sins” and into the body of Christ, (1 Corinthians 12:13).

❖ 6. IT HAS THE WRONG ORDER, (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37). These verses establish the **sequence of events** in conversion to be **hearing, faith, repentance, confession, immersion, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit**. Sectarrians confuse this order. They state the sequence like this: **Gift of the Holy Spirit, repentance, faith, salvation, and then baptism**.

❖ 7. IT HAS THE WRONG ALLEGIANCE. Sectarian baptism binds one to wear a human name, obey and endorse a human creed, belong to a human organization and to support a human program, while scriptural baptism binds one to wear a divine name, obey a divine message, belong to a divine body, and to engage in a divinely authorized program. Denominational baptism attracts people to a denominational body rather than to Christ and His Kingdom.

REMEMBER . . .

1. One cannot be **taught wrong** and *baptized right* (Romans 10:17; 6:17).
2. One cannot be **baptized wrong** and *worship right* (Romans 6:3,4; Acts 2:42).
3. One cannot **worship wrong** and *live right* (John 4:23,24).
4. One cannot **live wrong** and *die right* (Matthew 25:31-41).
5. Therefore, one cannot be **baptized wrong** and *die right*.

What about you, my friend? Have you submitted to scriptural baptism? Don't make the error of interpreting what you did years ago in the light of what you now know the Bible to teach, as many have done. One must understand what he is doing at the time he is doing it, in order to obey the gospel scripturally from the heart. †

In Acts 19, we read of a situation in which people had not been baptized according to the ONE baptism of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-4) in force at that time: “Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:4,5).

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Is Baptism Important for Our Salvation?

Reuben Emperado

Is baptism important for our salvation? Did God include it in His overall plan to save man? What is the purpose of water baptism? Many human opinions have been offered on this matter, but in this study we will allow the Scripture to tell us of the purpose and design of baptism.

The Bible plainly tells us what baptism is for:

1. It is for salvation from our sins through the gospel (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
2. It is for remission of sins by the blood of Jesus (Acts 2:38).
3. It is for the washing away of sins by Christ name (Acts 22:16).
4. It is the time when we are buried and raised together with Christ (Romans 6:3,4; Colosians 2:12).
5. It is the time when we put on Christ (Galatians 3:26,27).
6. It is the time that we experience the new birth (John 3:3-5).
7. It is an act of obedience to the will of God (Matthew 3:15-17; Hebrews 5:8).

Baptism Is for Salvation

Mark 16:16 is a very important verse when we consider the subject of water baptism. Many theological battles has been fought on this single verse alone. A correct understanding of this verse will clear away many misconceptions on this very important subject.

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’” (Mark 16:15,16).

What does this passage really teach? This verse is a compound sentence which has two clauses. The first clause (independent clause) speaks of the conditions of salvation and the second part (dependent clause) speaks of the reason for condemnation.

Those who espouse the doctrine of “faith alone” theory have avoided and abhorred Mark 16:16 like a plague. This kind of attitude is seriously wrong and defiant toward God. The verse is very simple and clear. It tells us in the first part who will be saved and, in the second part, who will be lost. Let us review this verse. Mark 16:16, says, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*

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Please observe these helpful questions:

1. Who will be saved? He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Who is the HE in this verse that shall be saved? Jesus answered this question. "*He that believes and is baptized.*"
2. Who will be condemned? "*He that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*"
The unbeliever will condemned

It has been frequently argued that the Lord did not say: "He who is **not baptized** shall be condemned." Does the second clause of Mark 16:16 nullify the first part? Of course NOT! Besides, how could you baptize an unbeliever? The only thing that makes "baptism" baptism is faith; without faith, one would merely be plunged under water, with no spiritual effect. So what profit would "baptism" be to the unbeliever? Disbelief, alone, is enough to damn a sinner (John 3:18) The reason the Lord did not say, "He that is baptized not shall be condemned" is because baptism is to be administered *only* to those who have faith. Jesus said: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" Baptism follows faith; it does not precede it, and salvation comes as a result of the combined actions. The absence of faith makes baptism an utter impossibility and would render the act a mockery to the holy ordinance of God (Hebrews 11:6).

Furthermore, when the Lord said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*", He made both faith and baptism as necessary requirements for salvation. That should settle the question. The servant of God will say: "*Lord, speak for thy servant hears.*" (1 Samuel 3:10). On the other hand, the proud and rebellious person will respond: "Lord, listen for your servant is speaking."

Consider the following illustration: "A man who eats and digests what he eats shall live; but he who refuses to eat shall die." Do you think for a moment that there would be any need to say: "He who does not eat and does not digest his food shall die?" What would a man digest if he refused to eat? You note that digesting is dependent upon eating, and since you have nothing to digest if you refuse to eat, then the refusal to eat would logically imply that there would be nothing to digest.

Faith and baptism are complimentary, not contrary, acts. Baptism does not nullify faith; neither does it nullify the grace of God. Baptism is a demonstration of a real faith and an obedient heart. It is in baptism that the human heart makes its appeal and pledge to God (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism saves because Christ's word says it does. Baptism is not another means of attaining salvation, as men have falsely presumed. It does not *compete* with the Gospel of Christ; it is, in fact, a *demonstration* of the Gospel of Christ. It is in baptism that the entire picture of the Gospel is reenacted. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus

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are pictured by the obedience of the sinner (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12). A person who refuses to be baptized is not a believer but is a rebel and an infidel! (Luke 7:30). A true believer will not argue against the will of God, but will humbly submit himself to His will (Acts 2:38-41; Mark 16:16).

Baptism Is for Remission of Sins

“And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:38 (ASV).

This text clearly expresses the purpose of baptism. It is FOR the remissions or forgiveness of sins. However, because of the false view that is now commonly accepted by many Protestant denominations, the meaning of the text has been twisted and butchered and has been made to appear to teach that baptism is “because” of remission of sins and has become “an outward expression of an inward condition.”

One Baptist scholar was honest and truthful enough to admit that Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins.

“In July 1877 the Baptist Quarterly published an article by J.W. WILLMARTH, prominent Baptist minister and scholar, entitled “Baptism and Remission.” In this article he sought to warn and admonish his own brethren regarding their claim that for (or eis) means ‘because of’ Dr. Willmarth strongly urged that “eis” means “in order to”, not ‘because of’ (that is, looking forward rather than backward, meaning that baptism is in order to obtain the remission of sins, not because sins have already been forgiven). Further, he quoted from the noted Baptist commentator, H.B. Hackett, to this effect: “This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized.” It is a pity that the scholarly admonition of Drs. Willmarth and Hackett did not prevail”# (Spiritual Sword, Vol. 25, January 1994, No. 2, “Baptism in the New Testament”, p. 3).

Clearly, Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 teach that baptism is essential to man’s salvation from past sins. True baptism must be preceded by a genuine faith, sincere repentance and confession of one’s faith in Christ (Acts 8:38; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38). This is done by the authority of Jesus Christ, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit which is “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:18-20). This is what the Lord commanded to be preached to “every creation” under heaven. May God help us to believe, respect, obey and teach it to others. †

Reuben S. Emperado is a preacher of the Gospel, working in the Philippines.

SALVATION

IF...

Bonnie Rushmore

Throughout the Bible, God promises His children wonderful blessings — **IF** we obey Him. Leviticus Chapter 26 is one of those instances. Verse One begins with God demanding total allegiance to Him — and Him alone. The Israelites were warned not to make graven images of any size. Furthermore, they were



to keep the Sabbath Day and revere the Tabernacle. Then, God gives the conditional phrase, “**If** you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give...” (Leviticus 26:3-4). The Israelites were promised: rain when needed, crops would flourish, plenty to eat, safety in the Promised Land, no fear at night, God would rid the land of evil beasts and their enemies would fall before them with the sword. God would renew the covenant made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He would walk among them because He was their God.

What a wonderful life God promised His children! They had no worries — they had food in abundance, plenty of children raising them up to be a great nation and no fears from wild beasts or enemies. The life God promised the Israelites was a foretaste of heaven.

On the other hand, **IF** the Israelites failed to keep God’s laws, they would experience terror, wasting diseases, and fever; enemies would eat that which they sowed; their enemies would defeat them, and the children of God would serve those whom they hated. The wild beast would return and take their children and their livestock away (Leviticus 26:14-21).

God made one more promise to the Israelites. **IF** after refusing to obey God, they realized the grave error of their ways and repented, God would welcome them back with open arms. The Lord said He would once again renew the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Leviticus 26:40-45). The books of Judges through Malachi show the Israelites repeating over and over again the pattern of obedience, rebellion, punishment, and repentance throughout the time period of the Old Testament.

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I have heard individuals comment that they do not understand how the Israelites could turn their backs on God knowing the promises from God. All they had to do was obey His commands. Some have hinted that if they had lived during the time of the Israelite nation, they would not have fallen away from God, but would have whole-heartily obeyed His every command, reaping the great blessings He bestowed upon them.

Are Christians today any different from the Israelites of long ago? I think not! We have been promised a wonderful home in heaven. *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”* (Revelation 21:4). In heaven, there is no night for God will give the needed light (Revelation 22:5). Heaven will be a beautiful place with each occupant living in a mansion (John 14:2-3; Revelation 21). An eternal home in heaven belongs to each who obediently follows God. God has also promised an eternal home of punishment **if**, we refuse to obey Him (Revelation 20:10-15; 21:8). Yet, there are many people who ignore God’s laws.

Thousands of individuals across the planet have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. Many of those same individuals own Bibles or have access to the Bible written in their native languages. Still, many refuse to obey God’s commands, placing themselves in an unsavory relationship with God.

Unfortunately, many who once loved and followed God’s commands have turned away from Him. They choose to enjoy the “pleasures of sin for a season” rather than adhere to the love of God and enjoy His wonderful blessings (James 1:12-17). Sin may seem pleasurable at the time, but the consequences of sin can lead to a heartbreaking, miserable life for the sinner, his family, and his close friends.

Just as God promised the Israelites that He would once again walk among them and be their God **if**, they would repent of their evil ways, God will welcome us back with open arms when we repent of our sinful ways (Luke 3:13,15; Acts 8:22; 17:30; James 5:20).

Let each of us examine our lives (2 Corinthians 13:5), making course corrections as needed, so that each of us may live a life in accordance with God’s will. Doing so will lead to a happier life on earth and an eternity in heaven one day! †

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5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

Sons of God God's Heirs

Paula Bates

1. Behold, what manner of _____ the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called _____ of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew _____ not (1 John 3:1).
2. Wherefore thou art no more a _____, but a _____; and if a son, then an _____ of God through Christ (Galatians 4:7).
3. The _____ itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the _____ of God (Romans 8:15).
4. And if children, then _____, heirs of _____ and joint heirs with _____; if so be that we _____ with him, that we may be also _____ together (Romans 8:16).
5. That being justified by his _____, we should be made _____ according to the _____ of eternal life (Titus 3:7).
6. For ye are all the _____ of God by _____ in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been _____ into _____ have put on _____ (Galatians 3:26-27).

~~ANSWERS~~

1. Love, sons, him
2. Servant, son, heir
3. Spirit, children
4. Heirs, God, Christ, suffer, glorified
5. Grace, heirs, hope
6. Children faith, baptized, Christ, Christ

Answers:

Not of Necessity

Joe C. Magee

My experience with the subject of giving could be called a paradox. For years, as a young husband and father, struggling to support a growing family, I would resist — even become upset — every time the subject of giving came up. I readily admit that part of the problem was that I knew I was not giving to support the cause of Christ as I should. But there was another problem.

So many times when the end of each year was approaching, the preacher would be asked by the elders to preach a sermon on giving. At times the sermon would be based upon the budget, which the elders had apparently already prepared, or would be an apologetic approach to the subject. On one occasion the preacher even apologized, saying, “I promise not to touch on this subject again this year.”

I began to study the subject of giving from a biblical standpoint, and I immediately recognized that we were creating an attitude of necessity, which is exactly what the Bible teaches NOT TO DO. *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7).

What constitutes a cheerful giver? Do you remember the first time you had an opportunity to give a gift? What prompted that action, if not love? Love for a mother, father, friend, or sweetheart makes the giving of a gift an exciting and cheerful act. How different from giving out of a sense of obligation.

We should be reminded that we serve a loving and giving God. He gave us life. He gave us a beautiful world in which to live. He gives the strength and resources to supply our needs. Most of all, He gave us His Son to die for our sins; and He gives us the opportunity to share with others our bounty. This is the opportunity which Paul deals with in his letter to the Corinthians. The saints in Jerusalem were in great need. Paul writes of how those in Macedonia responded to this need. *“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality”* (2 Corinthians 8:1,2). Note how closely joy and liberality are tied together. Then as Paul admonishes the Corinthians to be

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prepared, he writes, *“Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation”* (2 Corinthians 9:5). Notice the words *“generous,” “previously promised,”* and *“not as a grudging obligation.”* I get the impression that these brethren were excited about the opportunity to help even those whom they did not know, and yet those who were of like precious faith. What prompted this enthusiasm among the Macedonians? We find the answer in verse five of chapter eight: *“And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”* Of all the gifts we may offer, none can compare with the one for which our Lord yearns the most: **ourselves**. *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24).

Let me share with you a method that has been used with surprising results where I have served. First, the leaders would determine to let the congregation set the budget. In order to do so, they would set forth proposals concerning the work of the church. Two months before the budget would go into effect, a series of lessons on giving would be presented. These would be Bible-based and not budget-centered. Following this, the congregation would be asked to search their hearts and determine what they would give over the next year, and would give that much over the next three Sundays. Why three Sundays? This would determine an average and would allow for any casual giving by visitors to the services. The average of these three Sunday contributions would then serve as a basis for what the leaders could determine they would have to carry on the work. In essence, they have let the congregation set the budget. The amazing thing about this is that, in every case where I have seen this put into effect, the congregation purposed more than the leaders proposed, and at the end of the budget year they had given more than they purposed! What’s more, the congregations found themselves personally engaged in more of the activities of the church, were more enthusiastic, and were rejoicing in the work of the Lord as never before! Under this method, I have seen congregations double and triple their giving in less than three years.

Giving as described and taught in the Scriptures is an act of love and a glory to God. It can become one of the most exciting experiences that a Christian can enjoy. †

Joe C. Magee is a Gospel preacher living in Shawnee, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

THE CHURCH

We Are at War!

Jimmy Jividen

The war we are fighting is not for physical territory or temporal power. It is a war against the devil and all of the deceit and darkness of his domain.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

This spiritual warfare demands the greatest sacrifice and most noble courage, since we are being attacked on all fronts.

❖ **There is the philosophical front which challenges reason and common sense as the means of understanding Scriptures.** In its place the devil would inject existentialism and its corollaries. Truth would be portrayed as relative, subjective, and personal. Universal, objective, absolute truth would be debunked. Yet, it was Jesus who said, *“Thy word is truth”* (John 17:17).

❖ **There is the ethical front which challenges the teachings of Jesus concerning honesty, morality, and benevolence.** The devil would advocate situational ethics and let every man do what is right in his own eyes. Might would be right. Abuse, oppression, and perversion would be unchecked, and the imaginations of men’s hearts would be only evil continually.

❖ **There is the religious front that challenges God’s revelation in the Scriptures.** Satan would contradict what God has said and would seek to deceive man as he did in the Garden of Eden. He would try to make the Word of God ineffective by claiming that it is so enshrouded in past cultures that it cannot apply to contemporary man. He would try to crowd the Word of God out of the mind of man by secularism.

It is time for soldiers of Christ to arise and fight. All that it takes for evil to conquer is for good men to do nothing. Paul exhorted Christians at Ephesus to: *“...take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm”* (Ephesians 6:13). †

Jimmy Jividen is an author and a preacher living in Abilene, Texas, USA.

THE CHURCH EXCITED FOR CHRIST

Maxie B. Boren

I am convinced that if we could ever get the church really excited about Christ and His cause, there would be no mountain that we couldn't climb!

Mind you, we don't need just more excited Christians — we've already got tens of thousands of them — excited Christians — excited for the things of this world! What we need are more Christians excited for Christ — Children of God on fire with zeal for His will — Redeemed who will say so — Saved who are busy saving — Those who have been told of Christ, out telling — Those who are sold, out selling!

We need Christians so excited for Christ and His way that their exuberance and enthusiasm run over! We need those who know they've received so much, and who can't be happy unless they're giving unselfishly of their time and money and talents! Enough of listlessness! Down with half-heartedness! Away with nominality! Let the Lord's church forever bury lukewarmness and apathy, and come alive as never before! *"Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee!"* (Ephesians 5:14)

Kindle that flame! Fan the fire! Let us light this cold, dark world — not with flames of war, but with the radiant light that Christ is Savior, Lord, and King! I challenge Christians everywhere — quit being excited for the things of this world, and let's all get excited for Christ and His cause. †



Maxie B. Boren is a Gospel preacher living in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

THE CHURCH

The Bride of Christ

Rusty Woods

According to writers of Scripture, God has always known how to treat His bride. Ezekiel 16 speaks of God putting an embroidered dress on Israel and slipping sandals of fine leather on her feet. In order to accent her beauty, He clothed her with linen and showered her with earrings and bracelets that would put Tiffany's and Hidalgo to shame.

Moving to the New Testament, Paul speaks of the church — the bride of Christ — as a lady he desires to keep pure for Jesus, her husband. Jesus made a sacrifice for His bride that showed ultimate commitment and love. Thus, He supplied the avenue through which she could be seen in splendor and beauty, absent of wrinkles and blemishes.

I have begun interacting more and more in recent years with Christians who have turned away from the church, through their own lack of commitment or through perceived failures among Christians in a local congregation, and they have decided to seek fulfillment in service and community elsewhere.

Maybe you, too, have heard a faithful friend say, "I get my fellowship by meeting up with friends at the local coffee shop once a week to discuss important topics." Or perhaps you have heard someone say, "I volunteer at a local hospital as a way to serve in the way Christ served, and that is my `church.'"

I do not want to downplay the significance of any of these things. Especially among the current college generation with which I work, service and community are essential parts of their culture and truly have great value.

However, I think Derek Webb's song "The Church" respectfully and accurately identifies those activities as the work of bridesmaids — not the bride. The bride is the full body of Christ from top to bottom — the oldest and youngest, richest and poorest, God's gracious children of faith living in the community. Despite these differences, members spur each other toward maturity as the collective body referred to as the beautiful "bride" of Christ.

Let's allow Jesus' passionate desire to receive His bride without blemish motivate us to live in Christian community in a way that honors His commitment to us, His church — His bride! "*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ... That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (Ephesians 5:25,27). †

THE CHURCH

What Am I Worth to the Church?

Richard Batten

Christ paid a great price to purchase the church (Acts 20:28). It must have meant a great deal to Him. The church is the only place where I can serve God and get treasures in return after death (1 Corinthians 15:58). In business, it is usually understood that a person must contribute to the general welfare of the company in order to stay on the payroll. For the company to keep my name on the books, the owners must be satisfied with my performance. The same is true in the church. In Revelation 3:1-5 we read where God had become displeased with the performance of those at Sardis and had blotted their names out of His book.

Let us suppose that our job was one that we kept by election, and every four years we had to campaign to be re-elected. What would we use for campaign power? (1.) "Here is my record; see what I have accomplished." (2.) "Note my qualifications, my experience, my talents." (3) "Here's what I promise to do." If my membership in the church was maintained the same way, would I be re-elected? Can I be counted upon or just counted? How about my absenteeism? Do I contribute to the growth of the church or expect the church to contribute to me? Do I visit others who are in need or expect others to visit me? Does the appearance of my name on the roll add strength to the church or bring reproach? Am I a problem or a promoter? Am I a spectator or a participant?

Many desire to be in the ship of Zion, to safely cross the sea of time to yonder shore of heaven, but too many are not willing to grab an oar and pull. Remember Hezekiah was told to set his house in order for he was going to die. He prayed and wept. Notice his appeal to the Lord: "*I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*" (2 Kings 20:3). If we were faced with a similar crisis, what would we use as a basis of appeal to the Lord? It is becoming increasingly difficult to get members of the Lord's church to faithfully attend the assemblies, much less involve themselves in the business of saving lost souls. Where do you stand?

Trust NO ONE with your soul



SNATCHING FROM THE FIRE



J. Randal Matheny

“Just received news that my niece Samantha lost her home to a tornado in Alabama last night. She nearly lost her baby boy, but her husband was able to grab hold of his foot and pull him down out of the air as the tornado was taking the roof off their apartment. Thank God all are alive and safe! Please keep her family in your prayers.”¹

How long would a father delay before grabbing for a child being sucked up into the air by a tornado? How much thought would a parent give before throwing himself to save a son?

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

If the physical life is precious to a father, how much more is the spiritual life of the soul precious to the Father for whom all creation has been named? *“And have mercy on those who waver; save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh”* (Jude 22,23).

We study and linger, talk and tarry, theorize and temporize. We wait for the right opportunity. We prepare and pray, write and preach to the saved. And fire keeps on destroying.

The apostle Paul walked into a city and proclaimed Christ. He didn't



wait for people to have a good impression or note his fine example. He didn't start soup kitchens or medical clinics. He didn't rent or build facilities, start programs or study the culture.

Our day is absolutely no different than his in any respect that matters. We are wasting time, digging in with excuses, whittling away the hours and spending our days entertaining ourselves and our children.

And all the while the Evil One whisks souls away into the dark of the night, sucks them up into his vortex of vanity, snatches them for subjects of his carnal kingdom.

We will suffer and sacrifice for everything but evangelism. God forbid that we be inconvenienced by the lost.

And we never notice the empty crib of the baby spirited away by the winds of the tornado. †

J. Randal Matheny is a longtime missionary and has lived in Brazil since 1984. He is an editor, author and publisher.

¹ Andrea Parker Spradlin, Facebook status update, 2010 April 25. Used by permission.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

“But I can’t tell anybody!”

Larry West

“The church in America is shrinking.

“The number of men, women, and children in the pews has dipped to the lowest level since a comprehensive effort to count members began in 1980, according to the 2009 edition of Churches of Christ in the United States.

“In the newly released directory, 21st Century Christian identifies 12,629 a cappella Churches of Christ with 1,578,281 adherents nationwide,

“Those figures represent 526 fewer churches and 78,436 fewer people in the pews than just six years ago.”

So says, Bobby Ross Jr. of *The Christian Chronicle*, (February issue 2009).

And what is the source of the problem? We are plagued with the disease, “But I can’t tell anybody!”

“Not personally.” “Not me!” “Not in my hometown!” “Not to my friends!” “If it’s at home I have something to lose!”

It’s:

1. “Not to my family! Why, oh, that’s my family!”
2. “Not to my friends! Why, oh, they’re my friends!”
3. “Not to my acquaintances! Why, I hardly know them!”



CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

4. And, “Not to strangers! I don’t know them at all!”
And we must ask, “Who’s left?”

Now, surely, the Lord must be looking down, saying to the American Christian, “Okay, allow me to please understand. I have cleansed all your sins away in the blood of my Son. I have, thus, added your name ... *your very name* ... to the Lamb’s Book of Life (Revelation 21:27). I have chosen you in Him before the foundation of the world, that you should be holy and without blame before Him in love. I have adopted you, yes *you*, as my child by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of My will. I have redeemed you through Jesus’ blood. I have given you forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of My grace which I have made to abound toward you (Ephesians 1:4-7)

... But you can’t tell anybody?

“I have made known to you the mystery of the Gospel (Ephesians 1:9) those before you never knew. *“Yet, living in darkness, in ignorance of the Gospel’s coming events, they through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And yet, all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise”* (Hebrews 11:33-39). That is, they lived in darkness. They never knew the mystery of the Gospel of Jesus.

“But *you!* Why, to YOU I have made it known! You know Jesus is My Son. He is God in the flesh! And as a human, He died to take away your own human sin problem (Ephesians 1:7). He raised up bodily from that buried grave to remove your own grave problem (1 Corinthians 15). That mystery I made known to you!

... But you can’t tell anybody?

“Because I see you from eternity’s side, I already see you yourself raised up and sitting together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6)! Already there! With Me! In Glory!

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

... *But you can't tell anybody?*

“And when your day comes, your day controlled by time and not eternity, why, in that great getting’ up mornin’ I will raise your body up in incorruption, in glory, in power, a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15: 42-44), glorified beyond your wildest imagination!

... *But you can't tell anybody?*

“You are going to allow the church in America to shrink? You are going to allow it to go the way of the Ephesian church when I removed its lampstand from its place (Revelation 2:5)? And why? Why are you going to do it?”

... **Because you can't tell anybody.**

“I allowed My Son to give His life for you! And I've given you all these Spiritual blessings. And more!

But you can't go ...

1. “Not to your family! Why? Because oh, “that’s your family?”
2. “Not to your friends! Why? Because, oh, “they’re your friends?”
3. “Not to your acquaintances! Why? Because, you “hardly know them!”
4. “Not to strangers! Why? Because you “don’t know them at all!”

“And who’s left? Look around the planet! *Who’s left?*”

“I pray, my child, please excuse me. I’m so hurt, so disappointed. I’m afraid I’m losing my lunch. Pardon me while I go vomit up the contents of my stomach (Revelation 3:16).

“I see you a rich church. You, My child, have become such a wealthy America, and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17).

“I just wish you could see the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18). It is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:4).

“Did you hear Me? It’s for YOU!”

“I’ve already told you about it. You know of it. But what do I hear? I hear

... **But I can't tell anybody.”**

And, then, it is Jesus, that sacrificial Lamb, who must turn and promise, “*All I can say, my child, is that it is only to him who overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*” (Revelation 3:21,22). †

Larry West has promoted evangelism all of his adult life through the “We Care” program out of West Monroe, Louisiana, USA.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

CHANGE WE BELIEVE IN

Philemon Rajah

Yes, we became familiar with these words during the US presidential Election. But as Christians, is the change that we believe possible? We dream for a change in which everyone knows Christ and everyone becomes Christians. But is it possible?

No, everyone in the world will not become Christians. The Lord Himself said that most will choose to walk the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14).

But, yes, *everyone* can know Christ, because He commanded His people to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, and He would not ask of us something that cannot be done! So, when, and how can the world know Him?

1. When we have the commitment to evangelize: Every one of us who are Christians should be committed to evangelize, according to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Matthew 28:18-20, “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘... 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen’*”.

Also, we should have the zeal to proclaim the Gospel as Paul was committed, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek*” (Romans 1:16).

2. The world can know Him when we live a life like Jesus Christ: We have heard, “The pen is mightier than the sword”, but I would like to say that a model living is mightier than writing 1000 books for others to change. So, as Christians, we have to ‘live the Bible’, rather than only to ‘preach the Bible’, or ‘read the Bible’.

First Peter 2:21 says, “*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*” And also we have to be careful that we do not deceive ourselves, as is said in James 1:22, “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*”

I wonder: If Christ had only preached and not lived accordingly, could He have made the great changes in this world as people came to know him? So then, we as Christians should live according to what we know of Truth. Then the change we believe in is possible! †

Philemon Rajah preaches the Gospel in Madurai, India, via TV and evangelism.



Peace that Surpasses All Understanding

Wayne Barrier

Everyone faces the struggles of life that can rob us of comfort, confidence, security, and peace. We work to overcome these trials and difficulties in various ways. Some troubles are too big and powerful for us to even begin to address. What can one individual do about the global insecurity resulting from war,

political strife, natural disaster, economic failure, etc? Even personal difficulties are often seemingly impossible for us to resolve. Disease, family problems, job loss, and many other troubles can overwhelm us. Stress-induced illness is among the top causes of medical services sought from hospitals and physicians.

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How do we manage these stresses? Obviously, Christians have biblical answers. First, consider the message of Philippians 4:6,7: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Jesus states in Matthew 6:24,25, *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing?”*

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon is all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the over, will He not much more clothe you? O you of little faith.

“Therefore do not worry, saying What shall we eat?” Or ‘What shall we drink? Or ‘What shall we wear? For

your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Faithful children of God are promised His care and provision of help. Jesus calls us to Him with the promise of rest in Matthew 11:28-30, as He stated: *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

Further assurance of God’s care for His children is offered in Romans 8:28, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, and to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

The response to life’s trials and troubles is simply to maintain our faith, commitment, and trust in God and His Son Jesus. When we put Him first, He will provide our needs. Through Him, that peace that surpasses understanding can be achieved. †

Wayne Barrier of Florence, Alabama, USA, is a member of the World Evangelism Team.

Differences of Opinion

Tom Kelton



Abram and Lot had acquired so much livestock before they left Egypt that it later began to drive a wedge between them. They found that *“the land could not sustain them . . . for their possessions were so great”* (Genesis 13:6). There wasn’t enough pasture land for all the animals, not enough room for both men. The overcrowded conditions caused a tense situation to develop. According to Genesis 13:7, *“there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock.”*

The herdsmen who worked for Lot demanded that Abram’s men move their flocks. Abram’s herdsmen refused to move, figuring that their master had a right to use his land any way he wanted. A full-scale war erupted. The situation was awkward, laden with tension. Not only that, but there were witnesses to the conflict: *“The Canaanites and Perizzites were dwelling then in the land”* (Genesis 13:7). They watched as the representatives of the one God wrangled over a difference of opinion — heathens observing that God’s people could not get along.

I’ve seen too many immature Christians fighting with one another, arguing among themselves, over many petty things. Members of the family of God may quarrel bitterly about which mission work to support, what the order of worship should be, what acceptable Bible translation is really “best”.

Major explosions don’t usually result from minor conflicts. They often

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are the products of problems that have been around and have been building for long periods of time. If too much nitroglycerine accumulates in the warehouse, then a very tiny jolt can set it off and blow things sky-high. Even so, the fact is that, as Christians, we do argue among ourselves, and when people outside the body of Christ witness our actions at these times, we look like hypocrites.

How quickly we can forget that the mark of the Christian is the love he or she should bear. As Jesus said to His followers in John 13:34,35: *“A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

Unloving behavior turns people away from Christianity. Non-believers use lack of love as an excuse for rejecting Christ. Statements like these from unbelievers bounce off our eardrums: “If you’re Christians, then you ought to love each other, but you’re full of more resentment than some of the people we meet in the world.” Sadly, we must accept this rebuke, and we regret that observations of strife among Christians provide onlookers with a basis of disbelief in Jesus Christ. †

Before his death, Tom Kelton was a writer and preacher living in Pharr, Texas, USA.

What I Say

Martha D. Manley

It’s much easier,
to write what to say...
Than to try living it,
day by day...

May I ever,
seek and strive...
And keep my
devotion to God,
Alive...

Words may come,
so quickly and sure...
But what of my life,
is it as pure...?

Do I recall,
or choose to forget...
What others,
remember till yet...?

My actions,
will surely display...
If I’m, trying,
to live the right way...

Or will people look,
at me in dismay...
Thinking that I,
Don’t live the right way!

I Will Boast

Tye Power

- ◆ I cannot claim heritage from a prominent family in the church.
- ◆ I do not count among my acquaintances any of fame or wide reputation in the brotherhood.
- ◆ I cannot look to a well-known preacher and call him a mentor.
- ◆ I have not been trained in one of our preaching schools or colleges.
- ◆ I am neither eloquent, nor multi-talented, nor a popular and out-going people-person.
- ◆ I can boast of none of these things.
- ◆ I cannot claim to have married into a prominent family in the church, yet I count among them three heroes of the faith, together with whom *“I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”* (Ephesians 3:15).
- ◆ I cannot produce an impressive list of references, but there is one who will vouch for me, since, like Abraham, I believe Him and I am called His friend (James 2:23).
- ◆ I take for my mentors the recovering alcoholic, the faithful shut-in widow, and the deacon who goes quietly about his work. We are *“fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God”* (Ephesians 2:19).
- ◆ I have been trained in the only school whose reputation never changes, by the only teacher who is always faithful, who begins every class with the familiar refrain, *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”* (Matthew 11:29).
- ◆ In speech I am more Moses than Apollos.
- ◆ In talents I have no more than two.
- ◆ In personality I can identify with Timothy. But the Lord told Paul, *“My power is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians 12:9). And so I declare, *“I am content with weaknesses....For when I am weak, then I am strong”* (verse 10).
- ◆ I will boast, but not about my connections, education, or talent. *“As it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord’”* (1 Corinthians 1:31). †

Tye Power is the pulpit minister for the Broadway congregation in Tyler, Texas, U.S.A.

Beware of Envy

Agapio V. Catamora

The most common sin usually done by people living on this earth is the sin of envy. The frequency of this sin is an indication that this attitude has been used by Satan to lead people to become God's enemy. The meaning of envy signifies jealousy.

Envy is mentioned often in the Bible and most of its victims were entangled in trouble of suffering wrongdoing. It is probably because "...*envy the rottenness of the bones*" (Proverbs 14:30), it is inconsistent with the Gospel (James 3:14), and it leads to every evil work (verse 16).

The first murder in the history of mankind on this earth was exemplified by Cain when he felt envious with his brother when the "*Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast*" (Genesis 4:4,5). The result: "*Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him*" (verse 8).

During the patriarchal age, Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, became a victim of his brethren's envy (Genesis 37:11). They "*sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt*" (verse 28).

Christ, our Savior, through envy, was falsely accused by His detractors.



Because of envy, He was deprived of His freedom. His envious enemies "*stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barnabas instead*" (Mark 15:9-16). And this was also true with

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the apostle Paul when the Jews were envious of him. Divine record says, *“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming”* (Acts 13:45).

During the time of Moses, God punished the Israelites when *“in the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the Lord”*. With their attitude God was not pleased, and *“the earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it buried the company of Bairam; fire blazed among their followers; a flame consumed the wicked”* (Psalm 106:16-18).

rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

If all envy could be removed, a large lot of brotherhood strife would cease. King David said, *“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the green herb”* (Psalm 37:1,2). Paul also wrote, *“Let us behave decently...not in dissension and envy”* (Romans 13:13).

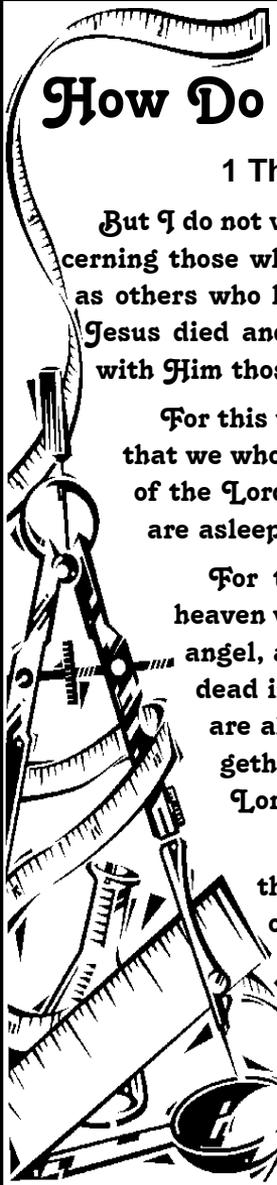
Peter admonished Christians to *“lay aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies and envies, and evil speakings, as newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby”* (1 Peter 2:1,2). And inasmuch as “envy” is one of the

**If all envy could be removed,
much of brotherhood strife would cease.**

There were so many crimes committed by many people since the fall, and envy has been counted as one of them (Romans 1:29). This is a proof of carnal-mindedness (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). In fact, Paul recalled that at one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kind of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another (Titus 3:3). *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off have been made nigh by the blood of Christ”* (Ephesians 2:13). *“He saved us through the washing of*

works of the flesh (Galatians 5:21), *“those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,”* it is therefore necessary to take heed to the word of Paul, *“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another”* (Galatians 5:26). *“And be renewed in the spirit of your minds; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”* Ephesians 4:23,24). †

Agapio V. Catamora is a radio evangelist for the Lord's church in Butuan City, Philippines.



How Do You Measure Up?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

PROVERBS 17:22



Uncle Homer is kinda different in some ways, but he surprised me when he recently showed a willingness to change his habits. He told me that he stopped eating a lot of natural foods because he found out that most people die of natural causes.



I think that the Constitution needs to be changed to allow people of much younger ages to serve in high offices in our government. The way it is, we are missing out on the perception and wisdom of youth.

For example, several young children saw a fire truck zoom past them on its way to a fire. There was a Dalmatian dog sitting in the front seat of the truck. The children began discussing what the duties of the fire truck dog are. One child said, "They use him to keep crowds back." An-

other one said, "No, he's just for good luck." A third child spoke with a firm, authoritative tone and said, "They use the dogs to find the fire hydrants!"



A woman went to the emergency room, where she was seen by a young new doctor. After about three minutes in the examination room, the doctor told her she was pregnant.

She burst out of the room and ran down the corridor screaming. An older doctor stopped her and asked what the problem was. After listening to her story, he calmed her down and sat her in another room.

Then the doctor marched down the hallway to the first doctor's room. "What is wrong with you?" he demanded. "This woman is 68 years old, she has two grown children and several grandchildren, and you told her she was pregnant?!"

The new doctor continued to write on his clipboard, and without looking up, said, "Does she still have the hiccups?"



At the banquet for Albert and Clara's 50th wedding anniversary, Albert was asked to give his friends a brief account of the benefits of a marriage of such long duration.

PROVERBS 17:22

“Tell us, Albert, just what is it you have learned from all those wonderful years with your wife Clara?”

Albert hesitated for a few seconds and then responded, “Well, I’ve learned that marriage is the best teacher of all. It teaches you loyalty, forbearance, meekness, self-restraint, forgiveness — and a great many other qualities you wouldn’t have needed if you’d stayed single.”



Let me tell you, not everybody who lives in a big city leaves home every morning with a full tank of gas. I happened to be in Boston a while back and was standing behind this woman in a line at the post office when the clerk told her, “You will have to put another stamp on this letter. It’s too heavy.” The woman looked puzzled and replied, “That will make it lighter?”



The history professor told his students that the mid-term exam would be an open-book test. He said, “You may use any reference materials that you can carry into the classroom.”

On the day of the exam, students staggered to their seats, loaded down with books, almanacs, reference sheets, and periodicals. However, one student simply carried a pretty girl

into the classroom and sat her down beside him. She was his girlfriend, a candidate for a Ph.D. in history.



The great golfer, Lee Trevino, succeeded partly because of his ability to poke fun at himself. He once told about finishing a round of golf and commenting, “I’m not saying my golf game went bad, but if I grew tomatoes, they’d come up sliced.”



The new bride loves to cook. Yesterday, she baked an angel food cake. The recipe said to beat 12 eggs separately. She said that the neighbors were so nice. Several of them loaned her some extra bowls.



Those New York subways have their problems, but in a way they’ve gotten a bum rap. You’ve got to admit that they’ve helped take crime off the street.



Sarah has burned her family’s meals so many times that they automatically head for the table every time they hear a fire alarm.

Training in Obedience

Betty Burton Choate

We might conclude that all of us would have basic instincts toward our children and our roles as parents, so that there would be a general pattern followed everywhere and throughout time. That is not actually the case. The secular world and the culture around us have definite effects on our baseline of thinking, even as parents. Here in the US, ever since the famous Dr. Spock wrote his book, there has been growing criticism of physical discipline of children. Spanking has been banned for a number of years in many public schools. Efforts are being pushed to make it a criminal offence for parents to spank their own children in their own homes. And wild, uncontrolled children are the result of this lack of discipline.

Certainly, I am not supportive of the physical abuse of a child, but carefully administered discipline is not abuse — in fact, it is one of the best friends the family can have. What is the scenario when a child is unruly and disobedient? A household that is frustrated, quarrelsome, and miserable much of the time. What is the scenario when children are obedient and disciplined, knowing their boundaries and living within them? A household that is at peace and going forward in all of the right ways. Which do you prefer?

“Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction [let not thy soul spare for his crying, KJV]” (Proverbs 19:18).

“Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:13,14).

Repeatedly, the Scriptures, by divine inspiration, instruct parents to discipline their children, in order to spare them from greater problems.

This lesson is about *little* children, as early as they begin to show disobedience in response to what the parents say.

Rule 1: Learn to THINK before you speak. But when you have thought about what you are saying, then say your “Do this” or your “No” or whatever, with a voice that carries conviction and determination. If you really mean what you say, and your voice carries that resolution, half the battle is won without more conflict.

Rule 2: Your child is disobedient, defiant, ignores you, throws a temper

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tantrum, etc., etc. What do you do? Obviously, there are many different personalities among children, even children in the same family. Some respond well to reasoning, some to shame for bad behavior, some to scolding, some to “time out”, some to having a privilege threatened or taken away, some to diversion, but some insist that you enter the battle and come out the victor.

Naturally, you try all the options, but occasionally the battle will come, and if you handle the confrontation well, you will have spared yourself and your child many future problems.

Your child simply will not obey. Now you have no choice. You have told him to do something, and if you are to be the recognized authority in his life, you must stand your ground and enforce obedience. Corporal punishment looms on the horizon. Sometimes a very young child will defiantly say, “No!” or hit out at the parent. My response to such disobedience was to give a stinging little smack to the offending part — across the mouth, the hand, not strong enough to do physical damage, but swift, and decisive — it’s the suddenness and the “last word” effects that change the little minds and behavior. Very rarely will this correction have to be repeated, if it is done with the proper authority in the voice and action.

But maybe the child is older and is needing a stronger method of correction. Fathers, with their masculine voice, can be very effective with only an open palm. Mothers may not see the same positive results, so let me suggest another approach.

1. Always administer discipline on bare little legs. The message comes through much more quickly when there is no padding, even when a mother chooses to use only a decisive hand as the tool of correction.

2. If a hand spanking is not enough, do your child the favor of keeping a keen little switch in some well-advertized place that is out of his reach (you don’t want to tempt him to steal your weapon and destroy it!).

3. Two or three stinging applications on bare legs will not do physical damage, but they are powerful mind-changers. And when this form of correction has been administered correctly, just the threat can affect attitudes for a long time to come.

4. But, further, the child who has been switched will naturally be crying. Part of the response is real; part of it is for your benefit, to inflict suffering on the parent in retaliation for his own suffering. If you allow him to stay in your presence, there will be extended tears. What worked very well with our children was to send the corrected child to the bathroom,

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not to his room (there are no toys and nothing for entertainment in the bathroom), with the promise, “You may come out when you have found your smile and can say, ‘Sorry’.” This procedure removes him from his audience, and it also opens the door for reconciliation. From your words, he knows that you are expecting this painful confrontation to end in the restoration of peace and your good graces.

5. If he lingers long, and you feel that you must check on him, don’t let him be aware of your presence. He must be the one who makes the change of heart.

6. If one parent corrects a child, the other parent must not interfere or offer comfort. This is even worse than no correction at all, because it teaches the child that he can be the victor by pitting one parent against the other, and it also sends the message that the parent doing the correcting was in the wrong — not the child. If there is the need to discuss some confrontation and the way it was handled, let it be done quietly between the parents, and away from the child — for everyone’s sake.

Have you ever explained to your children that, as a Christian — one of God’s children — you have no choice but to teach them to be obedient, even if it means spankings? God has commanded parents to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to train them in the way they should go, to chastise them when it is necessary. If parents fail to do this, they themselves are being disobedient to their Father, and He will not tolerate that because He knows that the well-being of many souls is dependent on good parental upbringing.

You need, also, to explain to children that when they are being disobedient to their parents, they are being disobedient to God. Help them to realize that one reason it is so important that they learn to obey you is so that they will also know how to obey God, their teachers at school, the policemen and everybody in authority. The biblically approved method of protecting a child from growing up to become a lawless troublemaker, who will cause heartache for himself and everyone he loves in this world and in the world to come, is to teach him to obey.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1-4). †

Betty Burton Choate is the widow of J.C. Choate, longtime missionary to India.

“And Ye Fathers...”

Charles E. Burch

The title comes from Ephesians 6:4, where the apostle Paul was giving instructions to children and parents. The complete verse states: *“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4).

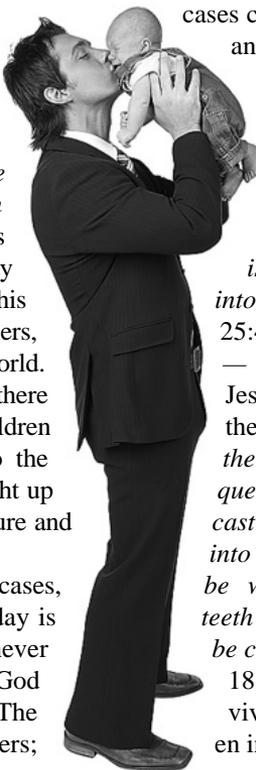
I want to focus on the last half of the verse. *“...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* This places a very grave responsibility upon the fathers across this land. Not just Christian fathers, but every father in the world. Throughout our country there are untold millions of children who would be faithful to the Lord, had they been brought up by their fathers in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The problem, in most cases, with the young people today is the fact that they have never been trained as to how God requires people to live. The above command is to fathers; oh yes, mothers have a very

important role, but God did not expect the mothers to do all. Yet, mothers can be a great encouragement and help to the fathers. When fathers refuse to fulfill their God-given responsibility, they have in many cases condemned their children to an eternity in hell.

The horror of hell is real! When Jesus painted a word picture of the Great Judgment, He said, *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal”* (Matthew 25:46). Notice, *“everlasting”* — that means hell has no end. Jesus has much to say about the place of torment. *“...into the fire that never shall be quenched”* (Mark 9:43). *“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 25:30). *“...to be cast into hell fire”* (Matthew 18:9). There are many other vivid descriptions of hell given in God’s Holy Word.

For a father to end up in



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hell is a terrible thought. Yet, a much worse thought is for his children to be there with him. The fathers who fail to bring their children up in "...the nurture and admonition of the Lord" will find absolutely no comfort in the fact that their children are there also. This will add pain and suffering to the torment, just to know that you could have saved your children. Instead, you chose to serve the devil and his pleasures in your earthly life.

Many times through the years, there are those dedicated mothers who do their best to bring their children up right. Many are successful in doing so, but without the father's help, it is a very difficult task.

"*And Ye Fathers...*" — think seriously! What do you do that is more important than bringing your children up in such a way that you will all be together in heaven forever? There are those in the Lord's church who would be glad to study with you or assist you in whatever way needed, that you might fulfill the command God has given to all fathers upon this earth. Pride and selfishness are great hindrances. †

Charles E. Burch is a retired Gospel preacher living in St. Elmo, Alabama, USA.

Take Your Time My Son

Martha D. Manley

I'm mindful of your
younger years.

When you were but a small lad,
who had very few fears.

I never knew what to expect
as you set out to play.

Would you be a cowboy,
Indian or a farmer, this day?

With the passing of time, you grew,
and with it brought change.

For in this stage of your life,
I sometimes thought you silly and strange.

You then no longer were picking
on your big sister.

To try her patience, to bother,
and to pester.

You then no longer followed me around,
you no longer had to hold on to my hand.

For it was then that I'd come to realize,
that our little boy was becoming a man!

So take your time, my son, as you are now,
in the role of husband and dad.

Always keep God in your plans,
and your life here on earth will be glad.

Your father and I as always, love you son,
and as we continue to pray.

That God will bless
you and yours each day.

How to Be Good Parents

David Tarbet

Joseph and Mary reared Jesus in “wisdom ... and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Undoubtedly their other children (James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, plus daughters whose names are not known, Mark 6:3), were reared by the same successful principles, for James became a Christian leader and authored a



book in the New Testament. Parents can learn effective, godly parenting skills from Mary and Joseph. Note these qualities:

They took their Son to worship (Luke 2:41), rather than “dropping him off” at the front door with a promise to pick him up “after church”. Families that worship together stay together. Spiritual things deserve the highest priority.

They taught Him to be obedient to His earthly parents (Luke 2:51), respecting God’s law of authority in the home. To be disrespectful of parents is a sin (Ephesians 6:1-3).

They instilled the dignity of hard work. Joseph, the carpenter (Matthew 13:55), instructed Jesus in the science of carpentry (Mark 6:3). To not teach a child to work is to teach him to steal.

They reared Him to be helpful, kind, and others-focused — qualities approved and admired by all (Luke 2:52). Are you rearing your children with a positive, strong religious emphasis? Take your family to worship this Sunday. It’s the right thing to do! †

David Tarbet preaches for the White Rock Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, USA.

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The Stranger



A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. In my young mind, each member had a special niche. My brother, Bill, five years my senior, was my example. Fran, my younger sister, gave me an opportunity to play big brother and develop the art of teasing. My parents were complementary instructors — mom taught me to love the word of God, and dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversa-

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tions. He could hold our whole family spell-bound for hours each evening. If I wanted to know about politics, history, or science, he knew it all. He knew about the past, understood the present, and seemingly could predict the future. The pictures he could draw were so lifelike that I would often laugh or cry as I watched.

He was like a friend to the whole family. He took dad, Bill, and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. My brother and I were deeply impressed by John Wayne in particular.

The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind — but sometimes mom would quietly get up — while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places — go to her room, read her Bible and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave. You see, my dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions. But this stranger never felt obligation to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house — not from us, from our friends, or adults. Our long time visitor, however, used occasional four letter words that burned my ears and made dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted. My dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home — not even for cooking. But the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often.

He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (too much freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man/woman relationship were influenced by the stranger.

As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents. Yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave.

More than 30 years have passed since the stranger moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. He is not nearly so intriguing to my dad as he was in those early years. But if I were to walk into my parent's den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name? We always just called him T.V.



(Author unknown)

Open Minded

SPC Alex Gibson

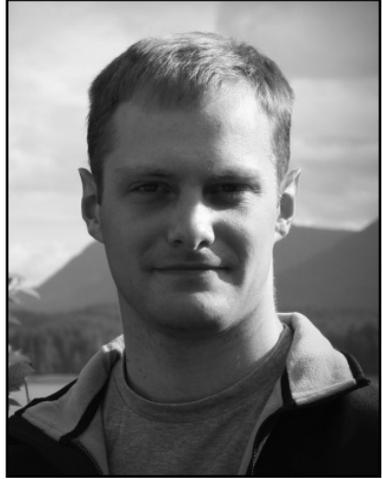
Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone who is closed minded? I have them all the time. It's like ramming your head into a brick wall and hoping that the wall crumbles before you crack your skull open. Being infantry, I have the advantage of having a very thick skull, so I normally win, but for those of you who are less likely to have such hard heads, I have some words of wit and wisdom.

First of all, I will address the parts of conversation. You have (1) the person who is talking the projected message, (2) the perceived message, and (3) the listener. This may seem like too many parts, but really it's not. Most conflicts are over misunderstandings and not actual differences. For instance, I tell you I want to eat something tasty for dinner. You have a sweet tooth, and so you think of something like having a pancake dinner. Whereas I am more of a carnivore and wanted three pounds of bacon and beef served with fries and a cold coke, perhaps "the best meal on earth", but all I said was I wanted something "tasty". The meaning different ones of us give that word is different, but that's where the trouble comes in.

So, what does this have to do with Christians and being open minded? I'm getting there; hold on. So, it's clear that the first thing we need to do is to make sure we use specific words and are clear in our meaning, and through dialog, confirm that the right meaning came across.

But you still have the person speaking and the person listening. They are the other part of the problem, and this is where being open minded comes into play. As Christians, we are often called on to talk about many delicate subjects. My personal favorite is the subject of judgment and hellfire. I'm not sure who keeps putting out the image that Christians run around pointing crooked fingers at people saying, "You'll go to hell unless you do it *my* way". Certainly, this is not the approach that needs to be taken. "My" way is not the issue. What do the Scriptures say? That is the rule of law for all of us.

In our outreach to others, we expect them to consider, with an open mind,



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the truths we are showing them in the Bible. We have to be willing to study with the same attitude. Christians need to approach life with an open mind, free of judgment and thoughts of hellfire and damnation. We have the joy of truth, and the great thing is, if it's true, *you can test it against anything and it will stand.*

So, that being the case, I can freely study evolution or any political structure or any thing I want. I carry truth and use it as my measuring stick. Does this mean that I abandon truth? No, not in the least; in fact it means just the opposite. You'll find that the more you explore the world and compare things, with truth, the more value you will find in your truth.

So where does that leave a Christian? Are we to say that homosexuality is OK, for the sake of being open minded? Or that denominations are all OK? Again, such is not the case. First of all, it was Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, that God created and united as "one" in marriage. Second, a house divided against itself cannot stand. Religious division is condemned by God (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

But as for talking to people about controversial things, yes, that's OK. In fact, if you do what you should when you come to such subjects, you'll learn a great deal from it. By that I mean you should go and study with the person and look at all the facts for both your cases and compare. If you're truly right, then what you believe will be strengthened. What about those questions of faith that just don't seem to have an answer? Believe me, they have answers, but my favorite one is "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:12,13).

Not that you should leave religious debates at that, but that you should be respectful of others and encourage them to study. Who knows? You may learn something, too! But there can be no growth if you or the person you're having a conversation with don't agree to lay down your preconceived notions and look fairly at subjects. Now, I'm not saying to abandon your convictions in the least, but to be willing to listen to others and their views so you can share and grow together. And if you can't find middle ground, then you will have opened doors simply by listening. And it's through those doors that you can sway people. Or rather that you can show God's love and patience, because it's not your job to convince someone of anything one way or another; that's God's job, you're just the tool He uses. And, with that, I'm done. As always, if you have any feedback or comments, I'd love to hear'em (zex1@hotmail.com). God bless. †

Alex Gibson is currently stationed at Fort Campbell, KY, USA.

Love: Go Ye Therefore

Ashley Bates

Let us take a moment to think about this topic. Most of the time people neglect to connect love with the command we are given by Jesus to “go”: “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15).

Taking a moment to reflect, it only makes sense to connect love with going. I believe as a Christian we must have love in our hearts before we will be motivated to go and teach. Will we be able to have an open heart and mind to reason with others if we don’t have this love deep in our hearts?

As a Christian we hold the true Word of God in our lives, and we have an obligation to share this with others, especially our family and friends. There can not be any earthly thing that is more important, as far as love is concerned. A love for souls should be foremost in our minds. We must have a love to teach others and to help them reach the same point we have reached in our lives. We should all carry this love with us wherever we go. If we are on a trip with our family and friends, or on a mission

trip thousands of miles away, we should be the best Christian we can be and show our concern to everyone we encounter in our daily lives. Our love should shine as the love of Christ did during His days on earth.

Christians are normally known for the love they show towards others. I know I try to be an example of love. I have the honor of receiving the love of God in my life, so why would I not want to share this love with others I meet in my walk of life? First Timothy 4:12 says, “*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*” Love (charity) is one of the most wonderful things we can share with others. It gives us, by our human nature, a sense of belonging and of being wanted. When you feel love from the people in your life you want to continue to be around them.

Love can be the most important factor in the great command found in Matthew 28:18-20: “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in*

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heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Think about school teachers you have encountered throughout your life so far. We all tend to like the “nice” teachers, the ones that are calm and gentle in demeanor. We are more receptive to learning when teachers don’t get upset because we don’t understand what is being taught. When we are teaching the truths of God’s Word, it is essential to do this lovingly. We can not go full force in telling someone that what they believe is wrong or their heart will be hardened, most likely resulting in us having no success in their conversion to Christianity. Think how you would feel if someone was treating you in this manner.

We must place ourselves in the other person’s shoes. By this we can envision their life and help our minds to process the steps to the teaching techniques that we must implement. Placing ourselves in their shoes opens our hearts and minds. Becoming one at their level helps pull the love in us to the forefront of our teaching. Without this love deep inside our hearts, we will not have the openness, care or concern we need for those we

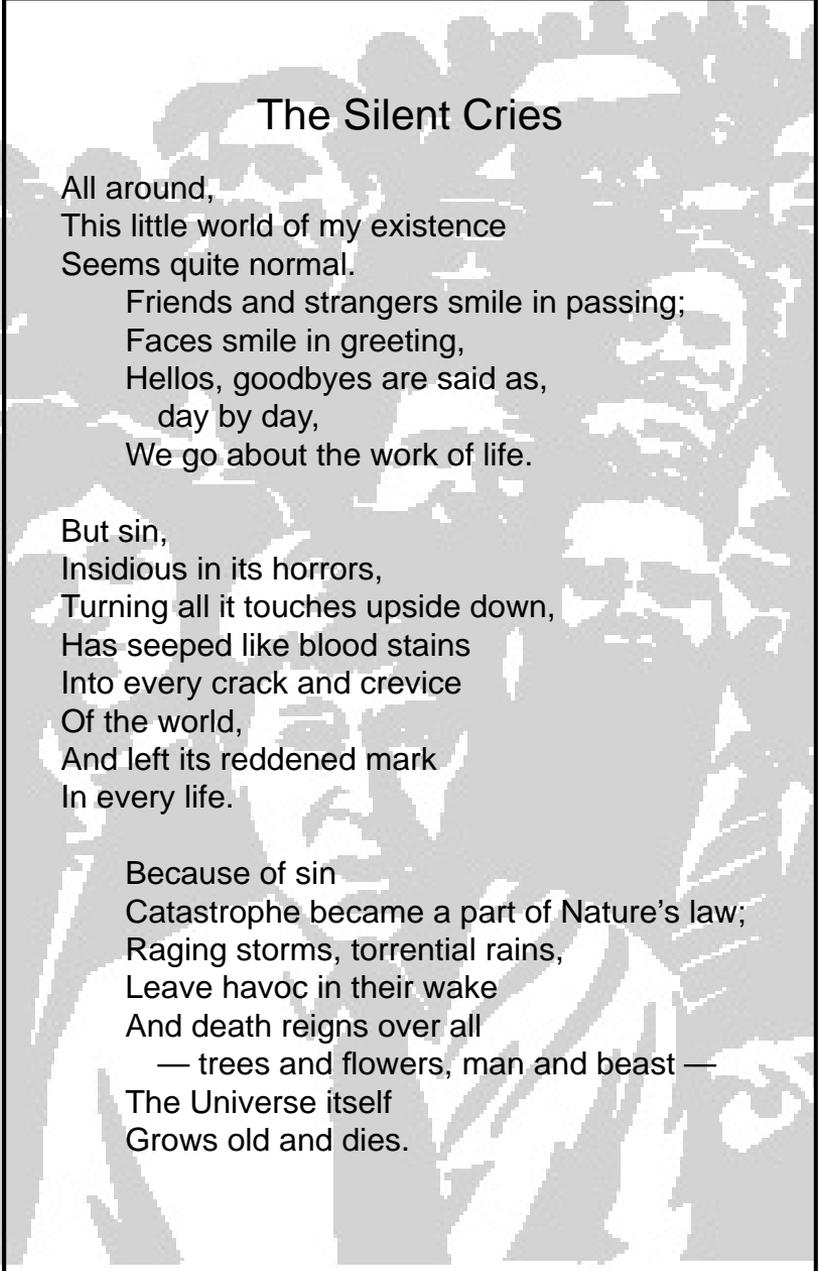
encounter.

We, as New Testament Christians, must stand out in the world and not become concerned with numbers. Let us examine our hearts and minds before we go out to teach. Let us have the love of Christ in our lives. Jesus said, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (John 13:34,35).

Let us have a sincere desire to teach all that we meet. This is the way we can teach others and be extremely successful in our conversions.

May love be the shining light we show to all of those we meet. Every new person may be an open opportunity that God is handing us to prove our undying love and devotion to Him. Every day we have contact with friends we go to school with, people we see at the grocery store, and neighbors. While we are having a conversation why not mention the importance of being a true New Testament Christian? Let us never be ashamed to share the Word of God with all that we meet throughout our lives on earth. Go forth as commanded by the Word of God and teach to redeem a world lost in sin. †

Ashley L. Bates was converted at the Mississippi Delta Community College Student Center.



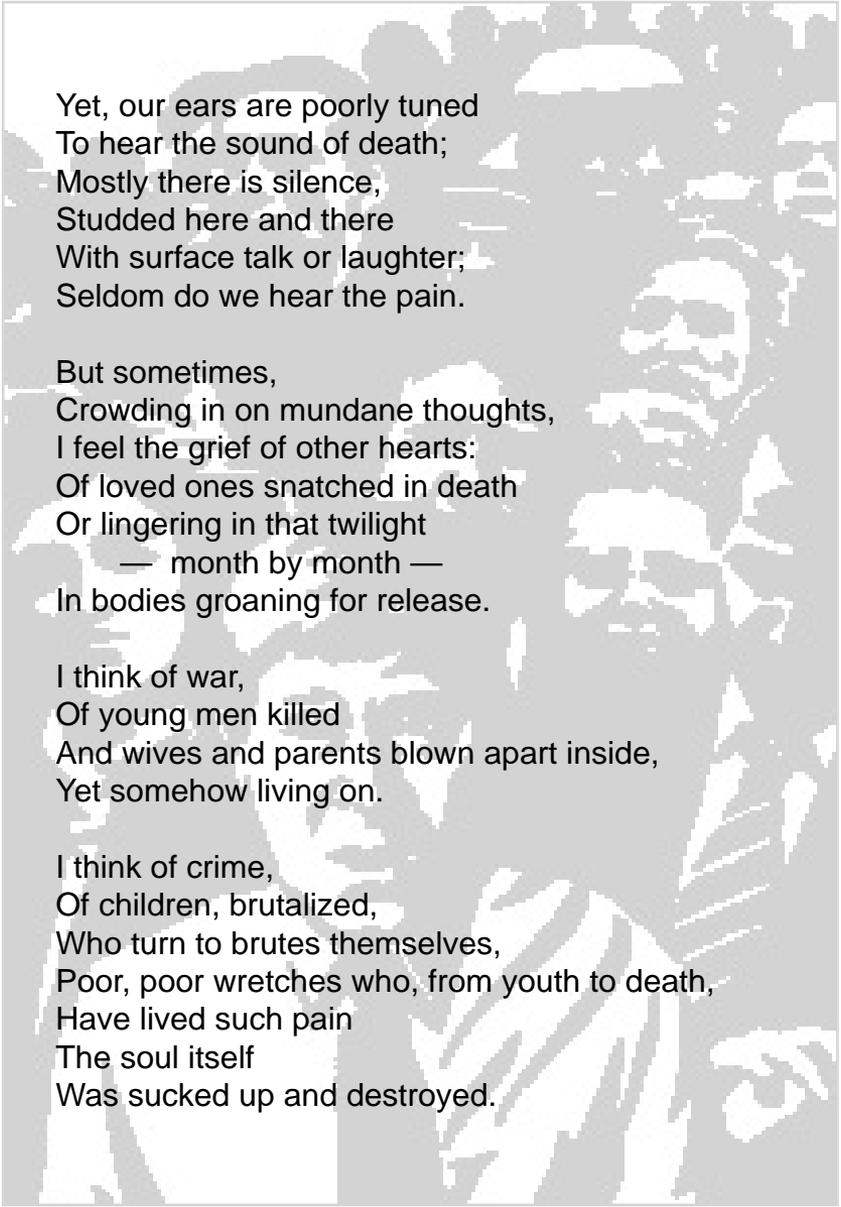
The Silent Cries

All around,
This little world of my existence
Seems quite normal.

Friends and strangers smile in passing;
Faces smile in greeting,
Hellos, goodbyes are said as,
day by day,
We go about the work of life.

But sin,
Insidious in its horrors,
Turning all it touches upside down,
Has seeped like blood stains
Into every crack and crevice
Of the world,
And left its reddened mark
In every life.

Because of sin
Catastrophe became a part of Nature's law;
Raging storms, torrential rains,
Leave havoc in their wake
And death reigns over all
— trees and flowers, man and beast —
The Universe itself
Grows old and dies.

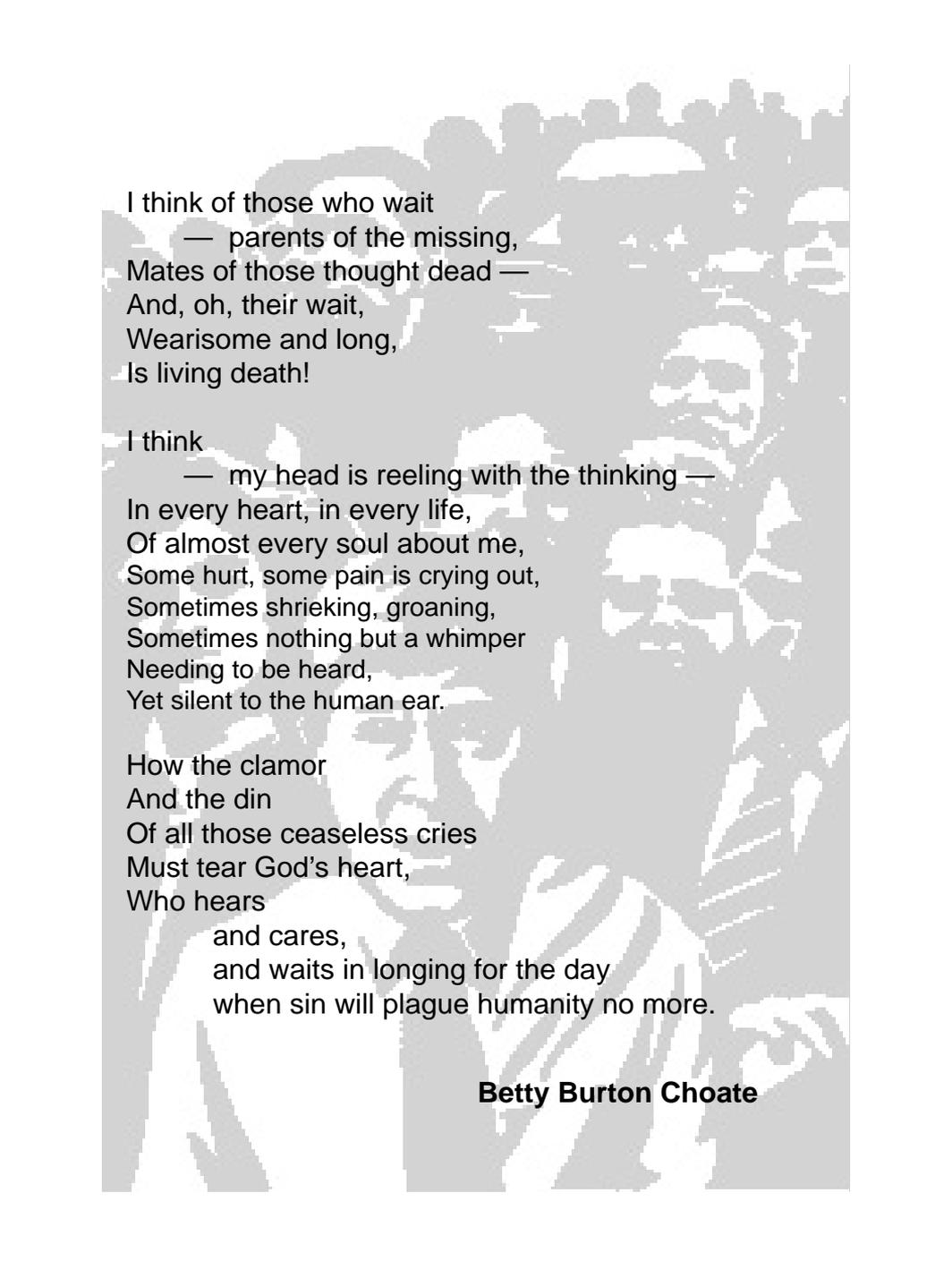


Yet, our ears are poorly tuned
To hear the sound of death;
Mostly there is silence,
Studded here and there
With surface talk or laughter;
Seldom do we hear the pain.

But sometimes,
Crowding in on mundane thoughts,
I feel the grief of other hearts:
Of loved ones snatched in death
Or lingering in that twilight
— month by month —
In bodies groaning for release.

I think of war,
Of young men killed
And wives and parents blown apart inside,
Yet somehow living on.

I think of crime,
Of children, brutalized,
Who turn to brutes themselves,
Poor, poor wretches who, from youth to death,
Have lived such pain
The soul itself
Was sucked up and destroyed.



I think of those who wait
— parents of the missing,
Mates of those thought dead —
And, oh, their wait,
Wearisome and long,
Is living death!

I think
— my head is reeling with the thinking —
In every heart, in every life,
Of almost every soul about me,
Some hurt, some pain is crying out,
Sometimes shrieking, groaning,
Sometimes nothing but a whimper
Needing to be heard,
Yet silent to the human ear.

How the clamor
And the din
Of all those ceaseless cries
Must tear God's heart,
Who hears
and cares,
and waits in longing for the day
when sin will plague humanity no more.

Betty Burton Choate

The Blessing of Singing

Colin McKee

Several studies have shown the benefits and blessings of singing. A study at the University of California, Irvine, indicated that the act of singing increased the levels of the infection fighting antibody IgA by 240 percent. (Singing For Health and well being. Louise McCoy, The Epoch Times 2/4/10). Studies also have linked singing with lower heart rate, decreased blood pressure and reduced stress (Patricia Preston-Roberts, online article) and a healthy lymphatic system (Dr. Ben Kim 10/1/08 online article). So, for Christians, we get the spiritual blessings and benefits from singing, plus physical benefits. We can truly sing, “sing and be happy today” as James exhorted, “*Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms*”(James 5:13).

David often wrote about and practiced singing in his many psalms. At the bringing of the ark into the tabernacle in 1 Chronicles 16, there was a special song service. We often read of occasions in the Old Testament when individuals and groups exulted in song. We knew that we were teaching and admonishing each other in our song service at worship assemblies, but now we know that there is even an extra blessing in singing — it makes us healthier in body as well as in spirit (Psalm 47:6). †

Colin McKee, in Hayden, AL, USA, is a longtime missionary to Indonesia.



Worship

Renewing Our Sacred Supper

Dan R. Owen

Many worshippers allow the Lord's Supper to become rote and commonplace, simply going through the motions because it is expected. Christ inaugurated the sacred supper to bind His people to Him forever. It is a deeply meaningful rite that is designed to keep Christians connected to Him and to one another. What can we, the worshippers, do so that we can renew our passion about the Lord's Supper?

First, we should treat it as a special family dinner. Only the people who share that special family relationship belong at this table. Those who have heard and obeyed the Gospel message are part of a blood-bought family. These baptized believers participate in a relationship with God and with one another. These alone share in the Body of Christ. These alone are cleansed daily by Christ's blood. These people are the family of God, and it is a great privilege to be welcomed by God to His table.

Secondly, we should treat it as a special thank you. As we gather around the table, we are praising and thanking God for all that He has done for us in giving His Son. We are thanking Him for all that He is doing by continually bestowing His grace, for giving us the indwelling presence of His Spirit, and for surrounding us with His serving angels. We even thank Him for the promised coming of His Son, and His promised deliverance. We can never thank Him enough, but in these few moments we try. Thank You, Lord!

Thirdly, we should treat the Lord's Supper as a memorial. It is a monument to the redemptive work of God. It calls us back to the passion of the Christ. It calls us back to His arrest, His scourging, His terrible trial, and His agonizing death on the cross. It calls us with hope and joy to that empty tomb. It reminds us that we are those who have been redeemed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. We are Christians because of the love of God and what was done for us.

Finally, we should treat the Lord's Supper as a proclamation. Every time we gather to take it, we are telling the world that we believe in the death of Christ as the answer to our sins. We believe that through the cross we are reconciled to God. We believe in the power of Christ's blood, the constant presence of His grace, and His eventual return as our Redeemer. Reaffirm these truths today and say to God, "I have put my trust in these things!"

Come to the table to share in a special relationship. Come to the table

Worship

today to say thank you from the bottom of your heart. Come to the table today to remember what was done for you and who you are because of it. Come to the table today to proclaim your faith again! Come to the table! †

Dan R. Owen preaches for the Broadway Church of Christ in Paducah, Kentucky, USA.

A Drop of Blood

Dean Kelly

I am a drop of blood. I feel myself fall onto a face. I slither down into an eye, and tears drive me out to flow on down to the tip of a nose. Then, I begin a seemingly endless fall that speeds up as I see the ground approaching. Suddenly, it is as if I slow down into slow motion, and I see a man approach the One from whom I fell. In a moment, it is no longer one drop of blood, but a flood of blood drops mixed with water that pour unbound into a puddle at His feet. I find myself being assimilated into the spilt blood, and know that I will soon be absorbed into the dry ground upon which I have fallen.

Yet, I cannot help but wonder, as my fate begins to play itself out: Don't they know who we are? Why has no one brought a container to catch each precious drop as we have fallen? Don't they realize the power that is contained in us? If my brothers and I held the cure for some horrible disease, wouldn't they be trying to save us? If we could make someone wealthy, wouldn't they be scrambling to try to be that one who collects us? However, instead, they simply ignore our plight, in their thirst for His blood. Soon we will be gone.

I cannot help but think of how ironic it all is. These other blood drops and I are actually the most powerful force on earth – and people here don't even realize it. In us is contained a power that cannot be matched by any other substance in this whole universe.

With us, a power that emanates from the very presence of God is found. With us, a price is paid that nothing else can pay. With us, a path to God is opened that had been closed. With us, a purpose is fulfilled that affects eternity. With us, a plan is executed to save mankind. With us, a place is opened where God and man can reunite. With us, a purchase is made – of any who will come to Jesus.

I am a blood drop – and our God has used me, in His Son, to offer salvation to everyone who will take advantage of my power. Have you been washed in the blood?

Worship

Our Weekly Communion

David Shaw



Each week the centerpiece of our gathering together on Sunday is a time of communion, of breaking bread and drinking the cup of our Lord's Supper. This past week as we took communion, I reflected on that word — *communion* — and its varied but significant meanings. The dictionary indicates the definitions are:

1: *an act or instance of sharing; 2: a Christian sacrament in which consecrated bread and wine are consumed as memorials of Christ's death or as symbols for the realization of a spiritual union with Christ; 3: intimate fellowship or rapport; 4: a body of Christians having a common faith and discipline.*"

All of these wonderful definitions capture what communion should mean to each of us.

1. We are there to share. Physically we are all sharing the bread and cup, and more importantly, spiritually and emotionally, we are sharing in a solemn memorial of what it cost for us to become God's children, the very sacrifice of His Son in such a cruel and wicked way. At the same time, we are shar-

Worship

ing in the celebration that He in fact DID suffer that death, and we are free because of His suffering.

2. We are reminded through two of the most fitting symbols of the very body and blood of Jesus that cleanses us. God knew that we as humans need constant reminders of Him, thus He instituted this memorial feast to be celebrated each first day of every week. The idea of a spiritual union with Christ, a communion with our Lord, can and should be an overpowering experience every time we partake in it.
3. Because of the communion we have with Him, we have become brothers and sisters together. This intimate fellowship is stronger than any blood relationship because it is from *His* blood.
4. Through Christ's blood and the reminder of it each week, we are called to recognize this blood relationship that we have with each other, and are to be unified in thought and action because of it. We commune with one another in a very real way because of our communion with our Lord.

It is quite interesting to note that never in all of the New Testament do we see communion taken individually; it is always as the body sharing it together. Thus, while it is an intensely personal time between my God and me, it is also an intense time of fellowship in communing with my brothers and sisters in Christ. As I have traveled throughout the world, I have been awestruck at the common bond I have with Christians any and everywhere. The time of sharing communion brings us all into the reality that through Christ we have been called into one body, His body, the church for which He died. †

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

(Matthew 26:26-28)

Who Am I ?

Rebecca Rushmore

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. Paul could not find me in Troas, and it troubled him (2 Corinthians 2:13).
2. Paul was comforted when I came to him in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7:6).
3. I demonstrated an interest in the welfare of the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 8:16).
4. Paul called me his "fellowhelper" in one of his letters to the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 8:23).
5. I made a trip to Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas (Galatians 2:1).
6. I am a Greek (Galatians 2:3).
7. While Paul was in prison in Rome, I left him to make a trip to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10).
8. I am a young preacher who frequently traveled with Paul (2 Corinthians 7:6, Galatians 2:3).
9. Paul left me in Crete to "set in order" the church and appoint elders (Titus 1:5).
10. Paul called me his "own son after the common faith" in the letter he wrote to me (Titus 1:4).

See answer on inside back cover

My Score: _____

Where Am I ?

Rebecca Rushmore

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. I am a city that sits on the bank of the Orontes River.
2. I am about 16 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and about 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
3. I am the capital of the Roman province of Syria in the days of Paul.
4. Another city in the province of Pisidia bears the same name.
5. After Stephen's death, many Jewish Christians moved here (Acts 11:19).
6. One of the first deacons was a proselyte from within my gates (Acts 6:5).
7. When the persecution of Christians began after the death of Stephen, some men came here and preached to the Grecians (Acts 11:20).
8. When the leaders of the church in Jerusalem heard about the new converts here, they sent Barnabas to see about the church (Acts 11:22).
9. The city of Seleucia is the seaport my travelers use to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea (Acts 13:4).
10. Paul began three missionary journeys from here (Acts 13:1-3; 15:36-41; 18:22-23).

See answer on inside back cover

My Score: _____

Four Weighty Words

Bill Dillon

In four simple, yet sublime words, Luke tells of the most significant event in world history. These four English words (making a total of six syllables) are wonderful and weighty words of importance to the entire world. Luke 23:33 says: "... *there they crucified Him.*" Each of these words receives equal accentuation. Let us look at them:

"THERE" — Where? It was on a hill that in appearance somewhat resembled a human skull. Hebrews 13:12 says it was located outside the city of Jerusalem. It was a spot where many before had expired, but the death of One on this site carried implications for the salvation of all humanity. John the Baptizer spoke of the One who was to die there and said, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

"THEY" — Who? The actual deed was carried out by officials of the Roman government, but it was His own people who cried out, "*Crucify Him, crucify Him*" (Luke 23:21). It is quite possible for men to think of themselves as zealous for the cause of God, when in reality they are guilty of merely being enthusiastic in support of their own prejudices and narrow-mindedness.

"CRUCIFIED" — What? What was it to die by crucifixion? It was the most degrading and debasing manner of death known in that age. Though it was the depth of humiliation for the crucified, it was also the height of love for lost, languishing men who needed a Savior.

"HIM" — Who? He who knew no sin (Hebrews 4:15). He was the holiest Who ever lived; the best that ever breathed; the purest that ever was. He was the One who entered into the struggles of every man. He was the One Who rules today by supreme spiritual authority (Matthew 28:18). He was the One Who made for us "*a new and living way*" (Hebrews 10:20). He was the One Who bore the sins of all, and yet said, "*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden...*" (Matthew 11:28).

"THERE THEY CRUCIFIED HIM" — four words which tell the death of God's only begotten Son, yet also the hope of dying and doomed humanity. †

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering O'er the heads of time,
All the light of sacred glory
Gathers round its head sublime."

Bill Dillon is the Editor of *Gospel Gleaner* and preaches for the Lord's church in Hickory Ridge, Arkansas, USA.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

A Prayer Before Going to God's House (Psalm 5)

Gary C. Hampton

David put the words of a morning prayer to music so it could be sung as he prepared to go to God's house. It was a prayer born out of intense devotion, or meditation. Interestingly, though David was the king of Israel, he recognized that he was only a representative of the Lord, who was the true King of Israel. Prayer to Him was the act with which David began his day. There is an air of expectancy as David says he will direct his prayer to the true King and look up. In other words, he believed God would hear his prayer and act upon its contents (verse 1-3). Spurgeon asks, "How can we expect the Lord to open the windows of His grace, and pour us out a blessing, if we will not open the windows of expectation and look up for the promised favor" (p. 51)?

David knew God could not find pleasure in the actions of the wicked, nor allow the evil to abide with Him. Further, he realized the boisterous behavior of some could not continue in the presence of the Almighty. Those who work iniquity are hated by God. Those who lie may escape the courts of men, but God will destroy them. Of course, the Lord does not enjoy the company of any who is thirsty after the blood of others (verses 4-6).

However, David, because he was not such a man, was ready to enter into the house of God. He would enter because of the greatness and fullness of God's favor, not based on his own sinlessness. He planned to prostrate himself in worship toward the Holy of Holies (according to Keil and Delitzsch, p. 125). He planned to ask God to guide him concerning the direction God would have him to follow. Because he felt the presence of his enemies, David would ask God to make the path of his life even and straight, so he could walk unimpeded and without going astray (verses 7,8).

David saw his enemies as people in whose mouths was "*nothing that should stand firm, keep its ground, remain the same*". He also saw their inward, guiding force as being corrupt, like "*a yawning abyss and a gaping vacuum*". David saw his enemies' throat, "*as the organ of speech, as...a grave, which yawns like the jaws, which open and snatch and swallow down whatever comes in their way*". At the same time, they tried to smooth their tongues, as with flattering words, to hide the evil stench of their intent (Keil and Delitzsch, pp. 126-127). David called on God to pronounce them guilty.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

He asked the Ruler of the universe to cause them to fail in their plans. He also wanted them cast out from God's presence because of their evil deeds. After all, they had rebelled against the one true Ruler of the world (verses 9,10).

God's faithful punishment of His enemies would cause those who trusted in Him to rejoice. Such would be an evident sign of His defending His people against those who would bring them down. Knowing God was their defender would result in His people glorifying His name. It would then have been apparent that God blesses those who walk within His will and keeps them safe with an all-encompassing shield (verses 11,12). †

Gary C. Hampton is Director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA.

On the Jericho Road

Emanuel Daugherty

One Of the fondest remembrances from my youth was hearing my mom and dad sing. They loved to sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." One of their favorites, and mine too, was "The Jericho Road". Dad's bass voice could make that old song ring! It is a grand spiritual song with a solid message. You remember the story that takes place on the Jericho Road — how the man was waylaid by thieves, robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Along came a Levite and a priest who offered him no assistance. At last came a Samaritan, despised by the Jews, but in this case, a good man who had compassion on the one in need and distress. Read for yourself for the details (Luke 10:25-37). Most of us will never see the actual Jericho Road, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho with its steep descent and places where robbers can hide. However, as the song suggests, we experience the Jericho Road. It is the road of life with its responsibilities, opportunities, hazards, toils, difficulties, and dangers. Yet, the road will not be nearly so dangerous and difficult if we take Jesus along as our traveling companion. He will take our cares and worries (1 Peter 5:7), give us healing for our soul's diseases (Mark 16:16), and He has already paid the cost (1 John 2:2) Finally, we must realize that the Jericho Road may prove to be costly, unpopular, and difficult. It cost the Good Samaritan in terms of time, trouble, and treasure, but his is the eternal reward. So too, will it be for us. Which side of the Jericho road are you traveling?

TEXTUAL STUDIES

“Everyone Who Joins in the Work”

Harvey Porter

The close of several of Paul’s epistles have greetings, asides, and instructions to those receiving the letter. His first letter to the Corinthians is a good example of this.

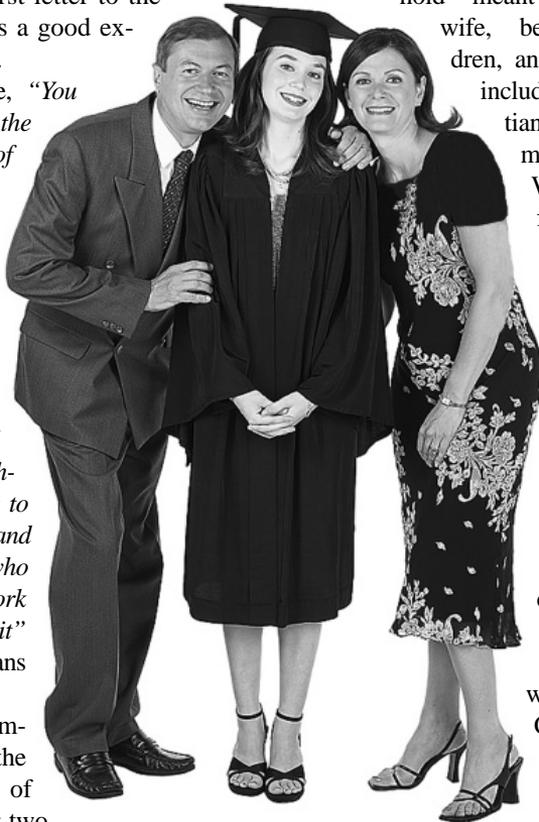
He wrote, *“You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it”* (1 Corinthians 16:15,16).

Paul commended the “household” of Stephanas for two

things: they were the first converts in Achaia, and they devoted themselves to the service of the saints. “House-

hold” meant the husband, wife, believing children, and would have included any Christian servants they might have had.

What a beautiful picture! A whole household devoted to the Lord and serving the church! So often in our times, households are divided over the Lord and the church. And sometimes in a household where both are Christians, only one gives real service to God. When



TEXTUAL STUDIES

both are dedicated to Him, the children most often follow. No wonder Paul commended the “household” of Stephanas.

They were pioneers in the faith since they were the first converts in Achaia. They had no example to follow. Their peer pressure came from the world and not the church. And then, Paul wrote that “*they devoted themselves to the service of the saints.*” The Greek word which we translate “devoted” carries with it the idea that they “appointed themselves” to the work of helping fellow Christians. They loved them and were close enough to them to see and know their hurts, discouragements, and needs. This is a needed work in the church today as well.

Paul then admonished those Christians who saw and received the service of the household of Stephanas “*to submit to such as these.*” One commentator wrote that this means, “that you also do your duty to them as they do to all.” Another translated this phrase as, “They have taken the lead in good works; do you also follow such leadership.” We would probably say that it means, “Don’t stand by while others do all the work; do your part.” In most churches today it is estimated that about twenty percent of any given congregation does most of the work. All of us ought to ask ourselves what we do besides attending the worship services. Do we teach a class, try to convert a soul to Christ, come to a workday at the building, visit the sick, take food, sing at weddings or funerals, etc?

Paul concluded his brief admonition by saying that we should submit (join in and help), “*everyone who joins in the work and labors at it.*” Look at the words “joins in.” These words speak of unity, of combined effort, of closeness, and love.

And then Paul states that the Lord and His church have a work to do. It is an organization that has a mission, a world mission. The church is in the greatest business the world will ever know — the saving of souls. No other endeavor on earth can do this or has the responsibility to do it. We should take special note of Paul’s phrase, “*the work and labors at it.*” “Work” is a strong term, but “labors” is even stronger. Alfred Plummer wrote that Paul may have been referring to the laborious training in an athletic contest (see Philippians 2:16; Colossians 1:29).

Let us strive to make our “household” like that of Stephanas. Let us all “serve the saints,” and let us join in the work and labor of the Lord. †

Harvey Porter (1929-1998) preached for many years in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

What About Religious Division?

Ken Tyler

Religious division is not pleasing to God. The church at Corinth had division, and listen to what Paul told them, *“Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Corinthians 1:10, emphasis added). It is not the will of God for religious division to exist, but because of man’s departure from the truth there are hundreds of different religious groups today who are not speaking the same thing.

We are also told by Paul in Galatians 1:8, *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* Friends, if we preach or teach doctrine contrary to what was taught by the apostolic-guided first century church, we will be lost eternally. It is just that simple.

The plea of the church of Christ is unity through going back to the Bible. It is not unity sought through giving up religious truth and saying it doesn’t matter what we believe, but

it is unity through teaching what the Bible teaches and nothing else.

It **does** matter what we teach and practice in religion. If we are in error, we are lost. This is the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 4:2 we are warned, *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God...”*

Proverbs 30:6 forbids the changing of God’s word, as does Revelation 22:18,19: *“If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*

Consider 2 John 1:9-11: *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son....”*

Why not examine the church of Christ and consider our plea (Romans 16:16)? †

Ken Tyler preaches for the church of Christ in Arab, Alabama, USA.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

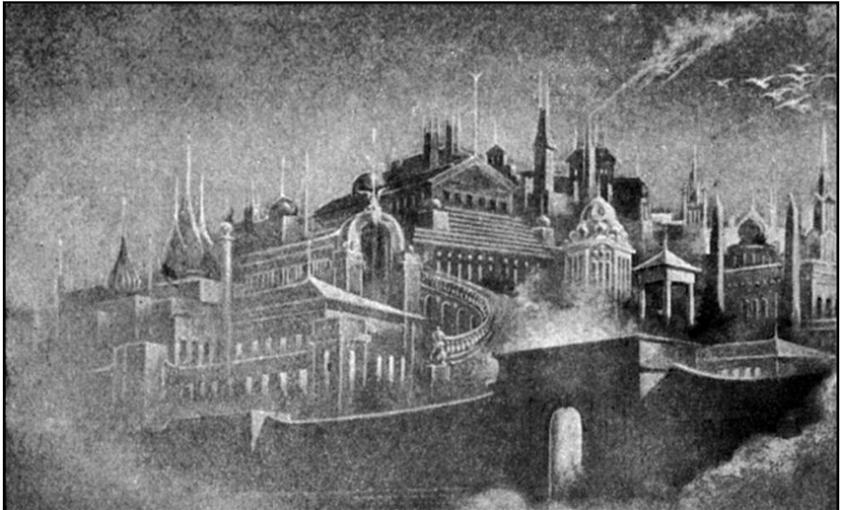
What Will Heaven Be Like?

Mike Hinton

It is said that “The secret to happiness is to have three things to look forward to and nothing to dread.” I have found that there is a measure of truth to that maxim. Life just seems so much better when you anticipate good things in your future. However, there is a significant problem with the real world application of the stated principle, i.e. that life seldom has a shortage of things to dread. Job, in the throes of personal despair, placed the human experience in a nutshell. *“Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble”* (Job 14:1).

That being the case, our happiness is going to be severely limited if our anticipation is earthbound. Even if somehow by chance and fortune we largely avoid sickness, poverty, oppression, and various other human afflictions, we still have a great nemesis. Death stalks us from the day we are born, and there is no insulation from the inherent sorrows of mortality. Consequently, transcendent happiness must be rooted in anticipation of things beyond death’s realm.

I believe that this principle explains why the Bible has so much to say about Heaven. What will Heaven be like? There are many metaphors used



BIBLE QUESTIONS

to describe the heavenly realm. John, in the Revelation, pictures it as an enormous and beautiful city, enhanced with the trappings of unimaginable wealth (Revelation 21). Isaiah describes it more in terms of a recreated earth; a return to the flawless perfection of the Garden of Eden (Isaiah 65). Jesus describes Heaven by assuring us that there are many dwelling places and that we may anticipate the unfathomable joy of His companionship: *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also”* (John 14:1-4).

We also read, *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”* (Revelation 21:1-4).

These varied descriptions are an attempt to put into words that which is in truth indescribable. Paul summed up the situation quite well in 1 Corinthians 2:9; *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* The grandest images of the heavenly realm that we can construct in our limited minds will be a pitiful shadow of the glorious truth.

Yet, those mental pictures of Heaven are essential to our faith and happiness. I believe that we are being encouraged by Scripture, with mind’s eye, to envision our goal. Heaven cannot truly be longed for in an abstract form. Through faith, it must become real to us, a place so wonderful and compelling that we can remain fixed on its glories through any and every trial. I pity those for whom Heaven is nothing more than simply “not Hell”.

So, I encourage you to spend time thinking about Heaven. Study what the Word has to say about it and form from that a diorama in your mind. With that beautiful hope to anticipate, Christians can maintain a measure of happiness even when there are a thousand things to dread, because we have one thing to look forward to that eclipses them all. †

Mike Hinton is a member of the church of Christ in Blanchard, Oklahoma, USA.

BIBLE FIND

Books of the
New Testament

Bonnie Rushmore

Across

3. Name the book that describes the life of Jesus Christ.

7. Name the book that contrasts the Old Testament with the New Testament.

8. Name the book that outlines the history of the Lord's church.

9. Name the book written to a man about his slave.

10. Name the book written to a young preacher.

11. Name the book written about joy.

12. Name the book that is a guide book to Christian living.

Down

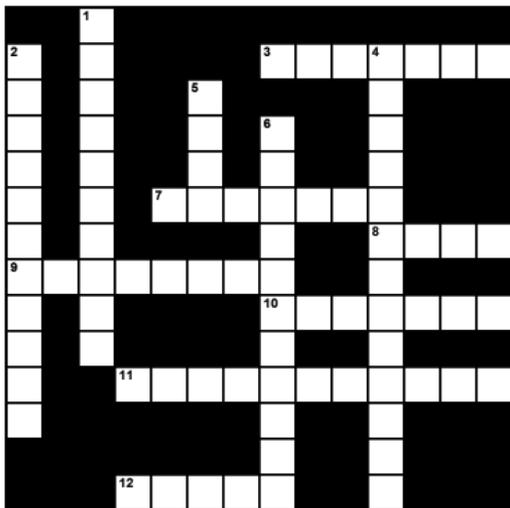
1. Name the book that proclaims victory for God's people.

2. Name the book that discusses the Christian graces.

4. In 2 ____ Paul addresses misconceptions about the second coming.

5. Name a book written by the half-brother of Jesus.

6. In 1 ____ Paul rebukes the church for allowing immoral behavior among its members.



Caleb

J. Roy Vaughan

Caleb was one of the twelve men sent out by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan. Ten of these spies discouraged the people, saying: *“We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”* Caleb said, *“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it”* (Numbers 13:30). But the people listened to the ten spies, and murmured against God and Moses, and refused to go up and take the land of Canaan. Because of this rebellious spirit, God kept them in the wilderness until all from twenty-years-old and upward had died, except Caleb and Joshua.

Caleb was one of those grand heroes of the Bible concerning whom we know very little, but enough to admire him. In conversation with Joshua, he said, *“I wholly followed Jehovah my God”* (Joshua 14:8). Caleb gave his service wholeheartedly to the Lord. He was not like many who are Christians, but serve God

halfheartedly. God’s kingdom is not first and foremost in their hearts. But it was not so with Caleb, who wholly followed the Lord.

Caleb was a man who stood by his convictions. There is no neutral ground between right and wrong. The Lord said, *“He that is not with me is against me”* (Matthew 12:30). People should understand this and be ready and willing always to let the world know where they stand. Any man who is unconcerned about which way matters go, and



afraid to take a position for or against a question, can never amount to much in the kingdom of God.

This great man of God was, of course, a man of faith. He not only believed in God, but he believed in himself. He knew the task before them could be accomplished and that God would go with them and give them victory. With such a faith, it seemed foolish and childish to turn back from the prize they had sought

BIBLE CHARACTERS

and that was so close at hand. He said, *“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”* But there were those who said, *“It cannot be done.”* As a result of their lack of faith in God and in themselves, they refused to go up and take the land.

Because Caleb was a man of faith, naturally he was a man of great courage. Peter admonishes us to add courage to our faith. What will a man’s faith avail him if he has not the courage to live by it? Caleb did not deny the dangers reported by the ten spies. He did not try to minimize the hardships and battles or the need to fight to take the land. He simply was not afraid. Whatever obstacle was in the way could be removed or overcome, and victory was as certain as sunrise the next morning. He had the courage of a true soldier of the Lord. He had the courage to champion the cause of the minority. It was two against ten, but Caleb knew he was right, and was not ashamed or afraid to stand for what was right.

The Lord’s servant should never be afraid to champion the cause of truth, regardless of whether it is acceptable with the masses or not. Caleb was not a man to wait and to find out how other men stand on a question before taking his stand. He stood on his own two feet. God has little use for a man who waits to see which

way the straws are blowing before he lets the world know which way he is going. God grant that we may be men of courage!

Finally, Caleb is an example of patience for us. He followed this disobedient people back into the wilderness. He might have expressed his disgust of them and declared he would have no more to do with them, but he did not. His day would eventually come, and he would yet see the promised land. He had done his part, and done it well, and he could only pity the poor souls who had thrown away their opportunity to enter the promised land.

And that day did come for Caleb. When Israel finally crossed Jordan into the land flowing with milk and honey, Caleb was there. Nor was he too feeble to enjoy his reward. His strength had not abated, and he declared he was as fit for war at the ripe age of eighty-five as he was when young at forty. He claimed the land around Hebron, drove out the enemy, and possessed it.

Caleb was not a man to retire from the service of his God. Why should any man anticipate such an inglorious end? His last days were glorious days. This was the end of the man who *“wholly followed the Lord.”* †

J. Roy Vaughan was a Gospel preacher and was associated with the Gospel Advocate for many years.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Isaiah 41:10,12,13

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

... Those who contended with you, those who war against you shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing.

For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

God is our Creator. He knows us as we do not even know ourselves. He knows our human tendency to be weak and lacking in faith. First, in this passage, He identified Himself as our God. Then He wrote reassurances, telling us that He will be with us, in whatever challenges we face. He used three strong words to bolster our faith, promising the support of His righteous right hand to fill our needs.

W h a t
about those who would array themselves against God's children? On the one hand, we are warned that *"all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"* (2 Timothy 3:12), yet ultimately the Christian will be victorious, and those who oppose us will be as nothing, as nonexistent things. We are promised in Romans 8:17 that we will be joint heirs with Christ, eternally! So God can say again, "Don't be afraid. I will help you."

ASKING FOR GREATER COMMITMENT

Ronald D. Bryant

Commitment to Christ is the focus of the Christian faith. When one desires to become a Christian, he is asked to make specific commitments. When one becomes a Christian, he makes a life commitment. Commitment to Christ is commitment to His will and to His purpose. Commitment to Him means commitment to the church of which He is Head. Members of the body of Christ have some specific and practical commitments to honor.

I. A GREATER COMMITMENT TO THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST.

- A. Basis: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”* Romans 1:14-17; Hebrews 5:12ff.; 10:22-25
- B. Accept the privilege ...
- C. Honor the responsibility ...
- D. Commit to speaking the truth in love ...

II. A GREATER COMMITMENT TO THE UNITY OF GOD’S PEOPLE.

- A. Basis: *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”* John 17:20,21; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:1-6
- B. Be a peacemaker ...
- C. Do not sow discord, do not gossip ...
- D. Be a minister of reconciliation ...

III. A GREATER COMMITMENT TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE.

- A. Basis: *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his*

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" 1 John 3:14-23; Romans 12:3-16; Ephesians 5:15-21;

- B. Share your life ...
- C. Love one another ...
- D. Honor one another ...

IV. A GREATER COMMITMENT TO THE WORK GOD HAS GIVEN TO BE DONE.

- A. Basis: *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1 :21-27).
- B. *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* 2 Timothy 2;1-3; Galatians 6:10
- C. Serve, using your God-given abilities ...
- D. Serve, using the opportunities God provides ...
- E. Be "laborers together" ...
- F. To God be the glory ...

Question: Is it appropriate to ask for these specific commitments from new converts?

Is it appropriate to ask for these greater commitments from all the members? †

Ronald D. Bryant preaches for the Central Church of Christ in Gadsden, Alabama, USA.

Which Man Enjoys the Good Life?

Man in Christ

1. Forgiveness of sins
(Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7)
2. All spiritual blessings
(Ephesians 1:3)
3. Peace with God
(Romans 5:1; 8:1)
4. With a right to pray
(1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:14,15)
5. Assured by truth
(John 8:31,32)
6. True and lasting joy
(James 1:25; Galatians 5:22)
7. Comfort in trials
(Romans 8:18,28; 2 Corinthians 1:3,4)
8. Preparation for death
(Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)
9. Promised eternal life
(1 John 2:25; Romans 6:22)

Man Outside of Christ

1. Guilty and condemned in sin
(John 3:19; Romans 1:18)
2. Apart from God's blessings
(Ephesians 1:3)
3. An enemy of God
(James 4:4)
4. No right to pray
(Proverbs 28:9; John 9:31)
5. Deceived, confused, skeptical
(2 Thessalonians 2:10ff; John 18:38)
6. Superficial and temporary joy
(Hebrews 11:25; 1 John 2:17)
7. Must bear trials alone
(2 Peter 3:12; Proverbs 1:22-31)
8. Not ready to die
(Luke 12:19,20; cf. Psalm 23:4)
9. Promised eternal punishment
(Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:19)

In which column do you find yourself?

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

JESUS AND NAZARETH

An Exposition of Luke 4:14-30

Ardron Hinton

“As His custom was, He went into the synagogue.”

Jesus stood to read; returned the scroll; sat down to speak.

*“The spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
because He has anointed Me to preach.”*

A Six-Fold Assignment:

1. Preach the gospel to the poor.
2. Heal the brokenhearted.
3. Preach deliverance to the captives.
4. Recover sight to the blind.
5. Set at liberty those oppressed.
6. Preach the acceptable year (Jubilee Year).

“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

1. They marveled at His talent, but rejected His claims.
(Note Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6)
2. Jerusalem saw His ordinary hometown;
Nazareth, His ordinary family.
3. They understood the significance of His claim concerning Isaiah 61.

“No prophet is accepted in his own country.”

1. Cases cited in proof: Elijah and the widow of Zarephath; Elisha and Naaman the leper.
2. They resented the favorable comment concerning Gentiles (Acts 22:22).
3. They would accept Him only on their own terms (Recall Satan’s offer).
4. They missed the “mighty works “ He did in other places (Mark 6:5).
5. They couldn’t get past the limitations imposed by their own minds. — “Is not this Joseph’s son?” Or “the carpenter’s son?” and they named the other children.
6. They planned to throw Him off a bluff. The escape is not detailed.
7. Mark reports: *“He marveled because of their unbelief.”*
8. He returned to Capernaum.
9. The statement of John 1:10,11 was especially fulfilled. †

GLOBAL HARVEST

Betty (Mrs. J.C.) Choate

The story of “the Heart of ...” *Global Harvest* is truly exciting because it lies at the heart of the final commission of our Lord to His apostles. He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). He further explained, “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

In our own efforts to evangelize, working first here in the States, then in Pakistan, then in Sri Lanka, and finally in India, we were convinced that if fellow-Christians just knew of the opportunities, they would want to be more involved, both at home and abroad. For a number of years we printed a bi-monthly mission newspaper, *World Evangelism*, which carried our own reports and those of brethren working in many other areas of the world. In fact, it is from that publication that our team efforts have become identified as

World Evangelism
SPECIAL ISSUE 2001

A Grand Idea Whose Time HAS COME!

A Satellite Network for Churches of Christ?
Isn't that a grand idea? Isn't it an idea whose time has come — an idea that should have become a reality long ago? Shame on us that we weren't the leaders among religious groups, to see this marvelous tool and to pull together as one mind and soul to make it happen

gauge, the dollar as an international currency, the opening of national borders, audio tapes, television, computers, and satellites which are capable of reaching every corner of the globe! We are blind if we have not received the providential supply of tools, building through the centuries.

Open Our Eyes to Providence!
By J.C. Choate (Editorial Staff)

I was one to obey Him!
Satellite! — We Can Do It!
But you might ask, "Aren't we too small to develop a satellite system that will reach the whole world, twenty-four hours a day, with the sweet message of the gospel?" STOP! THINK!
Would that provide such a tool, let me enable us to use it, if we have the vision and faith to try?

nobody else has done it.
We have received the same command, with the same promise of His help. We are at a crossroads, for ourselves and for the world.
Will we take this wonderful tool and change the course of history for centuries to come?
That's right! God has placed

LIBERTY CHURCH OF CHRIST
808 Highway 25
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WORLD EVANGELISM
J.C. CHOATE
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PHONE: 662-939-1191
FAX: 662-939-1181
E-Mail: Choate@WCEC.org

“World Evangelism”.

In 1993, J.C. launched into the editing and printing of a quarterly teaching magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*. This issue is number 65. The magazine is translated and printed in Spanish, Tamil, and Telugu, and there are plans to have a Hindi version. Thirty-eight thousand copies are usually printed here in the States, with 5000 more English copies printed in India, and 5000 each in Telugu and Tamil. Eighteen thousand of the US printing are sent to 80 countries, free of cost to the recipients. In the rest of the world, sound study materials are scarce, and this

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

In Area of Him Page 4
Who Am I? Page 11
Evangelists with a New Method Book Page 14
Children and Baptism Page 16
V20, 2000 and 100 Commem Page 18
From Awareness to Faith in the Living God Page 41
Satan's Trickery Page 42
Look at the Wreckage ... Page 76
A Showcase of Service and the Wonderful Page 103

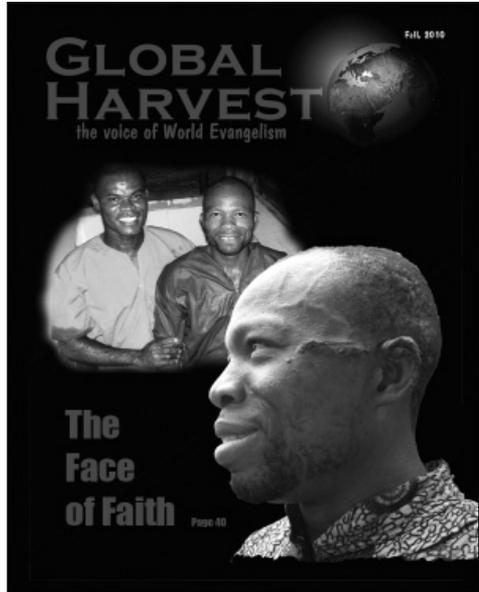
FROM THE HEART OF...

is one way we can help to fill that void. Many, many are the letters we have received, telling us of conversions and of spiritual growth on the part of churches and individual Christians.

In 2004, with great joy the first issue of *Global Harvest* was printed and distributed, but the recurrence of J.C.'s cancer forced us to discontinue work in the middle of the second issue, much to our sorrow. Our hearts ached to be able to share with the church the great work that it was doing throughout the world, and the exciting opportunities that were apparent.

During the two years of J.C.'s struggle with cancer, God granted time for Jerry and Paula Bates, and Louis and Bonnie Rushmore, to move to Winona, to take up the work J.C. had been doing. It also gave me time to learn many things I would need to know, if the overseas work with radio/TV and literature was to be continued past his death. Our sponsoring congregation, the Liberty Church of Christ, made the commitment to support the program of work, and so everything has moved forward without serious interruption. Every day my heart is filled with gratitude that God used J.C. to develop the work, and that He has allowed us to take it up and do our part to enable it to live and to grow.

One of those important parts, we have been convinced, was the mission news magazine that had almost been stillborn. In our team meeting, we made the decision to revive *Global Harvest* and to try to make it a voice for all mission efforts throughout the world, including those very good works here at home. Because of a shortage of time and funds, it is currently printed only twice in a year. We certainly would like to build a large enough subscription/church bundles list to be able to publish it at least quarterly, but that isn't possible yet.



FROM THE HEART OF...

are to do a good job of evangelizing. That is the sole purpose in printing *Global Harvest*: to bring together in one beautiful magazine as much coverage as possible of the work of the church around the world.

Let me ask some further questions:

◆ Did you know that nearly 100 Muslims have been converted in recent months in one community in Nigeria? Did you know that they have suffered persecution because of their conversion to Christianity, and that two of the men spent three weeks in the hospital, at the point of death, because of attacks with clubs and machetes? You may read the details of this story in *Global Harvest*, along with the account of hundreds of believers in Christ being killed in a Muslim rampage in the Jos area of Nigeria. Included in this report is the record of the killing of one member of the church who was on his way home from worship when the attacks took place. Reading these stories, you will be made to question, as I did: “Is my faith strong enough to stand if we here in America were threatened with death because we call ourselves “Christian”?”

◆ Were you aware that many churches of Christ are busily engaged in prison ministries, and that many are being converted and given a literal “new lease on life”?

◆ Were you aware of the great work that is going on in communist China, through medical/child care efforts and the work of Christians who are teaching in universities? Having lived under the godless scourge of communism for decades, the people of China are hungry for hope and truth, and the fields are truly white!

◆ Did you know of the many facets of evangelism and training in the Philippines involve helping local people to have a better standard of living along with their growth in Christianity, and training young men for evangelism, with the ultimate target of China in mind?

◆ Have you followed the spread of the Gospel throughout the Pacific Islands, and the current development of a radio station operated by the church, enabling the message to go to all of those thousands of islands?

The things that are being done by supporting congregations and individual Christians will encourage and motivate you. We urge you to call us and subscribe to *Global Harvest*. Help us to get this message out to the church, and join with us to obey that Greatest Commission of our Lord. May it be said of this generation of Christians that, like our brothers in the first century, we turned the world upside down, and the whole world heard of Christ through us. †

THERE IS NO TIME FOR APATHY IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST!

We encourage you to consider these good works:
to subscribe, support, publicize, benefit from, and take
advantage of what our brethren are doing to spread the
message of Christ.

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Support the satellite cable network being
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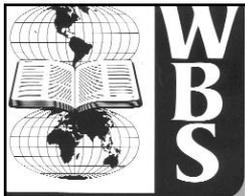
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American Life, DirecTV, and INSP). Benefit from the lessons, support the preaching of the Gospel. **Phone: 800-321-8633; email: search@searchtv.org; Website: www.searchtv.org.**

.....

Restoration Radio Network International, led by Roy Beasley, uses short-wave radio to reach people in English, French, Philippine dialects, Spanish and Arabic, with a well-organized "**Apollos Follow-Up Program**". **Phone: 615 833-4771; Website: www.rrni.org.** Help reach the masses through radio.

.....



Gospel Gazette Online is a monthly Gospel magazine on the Internet, begun by Louis and Bonnie Rushmore in 1999. Thousands of articles, written by faithful Christians, are archived and selectable through the onsite search engine. GGO is free to users throughout the world, and it is visited regularly even in parts of the world that remain virtually inaccessible to missionaries. (**www.gospelgazette.com**)

.....

Apologetics Press has been the voice in churches of Christ for many years, speaking clearly, loudly, and biblically on subjects pertaining to **Creation/**



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What Can You Do to Help Spread the Word?

- For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?
- Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- If you have found the Truth and are a Christian, is there a bookstore from which you can order additional study materials? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

So you are born into an unbelieving home, you live according to the religion of your parents, you grow old, and you die, thrust into eternity to meet the God you never knew. What unspeakable tragedy! The scenario is LIFE for the majority of the people of the world.

Through mass media — radio programs, TV, and literature — we are doing all we can to bring God’s Word to people who have so little hope. Half of each issue of *The Voice of Truth International* is sent free of charge to churches and individuals who have few or no other study materials, to aid in their spiritual growth. We ask brethren to help us with \$35 a month, to cover the \$8,000 postage bill incurred with every issue. Will you please have mercy on these souls and help us share the saving Gospel with them?

To help with this particular need, please send your checks to:

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
Box 72, Winona, MS 38967**

To speed up your announcement that you want to help,
call us at 662-283-1192 or send your E-Mail to

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org

Website: WorldEvangelism.org

Dear Brethren:

- I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, ***The Voice of Truth International***. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume _____. My address is given below.
- I want to order the complete set of volumes in print (64 issues) for the reduced price of \$2.00 per copy. My address is given below.
- Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.
- I want to MAKE A GIFT subscription of ***The Voice of Truth International***. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume _____. The address is given below.
- I want to send \$25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. Churches are also urged to use boxes in this way. Or you may send one payment of \$300.00 per year for four issues. This will help us to send more copies to the mission fields.
- We want to give \$_____ each month to help send this magazine to mission fields of the world, including the USA.
- As a congregation we want to help print and circulate 100,000 copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

(Return this form in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address, stating your wishes.)

Attn: Byron Nichols

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIIONAL

Box 11218

Springfield, MO 65808

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search (page 34)

1. Certainly not.
2. The law makes sin known to man.
3. Sin.
4. Spiritual, carnal.
5. The inner or spiritual man.
6. The inner or fleshly part of man often controls us, which leads us to do that which is wrong.
7. good.
8. flesh.
9. We lack the ability to perform righteousness.
10. The inner or spiritual man and the outward or fleshly man.
11. Outside enemies and from within his own self.
12. Captive to the law of sin.
13. It is a strong term that refers to the misery or distress that comes with the judgment of God.
14. The fleshly body still under the grip of sin's power.
15. Jesus Christ our Lord!
16. Law, sin.

Who Am I? (page 87)

Answer: Titus

Where Am I? (page 88)

Answer: Antioch

Bible Find (page 97)



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Sorry, that's all for this time . . .

You'll have to wait for the **Spring 2011** issue to read more of the inspiring work Christians are doing around the world. But, wait (ah em...), I have a little confession to make. Our purpose in investing time and money in the printing of Global Harvest might be classed as somewhat ulterior. **What we want you to be motivated to do with great spiritual excitement! is one or all of these things:**

- * Choose a particular person or area of work for which to pray every day.
- * Begin to support, even on a limited basis, some mission effort somewhere, so you will have a vested interest in the souls there.
- * Encourage the church with which you worship to invite a missionary to come and tell you of the work he is doing.
- * Sign up to be a World Bible School teacher.
- * Develop a local prison ministry.
- * Follow the example of the College Church in Searcy in outreach to the community, through fellowship and personal Bible studies.
- * Make a list of lost family and friends for whom you will pray, and schedule studies if you can.
- * Make opportunities to bring up spiritual concerns in your conversations with others.
- * Have on hand tracts, copies of "House to House", "The Voice of Truth International", and other teaching materials to give to people you meet — even at a service station, in a restaurant, or on the street.
- * Begin praying and planning to go on a mission trip.
- * Pray for God to plant you where He wants you to be.
- * Ask God: "Please don't let me get in Your way."

The safest, happiest, most exciting life a Christian can live is one of working in partnership with God. Good soldiers don't sleep on patrol. Let's MARCH in the Lord's Army! Together we can win!

