

V **THE** **VOICE OF TRUTH** **INTERNATIONAL**

VOLUME ONE \$4.00

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We
Be
Certain
About
Jesus?**
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THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A WORD...

Centuries ago God placed the stamp of His wisdom on the written word when He carved the Law on the tables of stone with His own finger. Time and time again He confirmed His judgment by commanding the prophets to speak and to write the words He gave them.

Obviously, men profit by being able to read, study, and meditate upon the revealed Mind of God in the form of the Bible, His written word.

We live in an age of marvels. No longer are we limited to a few scrolls, containing a small part of God's revelation. We are blessed with an abundance of "the printed page", during a time when computers, scanners, laser printers, and off-set printing make it possible for the message to be spread easily and inexpensively throughout the world. How thankful we are to be a part of this age, and to be able to devote our time and energies to supporting His truth.

It is our prayer that the pages of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** may prove to be a blessing of encouragement and instruction to all who read it, both here in the U.S. A. and overseas. May God help us to be true to the commitment to uphold His name and His doctrine, exemplifying always the Spirit of Christ. Amen.



Sister magazines for which **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** will serve as a feeder:

The Bible Teacher, English, New Delhi, India
The Word of Truth, Telugu, Kakinada, India
The Way of Truth, Tamil, Bangalore, India
The Voice of Truth, Tamil, Erode, India
The Bible Truth, Malayalam, Trivandrum, India
The Voice of Truth, Angami Naga, Nagaland, India
The Voice of Truth, English, Colombo, Sri Lanka
The Voice of Truth, B. Indonesian, Jakarta, Indonesia
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Requests for articles on particular subjects will be considered. Comments and suggestions regarding the content and appearance of the magazine will be appreciated. Our goal is to strive for excellence.



INTRODUCING

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

J. C. CHOATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In 1962 my family and I went to Karachi, Pakistan to serve as missionaries. While there we became familiar with *The Voice of America*, listening to that short-wave program for news from our country and also for news that was happening throughout the world. It occurred to me that while that was a voice for America, why shouldn't there be a voice for Truth? We then began a monthly magazine, and — you guessed it — we called it *The Voice of Truth*.

Later, we began to broadcast the Gospel over *Radio Sri Lanka* in English and other languages, to serve India and also for several other countries in Asia and Africa. Most of the programs were given the name *The Voice of Truth*. We also began some magazines in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and in Singapore. Again, several of them continue to be published under the heading *The Voice of Truth*.

As the years have gone by and we have seen, increasingly, the need for good Christian magazines both at home and abroad, we have decided to print a new magazine in the United States. Again, we have turned to the name *The Voice of Truth*, but since this one will be more international than the others, it will be known as **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**.

Our purpose for **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** is several-fold. First, we want to bring out a magazine of around 100 pages which will be filled with basic truths of the Bible. There will be no paid advertising to take up the space. While we may see fit to deal from time to

time with various false teachings, our purpose will not be to publicly attack personalities, to give them and their opinions publicity, and to make martyrs of them. Rather, we prefer to teach God's will in such a way that when you pass the magazine on to a friend, you can do so with the full assurance that he or she will be taught the truth without the need of any apology. In other words, we will not use the magazine as a forum for debate and controversy. That is not to say that there is no need for such magazines, but this will not be one of them.

Second, we believe that this magazine is needed here in the States, and it will be distributed here as widely as possible, as it goes on sale, issue by issue, and by yearly subscription. **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** will be unique in its make-up, not a duplication of other publications.

Third, we hope to use this magazine as a feeder for our English magazines in other parts of the world. That is, the articles will be laid out in such a way that they can be offset directly, along with local articles and editorials. Using this method, the articles will already be typeset, proof-read, and ready to go. The content will also be carefully selected, according to the need in the countries where it is published. You might ask, "Then why not just send a supply of this magazine to those different countries?" If that were done, there would be the problem of shipping and probable duty on bulk quantities. Then, whether mailed from here or from there, individually, they would carry the U. S. A. address and indication as having been printed in America. We feel that such literature makes a far better impression for good if it is printed in the individual countries where it is being used. Also, in this way, local editorials and articles can address specific needs.

Fourth, we will make this magazine available to World Bible School teachers to send to their English-speaking students throughout the world. They can use it as supplementary and follow-up materials in their efforts to win their students to Christ.

Initially, we hope to print **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** at least on a quarterly basis, and then move up to a monthly publication. By not dating the magazine it will be relevant over a long period of time, but we will number the issues so that the ones who receive them can keep up with them and order them according to the issue number they need.

I will serve as Editor-in-Chief, and Bro. Byron Nichols, a faithful preacher of the Gospel and one of the elders of the North National Church of Christ in Springfield, Missouri, is the Managing Editor. We will have a staff of writers who will make available to us articles on a regular basis to

appear in its pages. Other writers will be added, as well as other staff positions, in time. We will welcome your comments and suggestions and your help with the circulation of this magazine.

We have dreamed about this magazine for a long time. It is now a dream come true, and the Lord willing, it will continue as a pillar and support for the Truth. We hope you will want to be a part of it, that you will help with the writing, that you will contribute monetarily so we can send it to those who cannot afford it. We would like to use it as a tool for **world evangelism**, to supply it to local libraries, doctors' offices, and reading rooms in general. Would you sponsor it in one or more of these places?

This magazine will be printed and circulated on a non-profit basis. It will not be political and will not cater to the whims and wishes of any man. *We believe there is one true and living God, the creator of man and woman and all things, that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, that He lived without sin, performed miracles, died on the cross to save man from sin, was buried and resurrected, and returned to the Father in Heaven to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, and that He will come one day to take His people to heaven to live there forevermore. We believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and completely furnishes us unto every good work, that Christ built His church, that He is the saviour of it, head of it, that He adds only the saved to it, and that one must be a faithful member of it to go to heaven. Concerning worship, the Christian life, marriage, moral purity, heaven and hell, and all other things that God would have us to do and to abstain from, we believe that these precepts are clearly stated in the Bible and that one day at the Judgment we will have to answer to God for all that we have done, or not done, based on the teaching of God's Holy Word.*

With the foregoing introduction in mind, we present to you **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. May it be used to help teach God's Word — the Truth — to every nation, to every ethnic group, and to every person in all of the earth. This is our purpose for our writing, our publishing, and our lives. In everything, may God's will be done to the salvation of souls and to His glory forevermore.

— J.C. Choate
Winona, MS

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

by
Byron Nichols



As we begin this new magazine, perhaps my most solemn thoughts have to do with the great responsibility that accompanies the selection of the title for the publication — **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL.**

What a serious undertaking it is to attempt to dispense the truth on any subject, but to try to do that with regard to **God's inspired Word, the Bible** — that is indeed a solemn endeavor! Add to that the idea of trying to do this on an international or worldwide basis, and you can see that this is not something to be taken lightly.

Someone has said, "A drop of ink may make a million think." What more could we ask? It is our earnest intent to cause many to think — to think about God, Jesus Christ, heaven, hell, and eternity.

Each issue of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** will be unashamedly evangelistic. All who are associated with this magazine are concerned about helping folks to be saved eternally. We share the same burden that the apostle Paul talked about in Romans 1:14-15. There he stated the responsibility that he felt in sharing the Gospel with **all people**. In the next verse he explained why he was so concerned about sharing the Gospel with them: "*... it is the power of God unto salvation ...*" He makes it apparent that without the Gospel there will be no salvation.

The need for this new magazine is tremendous. Without exception, every worker involved in world evangelism that we have had opportunity to discuss this with has wholeheartedly agreed that there is an enormous need. Not only is the need great, but the opportunities that now exist are also great. It appears that there are more people exhibiting an interest in God and the Bible than ever before. We just **must not** let these opportunities pass by. We **must** share with these *millions of souls the wonderful news about Jesus Christ and His church.*

I am so very proud of the excellent group of writers who have agreed, with no pay whatsoever, to share their wisdom and their knowledge

of God and His inspired Word through these pages. These are people who truly care about others. They want to make a difference in the world. I believe that they are already doing that, but I believe that they will now be able to do so to a larger extent than even they had hoped for.

Gratitude must be expressed to all who have already been a source of encouragement to us in this new undertaking. The uplifting words, kind acts, and financial assistance have all helped to reassure us that this great effort is indeed worthwhile. This is not and can not be the project of just a few, but must be that of an ever-enlarging **team** of Christians conveying the love and compassion of Christ to the multitudes who desperately need to know of Him.

I have no hesitancy about asking our brethren, the church, to financially support this effort. There is absolutely no limit to what can be done through this means, but it obviously will require money for it to be accomplished. Surely those who are God's children will want to do what they can to assist in this mission effort.

To our readers who are not yet disciples of Jesus like we read about in the New Testament: We care about you, we are concerned about you, we want you to be saved from your sins and go to heaven when you die. By looking at and

reading this first issue of our magazine, you are already showing that you realize the need to be thinking very seriously about eternity. In every issue we will be having articles that will help you to better understand how to become a Christian.

To our readers who are already Christians according to the teachings of the New Testament: We will be providing you with material in each issue that will help you to grow in Christ, to become a more knowledgeable student of the Bible, and to help and encourage you as you live the Christian life before others.

As you read this and each succeeding issue of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**, you will become aware of the emphasis that is placed by this journal and its writers on the authority and essentiality of the Bible. The apostle Paul stated that the Word of God "*... is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*" (Acts 20:32). Our motive for bringing this publication into existence is to help as many as possible to have that *inheritance* to which Paul referred, and that *inheritance* is made possible only through God's Word. Thus, an effort will always be made in these pages to direct men and women to that Word. Our fervent prayer is that you will allow His Word to direct your life.

— Byron Nichols

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Readers:

We would like to hear your special requests for particular studies in the pages of this magazine. Articles may also be submitted for review and possible publication.

The Editor

Defenseless Love

I love so deeply, Father,
Your children whom I meet;
I love without reserve.

I want pure love
And Trust
To flow between us.
But, often — oh often —
I have been,

I am,
Betrayed
And my love returns to the covers
Of my own heart
Battered,
Bruised,
By hands
That knew no kindred love.

But, Father,
What am I to do?
The love is there,
Welling up inside, and longing
For worthy ones to love.

Must it be with me as with our Lord
Who loved implicitly
But trusted Himself to no man
For He knew man?

Must I, too,
Love without the trust,
Unprotected,
Expecting
To be betrayed?

Oh — but, Father —
That way holds pain!
Must I walk that way?

My feet will stumble
For tears will blind my eyes . . .
I cannot see.

Father, take my hand . . .
Show me the way . . .



CAN WE BE *Certain* ABOUT JESUS?

Richard L. Jones

The four accounts of the Gospel were written for specific purposes. Matthew was written while he was living in Judea and was composed especially for Jews to show how Jesus is the fulfillment of Judaism.

Mark may have been living in Rome when he wrote his Gospel for the Roman world. His purpose was to show Jesus as the Son of God and the Lord of the world.

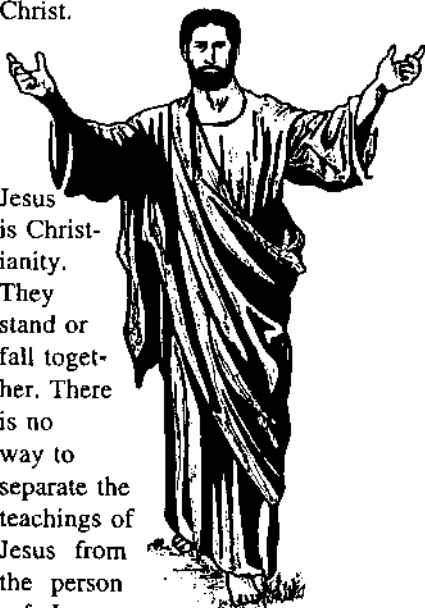
Luke was in Greece when he wrote his Gospel for a universal world. Experts say that his Gospel is written in the best Greek of the New Testament.

Skepticism about Jesus has grown quite a bit in the last few years. This is in spite of growing evidence about Jesus as the Son of God. Presuppositions keep many from knowing the truth about Jesus. Existentialists have no moral absolutes to control their lives. Hedonists live for the moment and justify their various lifestyles. Evolutionists discount the Creator and make life an accident.

The Gospel of Luke reassures us about the historical validity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Christianity. They stand or fall together. There is no way to separate the teachings of Jesus from the person of Jesus.

The things we know about Luke help add to our certainty about Jesus. As a second generation Christian, he never saw Jesus personally, but he checked the reliability of things he



heard.

He was a Gentile who had not been nurtured in Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. He probably had a built-in antagonism to Jews. His conversion came directly from heathenism to the Gospel. He must have begun his relationship to the Gospel as a skeptic.

Luke was a physician who ministered to the apostle Paul. Though medicine was primitive according to our standards today, they were taught to exercise care as they approached things. Luke took the scientific approach and looked for logical and natural explanations for what he observed.

It is quite interesting that the supernatural birth was told by a doctor.

Luke must have interviewed eye witnesses thoroughly and reported all things accurately, but above all, he was guided by divine revelation in the writing of his Gospel.

Luke's motive for writing also

adds certainty to his record about Jesus. He did not write for personal profit. If so, there would be the element of suspicion. He wrote for Theophilus, perhaps a Roman official. Luke wanted him to have an orderly account of Jesus' life. Orderly does not mean chronological, but organized.

As we read the Gospel of Luke, we can be certain about Jesus being the Son of God. We must accept Him as the Lord and Savior. He is the only One who has the right to be the Sovereign of our lives.

Have you considered His claims over your life? Our challenge is to acknowledge Him as the Son of

God and be immersed in water for the remission of our sins.

Christianity is not a religion based on ideas. It is a religion based on historical events regarding Jesus of Nazareth. HE IS THE ONLY SON OF GOD!

Richard L. Jones preaches in Edmond, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

Some have said Jesus Christ was a good man but not the Son of God. Why do they say He was a good man? Because of what the New Testament says about Him. The same New Testament says Jesus said repeatedly that He came down from heaven and that He was God's Son. If He was not what He said He was, He was not even a good man, because a good man does not tell things about himself that are not true.

Christians are God's children because they are people who have been begotten of God by His Word (James 1:18). But, Jesus is the only Son God has who was begotten as He was begotten. He was begotten of God when His virgin mother Mary miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ is God's Son and the Savior of all people. He died on a Roman cross for the sins of all people. Three days later God, His Father, raised Him from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:24; Luke 24:46,47; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3).

The fact that Jesus died for

all does not mean all will be saved. Only those who trust in Jesus Christ will be saved. Trusting in Him means believing the wonderful good news, or Gospel, about this wonderful Son of God, and it means repent-

ing of your sins, confessing your faith in Him, and being buried and raised in water baptism in order to have for-

giveness of your sins through the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. (Read John 8:21-24; Romans 10:8-10; 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12.)

Jesus said he that believes the good news about Him and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:15,16). Peter told believers in Christ, "*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38). The Lord adds those who do this to His church (Acts 2:41,47). If you need assistance in doing this, please contact the church of Christ nearest you, or contact me.

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

JESUS CHRIST the Son of God

Basil Overton

THE PREEXISTENCE OF CHRIST

Steve Williams

Christians believe that Christ was eternally preexisting as a divine being before His entrance into this world as a human being. A variety of arguments can be brought forth from the Scriptures to demonstrate this great claim for Christ.

(1) Jesus Christ, though born six months after John the Baptist, was older (John 1:30).

(2) Jesus Christ, though a descendant of David, was older than David, thus David could call Him Lord (Matthew 22:41-45).

(3) Jesus Christ, though a descendant of Abraham, lived before Abraham (John 8:58).

(4) Statements in the Bible that God "sent" His Son imply that Christ lived before His life in this world (John 6:44; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:9).

(5) Statements that Christ "came from God" or "descended from heaven" imply His preexistence (John 3:13; 6:32,42,50-51; 13:3; 1 Corinthians 15:47).

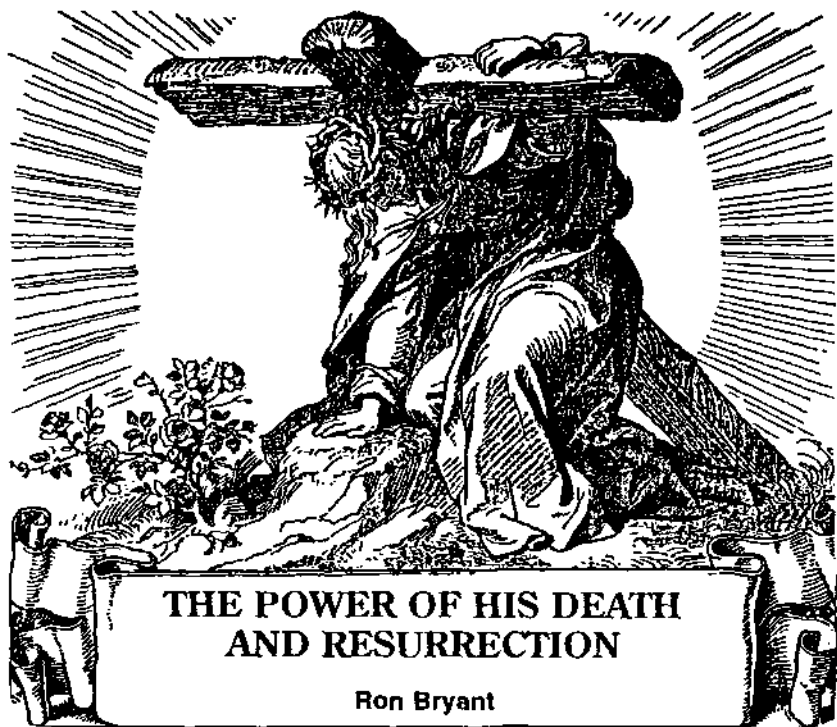
(6) Bible verses which describe a condition in which Christ existed which was prior to and dif-

ferent from His earthly existence also imply His preexistence. Jesus "was rich" but "became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9). He "was in the form of God" but took on "the form of a slave" (Philippians 2:6-7).

(7) Since all things were created through Christ, Christ must have lived or existed even before creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2). "He himself is before all things" (Colossians 1:17). He was in the presence of God before the world began (John 17:5).

This is why Jesus is called the Alpha (Revelation 1:17; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). Since Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, it is a good description of Jesus as one who comes first, is before all things, and is eternal with the Father. Truly, "In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Steve Williams teaches Bible International Bible College in Florence, Alabama.



THE POWER OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Ron Bryant

There is a real connection, beyond our comprehension, between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of men's sins. This is the thrust of the Old Testament (see Isaiah 53:4-12), and this is in agreement with the very message of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus "*died for our sins*," (literally, "*on account of our sins*"). This is no formulated creed, but a clear declaration of the historical fact. That which did take place and is a matter of irrefutable historical fact, was foretold in Scripture (Luke 22:37; 24:25-

27,44-46; Acts 2:25-27; 3:35; 13:34-35; 17:3; 18:28).

The death of Christ for our sins is also vitally connected with the power of His resurrection. In His death and burial He came down to our level and met our needs of forgiveness and cleansing. In His resurrection He made it possible for us to be raised up to His level. He died on the cross, paying the debt of sin "*once for all times*." He arose from the dead, and remains alive as the Risen One. He conquered sin in His death, and conquered death in His

resurrection. Christ has been raised from the dead; this, too, is a matter history. Jesus is the first and foremost example of all those that are to be raised. It is to be affirmed: If Christ be risen, others can rise. In truth, when His relation to mankind is considered, it can affirmed, others will rise.

The death of Christ on the cross and the resurrection of Christ from the grave are not to be viewed as points to be mechanically embraced, but as sources of Divine power which extend personal redemption and personal resurrection to the believer. His resurrection stands to vindicate all of His claims, gives credence to the authority of His Word, and is the support of all that He has promised. He has secured for us a life beyond the grave, for He Himself possesses that life (Romans 5:1-11; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 3:1ff). The good news is *"Christ died for our sins, was buried, and arose from the dead,"* and all of this was foretold in Scripture.

Ron Bryant preaches for the Camelback congregation in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A.

Testimony

Is it not ironic that every man in the whole world pays tribute every day to the existence of Jesus Christ and His supremacy among men by the very acknowledgment of the date we live by!

Except by the power of God, how could it be that the One who claimed so much, and was hated so passionately for His claims that He was crucified two thousand years ago, has today conquered the world to the point that everything we do is dated from His birth?

Betty Burton Choate



For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3,4)

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HEAVENS

Wayne Jackson

Long ago an inspired Hebrew shepherd wrote: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork"* (Psalms 19:1). As one surveys the breath-taking expanse above, several factors suggest a divine Source.

First, the order of the universe argues for an Orderer. When scientists launched a spacecraft from the Earth to the moon in July of 1969, they knew that during the three-day trip the moon would move more than 165,000 miles. In order to reach its exact destination the spaceship had to be aimed far ahead of the moon's course. The mathematical orthodoxy of the heavens made it possible to land on target. The scientists knew precisely where the moon would be three days from the time of their launch. Scripture does not speak loosely when it alludes to the "ordinances" (laws) of the heavens (Jeremiah 31:35).

Second, the vastness of the universe hints of the power of the first Cause. It has been estimated that our universe is some 20 billion light years across. This would be the distance that light would travel in 20



billion years at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. Of course, this is only an estimate, since no one has actually measured the universe or observed its extremities. What kind of Creator did it take to make such a vast universe? Surely, He is God Almighty (Genesis 17:1).

Third, the mysteries of the universe reveal the great wisdom of the Creator. The more astronomers study outer space, the more they realize how little they know. Theories about the origin of the universe come and go. After centuries of study, man is still no nearer to solving some of the grand mysteries of the universe than when he started. Indeed, as Paul noted, God's ways are past tracing out (Romans 11:33).

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

THE WAY WE SEE IT

Jim Sheerer

The way we see it, the Bible is the most important book in the world. It is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is the only Word of God. There is no other book which comes from God.

The Bible tells us what God is like. It tells us what Jesus is like, and what the Holy Spirit is like. The Bible tells us how to have the right relationship with God. This book teaches us how to be saved and how to live the Christian life. It directs us in coping with temptation, suffering, disappointment, illness, and depression. It teaches us how to pray. It tells us everything we know about the church and its function. It assures us that there is a heaven and that there is a hell. In short, the Bible tells us everything we need to know in order to be saved and go to heaven.

This is the most important book for everyone to have in his/her home. We need to read it every day. We need to search out its riches. We need to meditate upon it day and night. We challenge each one of you to do this. You will be the one who is blessed.

Do you have a heavenly Father?

There are many concepts of God. These range from 'the Force' (an impersonal Energy from which all things have sprung), to lifeless idols, to the worship of man himself as the embodiment of the eternal Spirit of God.

The Bible teaches, "God is Spirit...." (John 4:24) But He is neither an *impersonal Force*, nor an indifferent and *unconcerned Being* who is aloof from the affairs of men. Psalm 103:13 explains: "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him...."

God promises: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people...I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:16,17)

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1) As humans, we can obey God's teachings and be owned as His children.

**Next: If God Is our Father,
who Is Jesus?**



REASONS FOR BELIEVING

Alan E. Highers

It is important for all of us not only to know what we believe, but why we believe it. Faith is not mere opinion or speculation. It is conviction based upon evidence.

Peter admonished that we should *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15). We should know the reason for our hope. We should be able to *"give an answer"* to others for our faith. As crucial as it is for us to believe in God, in Christ, and in the Bible as God's Word, it is also vital for us to know why we believe and to be able to tell others. The Christian life is based on teaching. Jesus instructed us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15,16). Paul said: *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same com-*

mit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). This is the process by which the truth is passed from generation to generation—faithful men, with ability, impart the message to still others. Superficiality is one of the afflictions of our time. Many people express opinions, but few have real convictions based on principles which they can articulate and explain. The need has never been greater for genuine study, reflection, and understanding.

The study of the Word of God is food for the soul. We cannot grow and develop as we should without spiritual nourishment. Jesus said, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"* (Matthew 5:6). Peter urged us to *"desire the sincere milk of the word"* (1 Peter 2:2). The Hebrew Christians were upbraided because they had not grown in knowledge and still had need *"that one teach you again...the first principles of the oracles of God"* (Hebrews 5:12).

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). The more we study and learn, the greater our faith will be.

Let us strive to be people of God, followers of Christ, and disciples of the Book of Books.

Alan E. Highers is the editor of the *Spiritual Sword*, and lives in Memphis, Tennessee, U. S. A.

JESUS AND HIS BIBLE

Grady Miller

It is important that we consider what Jesus said or thought about anybody or anything. The New Testament records ample information to lead us to conclude that our Saviour immensely respected the power of God's Word. Notice these few observations that Jesus made in regard to the Book.

Jesus viewed the Scriptures as necessary for study and edification. He chided the religious leaders of His day, "*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God*" (Matthew 22:29). Even as a young boy of twelve He amazed the scholars of Israel with His understanding of the Sacred Writings (Luke 2:46,47).

Jesus relied upon Scripture in His confrontation with Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4). Three times He resisted temptation, and each time He declared, "*It is written.*" Jesus often quoted Scripture to confound and rebuke His adversaries. He would sting His critics with such statements as, "*Have ye not read?*" (Matthew 12:3,5), "*Did you never read?*" (Matthew 21:42), "*Is it not written?*" (John 10:34), and "*What did Moses command you?*" (Matthew 19:3).

Jesus viewed the predictive utterances of the Old Testament prophets as inspired statements which had to be fulfilled. He commanded Peter to sheath his sword when Judas led a mob to arrest Him (Matthew 26:52-54). He insisted that He could call an army of angels down from heaven to fight for Him if necessary, but then asked, *"But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"*

Following His crucifixion and resurrection He gave further instructions to His disciples before leaving this earth: *"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me"* (Luke 24:44). Our Saviour's emphasis is seen by Matthew's and Luke's employment of the Greek word *dei*; it means "it just has to be, in the very nature of the case." In Luke 24:46 an even stronger form of this word (*edei*) is used; the King James Version translates it *behoved*. *"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer . . ."* There can be no doubt as to our Lord's high view of Scripture. He declared that *"the scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35).

It is also significant that Jesus upheld those parts of the Old Testament record that the modern critic and skeptic have so vehemently rejected. Harold Hazelp has stated, "After two centuries of Biblical criticism, it almost seems as if He intentionally cited the historical incidents which would be most doubted by men of later times."

The Lord gave a strong endorsement to these events: the creation of male and female (Matthew 19:4), the flood (Matthew 24:37ff), the destruction of Sodom and the story of Lot's wife (Luke 17). He believed in the historicity of such Old Testament characters as Abraham (John 7:56), Moses (John 3:14), David (Mark 2:23-28), Solomon (Matthew 6:29), Elisha and Elijah (Luke 4:25-27), and Jonah (Luke 11:29-32). If such events and characters are mythical accounts, either [1] Jesus did not know the truth and was therefore not the Master Teacher, or [2] Jesus knew the truth and chose not to teach it, and was therefore a dishonest man.

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5 Approaches to Bible Study

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

We need more Bible students! We need better Bible students! The church is suffering for lack of Bible knowledge. Elders and preachers need to be great students. Parents need to be students, and then teach their children to be students. Teachers must be students. Let me suggest five approaches that will make a great student:

1. Study your Bible consecutively for information. Study from Genesis to Revelation. Start at the beginning and move to the end. The Bible has progress and movement. All knowledge builds upon prior information. Studying from the beginning with continuity will reveal the unity and harmony of the whole.

2. Study your Bible dispensationally for application. This approach will enable the student to know where he is in the Bible. He will be able to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel, bondage and liberty, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. Much confusion has resulted from a failure to "*rightly divide the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

3. Study your Bible typically for illustration. The Old Testament abounds in "types" which find their "substance" in the New Testament. The types serve as portraits, glimpses of things to come. The types are like the parts of a puzzle that ultimately come together to form the whole picture in the New Testament.

4. Study your Bible devotionally for inspiration. This approach enables the student to meditate and "*delight in the law of the Lord*" (Psalm 1). Rather than going through the Book, he allows the Book to go through him. Such will nourish the soul.

5. Study your Bible doctrinally for stabilization. There are so many "*winds of doctrine*" blowing (Ephesians 4:14)! Strange sounds can be detected only if you know the certain and true sound. Any error can be seen only if you know the truth.

May I challenge you to be a good Bible student!

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THE GOOD SEED

O. P. Baird

Jesus spoke a parable about seed. He told of a man sowing seed in different kinds of ground. Some of it bore fruit and some did not bear fruit. It bore fruit when the ground was good. He explained what the seed represented, "*The seed is the word of God*" (Luke 8:11). He also explained what the different kinds of ground represented. Of the good ground He said, "*And that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth*

Several years ago an interesting picture appeared in a magazine. It showed a man standing beside some pea vines. With the picture was the story of the seed from which the vines grew. It is a remarkable story and illustrates some truths about spiritual seed.

Some peas were found in a tomb in Egypt. They had been in the tomb two thousand years. The peas were planted to see if they would grow. Peas like those were not growing anywhere in the world, but when they were planted they grew and produced peas exactly like the peas found in the tomb.



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fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

Today there are many kinds or varieties of religious beliefs, all going by the name of "Christian." When we see different kinds of plants we know they grew from different kinds of seed. When there are different beliefs people should know that they are the result of different

teachings. The right seed is the Word of God, the Bible. Any teaching that is not found in the Bible is the wrong seed and will produce the wrong fruit.

What fruit will the true seed produce when people take it into their hearts? It will produce Christians. It will make people believers in God and His Son Jesus Christ. It will cause them to love God and follow His teaching in His Word. If people follow God's Word only, they will be Christians only, just like the first Christians.

Christians are people who have been born again. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). By what seed is he born? We find the answer in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not

of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God."

The fruit of the true seed is also the church. When one person receives the Word in faith and obedience, he becomes a Christian. When others do the same thing they

also are Christians, and the group of Christians is a church. A church is just a group of Christians who worship

and serve God together. God gives instructions to the church in His Word. He describes how He wants a church to be organized, how He wants the Christians to worship, to live, and to tell others about Christ. The way the apostles organized the churches they established is the way God wanted them to be organized. This is true because the apostles were God's messengers and were inspired by His Spirit in them.

Paul warned that other seed would be planted and would produce the wrong fruit. He said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.
(1 Peter 1:23)

(Acts 20:29-30).

Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"* (John 8:31). The words Jesus spoke when He was here on earth were His words. When He went back to heaven He sent the Holy Spirit to guide His apostles and others in teaching. What the Holy Spirit gave them to teach was Christ's Word also. When He promised to send the Spirit He said, *"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father*

hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14-15).

Let us take into our hearts the pure Word of God. Let us continue in that Word, learning it and following it. Never accept teachings that are not found there. In that way we will be faithful disciples, and the final fruit will be eternal life in the glory of God with all the redeemed.

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God's Love

Except when man's wrongs have demanded justice and not mercy, God's whole relationship with men has been one of giving and giving and giving, of thoughtfulness and concern and mercy and longing and desire to bestow happiness and life on the unworthy subjects of His love.

The Bible is one long love story, God's love letter to us that lays bare His heart and His immense longing for us. When we read in those pages of all that His love causes Him to do for us, we learn that kind of love from Him.

And this is the difference between the love in the heart of a Christian and the love in the hearts of those who follow other gods: the Christian's love is active, demanding that he consider others before himself, because he learned of love from God. . . .BBC

Jesus Trusted Scripture

William Woodson

The example of Jesus is an enriching study for all people, especially for Christians. In matters of conduct this is often considered — how is one to speak, to talk, etc. But, there is also the example of Jesus in the way He regarded and handled the Scriptures. This aspect of His example is considered in this article.

Many avenues of Jesus' regard and handling of Scripture could be studied. He indicated "*it is written*" (Matthew 4:4). He followed Scripture in resisting temptation (Matthew 4:4,6,10). He insisted that the commandment of God must not be rejected to keep human traditions (Mark 7:9).

Jesus taught by word and example that one should trust the Scriptures as the Word of God. The basis for this was in the fact that what the writer of Scripture said, Jesus insisted God had said. Further, Jesus stated the "*scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). He indicated that when Scripture had spoken, "*thus it must be*" (Matthew 26:54).

One writer has beautifully

summarized the importance of trusting Scripture because of the example of Jesus: "In our Lord's view, the whole of Scripture is one piece. It is, in every part of it, the word of God, which comes to us as the divine truth, without any error whatsoever.... The real Jesus, the only Jesus for whom we have any evidence whatsoever, believed the Bible was true and that it is the very word of God. He commanded His disciples to believe and obey it. He rebuked those who disregarded it or sought to interpret away its obvious instructions.... The real issue for us today is this: Is Jesus Christ our Lord? Only when we have answered this question. . . are we prepared to answer the further question: Is the Bible the infallible word of God, the authoritative guide for my life and thought? And our answer to this second question is the way to become obedient and faithful and useful disciples of the Lord Christ." (Kenneth Kantzer)

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THE TRUTH CONFIRMED AND ONCE DELIVERED

Reggie Gnanasundaram

Man is always concerned about the truth, and there are many who claim that they are truth-seekers. What is truth? Jesus said in John 17:17, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*" The purity of God's Word is described in Psalms 12:6: "*The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*" Proverbs 30:5 teaches us that, "*Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.*"

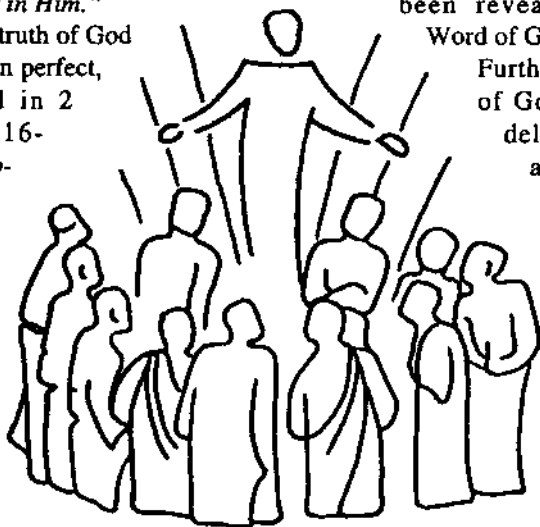
The truth of God will make man perfect, for we read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*"

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Yet, there are many who claim that they have new revelations from God and publicly announce that they are prophesying. God's Word stands firmly against all such false claims, and since God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, it is just not possible for any man to reveal any truth other than that which has already been revealed in the Word of God.

Further, the truth of God has been delivered once and for all.

We read in Jude 3, "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful*"



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for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

We see from the foregoing that the truth of God is complete, it will make man perfect, has been confirmed, and has been once delivered to the Christian. Therefore, God's Word warns us not to add to or take away from that Word. This warning is found in three distinct positions in the Bible. (1) In the beginning of the Bible we read in Deuteronomy 4:2, "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*" (2) In the middle of the Bible we read in Proverbs 30:6, "*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*" (3) In the end of the Bible we read in Revelation 22:18-19, "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*"

The apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 1:8-9, "*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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*"

It is so sad that many reject the truth of God. Jeremiah wrote, "*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23). If man is not in a position to direct his steps, then how must man walk? We find the answer in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "*For we walk by faith . . .*" What is faith? Romans 10:17 reads, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Therefore, how does man walk? As he is directed in the Word of God.

Man may reject the Word of God, but he can be certain that the Word of God will confront him in the last day, for we read in John 12:48, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*"

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WILLING TO DO HIS WILL

Leon Barnes

Do you have a real hunger for truth? Is there a craving to really understand God's will? If you answer "yes" to these questions, good. But more is required. A longing to know is important for all of us. But knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not what God is asking of us at all.

Listen to Jesus in John 7:17, *"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself."* If there is a formula for understanding the will of God, this is it. Please notice, He didn't offer anything to the ones who just wanted to KNOW. We may want to *know* so we can win an argument, tell someone what is wrong with them, or just as a novelty so we can boast about our superiority or understanding of things. These attitudes are not what God desires. The important thing is one's willingness to DO the Lord's will.

Some people say, "Well, it doesn't matter to me what you show me in the Bible, I'm never going to change. My family has always believed this way and I will die believ-

ing the same thing." When I hear this, I don't go away puzzled that they can't seem to grasp the teachings of God's Word even on the most basic of themes. Understanding has to do with heart as well as intellect.

Listen, God's Word is not just a reference book to be placed on the shelf and pulled down when I want to look up something of interest. It is about life. It is intended to touch us where we live every day.

It is literally amazing the kind of ideas people can come up with while studying their Bible, *when they go to it in order to prove that what they are already doing is the right thing.* But it is equally amazing how simple things are in the Word of God **when I am looking for teaching on how to live, and I am willing to yield my whole life to His charge.** The one willing to do His will truly does come to know that the Bible is from God and is willing to live according to its laws every day.

Leon Barnes preaches in Little Rock, Arkansas, U.S. A.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Sunny David

Most people have difficulty in understanding the book of Revelation. The highly figurative language of this book has caused many to believe that its contents are largely unintelligible, and for that reason it has often been abandoned by the readers in general. Others who read this book do not keep in mind for whom the book was actually written and under what circumstances the signified message was delivered. The symbolic language of Revelation was not difficult to understand for those who had actually received the message in the beginning, because they understood the meaning of these symbols, but this causes many today to misunderstand and misapply its teaching. All kinds of sensational things are being taught today from the book of Revelation which are not true, and many are being misled into falsehood by such sensational teachers.

From the very first page of the book one can clearly see that the message was directed to the seven churches in Asia Minor, where Christians were being killed, exiled, and robbed of all their properties for refusal to



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renounce their religion. The message was to give them hope and courage. The message was not restricted to the seven churches alone, since the number seven is often used in Revelation symbolically for completeness or perfection. These seven churches were selected by the Lord to be representative of all churches, because the conditions reflected in those seven churches were also to be found in all other churches of Christ as well. No doubt its first message was for them, yet its message is for God's people everywhere and in every age.

The emperor Domitian had introduced the law of emperor worship. He had images of himself erected throughout the empire to

make his worship more convenient for all people everywhere. Worship of him was compulsory. Each per-

son was to burn a pinch of incense on the altar to the godhead of C a e s a r . Having done so, the person was given a certificate showing that he had performed his religious duty. Every Roman citizen had to do that and receive that certificate. Any who refused to comply was considered to be one who opposed the emperor. We can readily see how difficult and trying it

Then He said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. . . . My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last . . .

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (From Revelation 22:6ff)

must have been for one to be a Christian in Rome. To show their loyalty and faithfulness to the emperor all that Christians had to do was to burn that pinch of incense

and say, "Caesar is Lord." But no true Christian would do that, because their Lord was Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone. They would give no man the name of the Lord (Matthew 10:32-33). Thus, Christians refused to go through the form of Caesar worship; therefore, they were outlaws. For their disloyalty to the emperor they were put into prison, beaten and persecuted, and many were even put to death.

To His followers the Lord Jesus Christ had promised that if they would be faithful to Him until death He would give them the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). That is, even death should not move them from their steadfastness, because the final victory would be theirs. They will receive the crown of life, eternal life with the Lord in heaven where *"there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain..."* (Revelation 21:4). However, their enemies and persecutors will be cast into the lake which burns eternally with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10; 21:8).

This, then, was the message of Revelation which was shown in symbols to the persecuted saints of John's day. Revelation is a series of

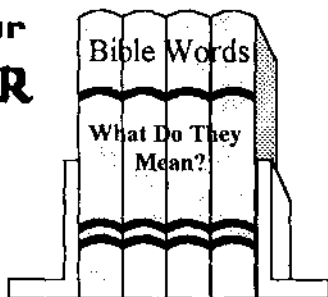
apocalyptic images shown to John by the Holy Spirit to set forth Christ as eternally victorious over all world conditions, and thus to encourage the Christians of John's day, and of every succeeding day until the return of the Lord in judgment. This was a message that the Lord is coming to the rescue of His people shortly; therefore, fear none of those things. The book of Revelation must be kept close to Asia Minor of the first century if its message is to be rightly understood today. No interpretation can be regarded as the correct one if it would have been meaningless to those who had first received the book. They were suffering, they were being threatened and killed. They needed the message of hope and courage, and the Lord gave them the Revelation. It tells us that God can defeat all enemies. No one can stand against Him, neither can anything stop His people from doing His will. He is in control. Revelation has a message of hope for all people who will follow God and do His will, and a message of certain destruction for all who disobey Him (Revelation 21:1-8).

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

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged according to their works . . . (Revelation 20:12)

It Helps to Enrich Your BIBLE WORD POWER

BY FENTER NORTHERN



Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1-12. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

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

"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"



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

Vocabulary Scale

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

THE DRAWING POWER OF CHRIST

Roy Beasley, Jr.

Some critics have tried to convince the world that Jesus Christ never really existed, that He is only a myth. But even the Jewish Talmud admits that Christ actually existed. Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to Him. Tacitus, the Roman historian, refers to Jesus and the disposition that Pilate made of His case.

Jesus was no myth; He was real. He was born in Bethlehem and reared at Nazareth; He lived only one-third of a century, and all of this in one tiny little corner of the earth; yet His life and His teaching have reached out into all times, to all people, in all places, to make Him the central figure of history.

Christ has had a greater influence upon mankind than any other person who has ever lived. Even after more than sixty generations, more than a billion people like to think of themselves as His disciples and willingly call themselves by His name... "Christian."

One of the most impressive passages in all the Bible is a state-

ment found in John 12:32, "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.*" Immediately after Jesus had said these words, it began to happen. He was lifted up on the cross; He was lifted up from the grave; and then a little later He was lifted up into heaven.

According to all the experience that men have had through the centuries, Christ's death on a Roman cross should have put an end to the Christian movement. Now that the leader was gone it should have run down like a clock. But Christianity was different. It did not run down like a clock. It has become more and more impressive as the years and the centuries have come and gone.

Instead of dying out and being forgotten, the tremendous drawing power of Christ has increased. Think of those who were, during His own lifetime, drawn to Him: Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, Judas, Matthew, Peter, James, and John. He drew people who left their families and their occupations.

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Even after His death He continued to draw people. Think of Cornelius (the Roman centurian) the Philippian jailor, the Ethiopian eunuch, and many others.

After nineteen centuries Christ is still drawing men. He is indeed the attraction of the ages. But the tragedy is that many resist the drawing power of Christ, many who have never confessed Christ before men. They may believe in Him, and in private acknowledge Him, but in the every-day affairs of their lives they have never really made it known. They have not stood up to be counted.

Have you heard the words of

Christ: *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"* (Matthew 11:28-29)? Have you heeded His call? Have you confessed Him before men? Have you repented of your sins? Have you been united with your Lord in baptism?

The Christ of Calvary still draws men unto Him— but He forces no one. The decision is yours to make.

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

IT IS WRITTEN

Burt Groves

"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

God spoke these words to King Solomon following the king's prayer after the completion of the temple. While specifics of obedience vary under Moses and Christ, God has always required faith and obedience of His people.

Obedience expressing humility and loving faith continues to result in acceptance with God and reception of all spiritual blessings. No one can receive spiritual strength without conforming to spiritual principles.

Pity the person who wants to be called a Christian, but refuses to study God's Word and humbly follow in the steps of Jesus!

Burt Groves preaches for the Pleasant Grove congregation in Dallas, Texas.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

JESUS

AND THE CROSS

Willard Collins



Salvation of the lost, on a worldwide basis, centers on Jesus and the cross. His sacrifice has drawn men closer to God for 1900 years. Before Christ was crucified He was treated shamefully. The Savior was scourged by His enemies, stripped and mocked by the soldiers. The opponents spit upon Him, and then they led Him away to crucify Him. Matthew wrote, concerning the crucifixion, *"And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots, and they sat and watched him there"* (Matthew 27:35-36). After hours of suffering, Jesus died at Golgotha.

The Cross — A Symbol

The cross symbolizes the great truths of Christianity. First of all, this symbol suggests the depths of sin. The marks of sin may be seen in broken homes, class hatred, and in men's disregard for the rights of each other, but the crucifixion is

the supreme effort of God to picture sin to man in its true light.

Sin was responsible for the death of the Son of God. I once heard the late H. Leo Boles preach on the subject "Sin That Crucified Jesus." He began with the sin of ignorance, and then listed the sins of hatred, envy, prejudice, lying, love of money, and moral weakness. In commenting on the sin of moral weakness, Boles said, "Pilate was too weak to do what he knew he should do. He could have acted firmly, but he sacrificed his principles of honor and acted as a moral coward."

The Breadth of Mercy

The cross of Christ is a sign of God's bountiful mercy. The power of the blood Jesus shed on the cross is available to all. Justice demands that evil be punished, but through Christ's death, God extends mercy to men in sin. Instead of the sinner receiving punishment, he can receive forgiveness.

The following story was handed down from the Medes and Persians. The laws of the Medes and Persians were unalterable and their penalties inescapable. An eye

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was demanded for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. A young man had put out the eyes of one of his fellows, and the law demanded that, as punishment for his crime, the young man must have his own eyes plucked out.

The criminal was brought before the judge for trial. In this case, the judge happened to be the culprit's own father. The contradicting cries of justice and mercy rang in the father's ears. He loved his son, but he also respected the law. The guilty must be punished, but love must find mercy's way.

After much reflection, the judge said to his son, "As your judge, I must assess the penalty of the law, which demands that two eyes be given for the two you have destroyed. I cannot do less than meet the law's demand. But, as your father, I offer one of my eyes to help meet the requirements of justice." Paul said of this lesson of mercy, "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). The cross declares God's mercy and love for man.

Power of Salvation

The cross symbolizes the power of man's salvation. Paul said, "*The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*" (1 Corinthians

1:18). Man becomes reconciled to God through Christ on the cross.

There is the story of a divorced husband and wife who stood on either side of the bed of their dying child. With one hand, the child grasped the hand of the father; with the other hand, it held firmly to its mother. While the child was in this position, life passed from the little body, and the spirit returned to God who gave it. Drawn together by this object of mutual love, pulled closer and connected by two tiny hands, this husband and wife were reunited and a once-broken home was restored.

At Golgotha the Son of God reached into heaven with one hand and took hold of God. With the other hand, He reached to earth to touch the heart of man. The Christ of the cross seeks to reconcile man to God.

The beams upon which our Savior died were more than pieces of wood. The next time you sing "The Old Rugged Cross," consider anew God's mercy and love.—John summed it up when he wrote, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

Willard Collins is president-emeritus of David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee.



FAITH

Hans J. Dederscheck

Faith has to be related to loyalty, belief, and reliance. Paul affirms that in Jesus Christ faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). It is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:1,6), but faith without love is unacceptable (1 Corinthians 13). Faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Therefore, faith is the lifestream in a man's existence. Faith saves, edifies, corrects, improves, and makes believers perfect in Christ Jesus.

A man's heart is purified by faith in God (Acts 15:9). By faith people repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). Humans are sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18). The Gospel of Christ is preached among all nations for obedience to the faith (Romans 1:5). Once we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

There is only one faith (Ephesians 4:5). That faith is to be defended, and Christians defend themselves with the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16). Christians are to progress in the faith (Philippians 1:25). Paul says: *"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven"* (Colossians 1:23). Christians show a faith of steadfastness (Colossians 2:5). Paul remembered without ceasing the work of faith, the labour of love of his brethren, the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:3). A Christian's faith must be defended. Therefore, the Lord tells us to take on the whole armour of God, so that we may be able to withstand in the evil day. Truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, God's Word, and prayer — these are our weapons against the power of evil, and we must use them continually (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Hans J. Dederscheck is an evangelist in Vienna, Austria.

"FAITH . . . LOVE"

Dan Winkler

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6).

To breathe, we both inhale and exhale. The abundant life of Jesus involves a similar process. We take in the teachings of Jesus by faith (accepting, trusting, and obeying what He says), and then we express the joys of faith in love.

Faith comes in all shapes and sizes.

(1) **There is "shallow" faith.** Jesus said, "*O ye of little faith,*" in reference to worry (Matthew 6:30-31), fear (Matthew 14:31), and human reasoning (Matthew 16:7-8).

(2) **There is "shipwrecked" faith.** Hymenaeus and Alexander are tragic examples of such (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 4:14-15).

(3) **There is a faith that "shrinks".** We are not to be of them who "*shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have a faith unto the saving of the soul*" (Hebrews 10:39).

(4) **There is a faith that is "strong."** How encouraged we are by the centurion and woman of

Canaan who were praised for their "great" faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28).

Whereas faith comes in different sizes, love expresses itself in different ways.

(1) **We love and obey God.** In fact, He told us that a true love is obedient (1 John 5:2).

(2) **We love that which is good.** We should never fall victim to the perilous times and the evil ways of those who are "*no lovers of good*" (2 Timothy 3:3).

(3) **We love those who are good and belong to God.** In fact, this is the way the world identifies us as followers of Jesus (John 13:34-35).

(4) **We love and reach out to the godless.** Those of the world are "*without Christ . . . and without God*" (Ephesians 2:12). With them we lovingly share the glories of Jesus and the blessings of faith (Mark 16:15).

What avails? "Faith which worketh by love!"

Dan Winkler preaches the Gospel in Decatur, Alabama, U. S. A.

I HAVE SINNED

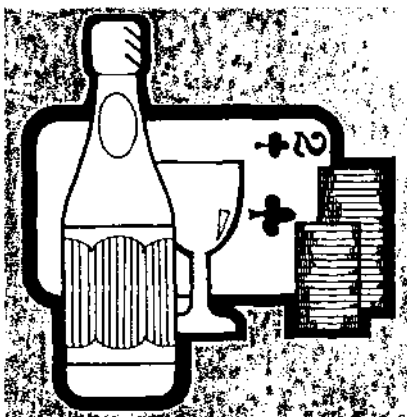
Ron Stough

Three of the hardest words for any man to say are the words, "I have sinned." Out of the hundreds of characters whose lives are recorded in Scripture, there are only eleven to whom these words are attributed.

For some reason, man has always been reluctant to confess his mistakes, but if an individual hopes to be acceptable to God, he must learn to admit that he has sinned. 1 John 1:8,9 says,

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins . . ."

In our permissive world, sin is practically an obsolete word. People are "sick," misguided," or "socially maladjusted," but they are not sinners. The Bible declares that sin is a reality, and that the sinner is unacceptable in God's sight. We



must realize this before we will confess our sins.

Not only must man acknowledge that sin is real, he must also realize that sin is a personal thing. The Scripture teaches that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), but many times we readily confess the sins of others, while failing to admit our own faults.

Only when man realizes what sin has done to him, will he "come to himself," as did the prodigal in Luke 15:17. This sinful young man finally realized that he was in the hog pen, and he was there because of his sin. When we realize that sin places us in the hog pen of life, we will be more eager to confess our sins and obey the Lord's commands for forgiveness.

Ron Stough labors with the Eastside church in Duncan, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Repentance:

THE HARDEST COMMAND?

David W. Chadwell

One of the Bible's least understood teachings is our responsibility to repent. The Bible begins by declaring (1) sin is the basic reality of human existence, and (2) everyone needs to repent. That is the basic lesson Israel was to learn from Adam and Eve (Genesis 2,3). From beginning to end, in all periods of Bible history, Scripture (1) documents the *need* for repentance, (2) *commands* sinful people to repent, (3) and holds people *responsible* for repentance.

The Old and New Testaments powerfully affirm the effect of human repentance on God. Repentance is essential to make the forgiveness of sins reality in a person's life (Acts 2:38). If one is to have his sins wiped away and receive the Lord's times of refreshing, he must repent (Acts 3:19).

How can a person repent if he does not know what repentance is? If he does not understand what Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament writers meant by that word, how can he repent? One must understand repentance! Faith and baptism without repentance will not produce forgiveness of sin and new

life in Christ.

This is the common explanation of repentance: "Repentance is turning your life around, redirecting life away from sin and toward God." Years ago someone explained the turning, the redirecting in this manner: "Repentance is a change of mind leading to a change of heart leading to a change of action leading to a change of life." All of this is true. However, in terms of everyday reality, do you know what that means?

Jesus gave the clearest presentation of the meaning and process of repentance in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). A man's young son came of age. In the arrogance and false wisdom of youth, he decided to escape the restrictions and control of his father and older brother. He demanded and received his portion of the inheritance. A few days later, the son left home.

He traveled to a distant country and spent his entire inheritance living in pleasure and ease. After he spent all his money, a severe famine struck that country. As conditions grew worse he had no

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food and no friends. He accepted a disgraceful job for an Israelite: feeding pigs (Leviticus 11: 2,4,7,8). Still he was desperate. He was so hungry he wished he could eat the undigestible carob pods he fed the pigs.

In his dire need he recovered "right thinking." He realized that his father's servants were cared for better than he. He also realized he was fully responsible for his mistakes. At that moment he knew that he had sinned against his father and God. He resolved to take action and face his sin.

What a hard decision! He would go to his father, confess his sin, and ask to be accepted back, not as a son, but as a servant. He knew he was unworthy to be a son. He had no right to make that request. Imagine his agony as he walked that long journey home, wondering each day how his father would react. Would he be angry? Would he be ashamed of his rebellious son? Would he let him be a servant? Without regard for consequence, he returned.

That is a powerful description of repentance. It clearly portrays what repentance is. (1) He recovered his ability to "think and see correctly." He stopped deceiving himself and looked at the realities of his life and situation. (2) He

saw his own sin, failure, and mistakes. (3) He acknowledged the truth: his sin occurred because of his choices and decisions. (4) He accepted full responsibility for his conduct and choices. "I have sinned against my father and my God." (5) He would acknowledge his wrongdoing to the ones he hurt — his father and his God. (6) He honestly understood his unworthiness. (7) He acted on his proper perspective, his right thinking. (8) He got out of the pig pen, he returned home, and he confessed the truth about himself.

A touching picture of our forgiving God is revealed in the father. After all that time the father still watched the road, hoping for his son's return. When that dirty, ragged, thin figure appeared in the distance, the father recognized him. He ran to his son, and in compassion hugged and kissed him. He hardly heard his confession — he knew the repentance was real! He received him as his son, restored him to the position of his son, and hosted an enormous celebration, because his dead son was now alive.

That is repentance. That is the powerful effect repentance has on God. That will occur in your life — if you repent.

David W. Chadwell is a preacher and writer in Oxford, Mississippi, U. S. A.



THE BEAUTY OF BAPTISM

Mack Lyon

People who read their Bibles know that baptism is a frequent subject there. Various forms of the word are found more than a hundred times in the New Testament. All of the major "Christian" denominations perform some act which they define as "baptism." So, a person seeking the way of salvation in Christ should be neither surprised nor offended when the subject comes up.

However, some denomina-

tions administer a form of baptism, and some people submit to it, with neither an understanding nor appreciation for its true meaning and value. To them it is a formality, ritual, church ordinance, edict or tradition as trivial and irrelevant as visiting some shrine.

Some rob baptism of its meaning by disclaiming its relationship to salvation in Jesus Christ. They understand that since the sinner is saved by grace (Ephesians

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2:8-10), it is a contradiction to say that baptism is "*for (unto) the remission (forgiveness) of sin,*" as in Acts 2:38. However, when one scripture seems to us to contradict another scripture, it is obvious we are misunderstanding one, or perhaps both of them.

So, it is important to all of us to know what baptism is all about.

The Holy Spirit helps us in the writings of the apostle Peter, who said of the great flood of Noah's day, "*wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 3:20-21).

The reader cannot evade that statement: "*baptism doth also now save us.*" It will help in understanding the verse if we read it and omit the parenthetical thought, then come back to it. "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" In being baptized a person is not just obeying some church ordinance; he is not just performing a ritual, or keeping an empty command; he is reliving the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in so doing,

he is saved (Romans 6:3-4).

To strengthen that, the Holy Spirit moves Peter to insert the parenthesis: "*Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.*" It is not merely taking a bath. While he is not addressing the "mode" of baptism, (sprinkling or immersion), he settles the question. The unbelievers seeing people baptized might think they were merely bathing, which certifies immersion as the method of baptism.

Well, if it is not a bath, what is baptism all about? It is "*the answer of a good conscience toward God.*" The New American Standard Version translates it, "*an appeal to God for a good conscience,*" not on the person's merit, but by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

People who reject baptism as a "work" by which a person tries to merit his salvation, fail to see the real meaning of baptism. When properly understood, Bible baptism actually is a denial of salvation by meritorious works and an affirmation of salvation on the merits of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism marks the time a person is washed from his sins in the blood of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5).

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

THE NARROW WAY

Bobby Dockery

Jesus preached that life is a series of choices.

One of life's most basic choices is between the broad and narrow ways. As Jesus said, *"The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus did not pretend that the way of discipleship was an easy, painless way. He spoke of difficulty and hardship. There is an easy way, but it is the way of death, destruction and eternal separation from God!

Why did Jesus picture the path of Christianity as a narrow way?

(1) Because The Terms Of Discipleship Are Narrow (Matthew 7:21; 16:24). You can be born a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Moslem, a Jew — but you can't be born a Christian. You must be re-born! (John 3:3,5). It takes a conscious decision...a choice...effort is required. Jesus demands explicit obedience (Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(2) Because Truth Is Narrow (John 8:32). Truth cannot

be broadened to accomodate error and still be truth! The truth is not elastic which can be stretched to suit every- body. When a mathematician solves an equation the correct answer — the "mathematical truth" — is necessarily narrow! When a pharmacist prepares a medicine he must narrowly follow the proper formula! By its very nature truth is restrictive. *"Any one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God"* (2 John 9).

(3) Because The Discipline Of The Cross Is Narrow. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane the options available were narrow. To do the will of the Father He had to submit to the cross. The Christian life demands disciplined living from us as well (Titus 2:12).

We must choose either the broad way or the narrow way. The broad way may seem easy and inviting; the narrow way may seem hard and demanding. But in the end, the broad way is ruin; the narrow way is life!

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

WHO IS OF THE TRUTH?

Jerry Jenkins

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37).



A major issue facing religious

people is, "Am I following the truth?" It is important to follow the truth, for a failure to walk in truth is to sever fellowship with the Lord. *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth"* (1 John 1:6). In addition, it is evident that truth is associated with action. We are to *"walk in truth,"* and we are to *"do"* the truth.

How can we know that we are of the truth? Some say it is impossible to know. Others say we can know by our feelings, or that knowledge comes by a direct intervention from God. The question is, "How can I be certain that I am of the truth?"

Again, we turn to our Master for the correct answer: *"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*

If you are of the truth you will hear the voice of Jesus about the following subjects:

(1) Have you heard His voice concerning baptism? *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16).

(2) Have you heard His voice about soul-winning? *"... Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Matthew 4:19).

(3) Have you heard His voice concerning giving? *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

(4) Have you heard His voice about prayer? *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Luke 18:1).

(5) Have you heard His voice regarding obedience? *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say"* (Luke 6:46)? *"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

Jerry Jenkins is the preacher for the Roebuck Parkway church in Birmingham, Alabama, U. S. A.

Jesus was asked, "Are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:23). In Matthew 7:13,14; 22:14, Jesus affirms that the majority of mankind will be lost. Then Jesus said that few will be saved. How many are few?

John wrote, "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). Yes, in relation to the world's population, living and dead, "few" will be saved. If millions upon millions are saved, would not the number still be "few" in relation to all who have lived?

Does God want all to be saved? In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God desires that all men be saved. It is our job to faithfully preach the Gospel to every creature that they might be saved.

Our question is why "few" are saved.

1. Few are saved because many want to take the easiest path, the path of least resistance (Matthew 7:7,8,13,14). Jesus says that we must ask, seek, and knock to have the favor of God.

2. Few are saved because many will not listen to the Gospel. In Matthew 22:1-13, Jesus spoke a parable to show that many were more interested in worldly things than they were in the kingdom of God. How true is this today?

3. Few are saved because many will wait until it is too late.

In Luke 13:22-28, Jesus says that many will seek salvation too late. It will be too late at the judgment day to seek salvation.

If all persons in every generation from the beginning of man were saved except one, that would still be too "few" in relation to God's desire. Our Lord has taught us why "few" are saved. May we urgently decide now to seek salvation, deeply care, and diligently prepare our souls to meet the Lord.

WHY ARE FEW SAVED?

Kenneth McClain

God Requires Obedience!

D.R. Boggs

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

This statement is made by Samuel to Saul when Saul returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites. You will remember that Saul brought back the king, Agag, and the best of the flocks and herds. Saul's excuse was that he brought the animals back to sacrifice to God. He had failed to obey God in destroying everyone and everything of the Amalekites.

God's attitude is the same today as it was in those days. Obedience is more important than anything we might think to sacrifice to God. We don't burn animals on altars anymore, but we still attempt to offer God that which we wish instead of full obedience to Him. We often become like the physical offspring of Abraham in trying to bargain with God for that which pleases us, instead of that which pleases Him.

We find passages of Scripture that are too strict to please us, and easily declare them as not

meaning what they say. We have friends and loved ones who are living in contradiction to God's Word, and declare that God has made a special exception for them. Or more comforting yet, we refuse to learn God's will for acceptable living, and then declare ignorance as justification for disobedience.

That which pleases the God of heaven is not measured in how many buckets of gold and silver we can fill at the Lord's temple. It is not measured by the number or beauty of great symphonies dedicated to the glory of God. It is not measured by the accomplishment of things that we decide is beautiful worship.

That which makes God the happiest is the humility of heart to obey His commandments, the willingness to say, *"Thy will be done,"* and then do it. People who are acceptable to God do not presume to tell God what they will offer. They offer the sacrifice of a pure heart, humbled in obedience, learning and doing the bidding of God's eternal Word.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

—Jesus Christ

THE CHAIN OF SALVATION

Johnny Ramsey

Every link in a chain is important. If one link is broken or missing, the chain is without value.

This principle is clearly followed in the Bible. It takes several things to save us. Some people say that "Christ saves us," and that is all there is to it! But, friends, salvation is attributed to many factors, according to the Scriptures. For instance, we read in Romans 8:24 that we are "saved by hope." In Ephesians 2:8 we read, "for by grace are ye saved through faith" In Romans 5:10 Paul informs us that salvation comes by the life of Christ. In Ephesians 1:7 we find that redemption is through the blood of Christ. John 3:16 tells us that believing is another link in the chain of salvation. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 we read that "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation" Paul further states that confession of Jesus as the Christ is part of the redemptive process (Romans 10:9-10).

Nearly every religious group agrees up to this point. How could we believe otherwise, when the Bible is so

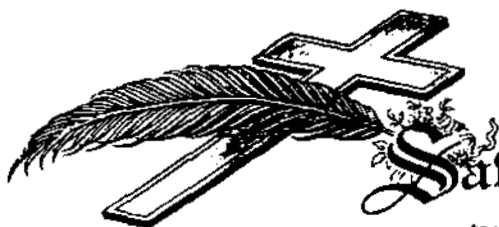
clear? But, now we come to two other necessary parts of the chain of salvation. In 1 Peter 3:21 we read, "*The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" Jesus added, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16).

The other link in this chain of salvation is found in Matthew 10:22. Here our Lord stated, " . . . *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*" Yes, the child of God must have endurance, or he will be lost.

Remember that salvation is a divine drama. There are two actors on the stage. God has a part to play; man has the other part. Have we fulfilled our role? Not unless we have been obedient to His commands. Let us see that no link in the chain of salvation is missing.

Have you broken the chain?

Johnny Ramsey teaches Bible in the Brown Trail School of Preaching in Bedford, Texas.



Cleon Lyles

Saved by Grace

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Sometimes the most simple statements in the Bible are the most difficult to understand. This is true because so much confusion has been heaped upon them. It is difficult to clear away the theories of men and grasp the plain statement of the Holy Spirit.

Grace means favor. Thus, if we are saved by the grace of God we are saved by the favor of God. God wants to save us. Every move that He made in the direction of our salvation was because of favor. We were not worthy of His goodness, hence grace is an unmerited favor.

We cannot save ourselves. It is impossible to accumulate merit before God. Regardless of what we may do that is approved of God, we are still saved by grace. Now this does not destroy the fact that there are certain things to be done. Accepting the grace of God requires obedience to His will. This will be

true throughout our lives. But when we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants. We must be saved by God's favor. Therefore, doing what is demanded of us in no wise makes us earn the salvation God has provided for us.

When the heart is right everything else will be all right. Certainly we will do that which is required of us. But the heart cannot be right when we think in terms of our own merit and forget that we are saved by the grace of God.

Notice in this verse that he says we are saved by grace through faith. Faith is something that works. The faith that pleases God does what God says. Having done what God demands, we lean upon His grace. He accepts us because the heart is right, and obedience to His commands demonstrates, or makes perfect, our faith. Thus, when we believe Him and obey His will, we are saved by grace. We do not merit salvation, but we have met the requirements of our faith.

Before his death, Cleon Lyles preached for many years in Little Rock, Arkansas, U. S. A.

A HOME PREPARED

Tony Lall

In the English language some words bring a feeling of sadness. One is "alone." One that evokes much feeling of sympathy and compassion is "homeless." In the wake of disasters, the news media speak of those left homeless. What is even sadder is when there is a home available or prepared and those who need it don't know or don't care.

"Mid pleasures and palaces
though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's
no place like home."

— J. Howard Payne
"Home Sweet Home"

The Bible speaks of some homes that have been prepared. The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-17) was prepared by God as man's first home. As someone has said, "To Adam, Paradise was home. To the good among his descendants, home is paradise." The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) had a home prepared, but he left it. George Moore, in *The Brook Kerioth*, wrote, "A man travels the world over in search of what he needs, and returns home to find it." I remember in the military marching to the cadence song, "You had a good

home but you left."

Another home that has been prepared is spoken of by Jesus. He invites us to live with Him. "*In my Father's house are many mansions...*" (John 14:2). The greatest home one can imagine has been prepared for God's children. Paul speaks of being "*at home with the Lord*" in 2 Corinthians 5:1-9. The phrase "*at home*" comes

from *endemeo* in Greek, and it literally means "to be among one's people." Ecclesiastes 12:5 says that "*man goes to his everlasting home.*" Isn't it great to know there is a home prepared and waiting!

A final word. Jesus says that we must prepare ourselves for this home that has been prepared for us. In Matthew 7:24-27 He tells us to build our lives on the Rock that gives a sure foundation. He is that foundation. On what foundation are you building your house?

Tony Lall is the preacher for the church in Pittsburg, Kansas, U. S. A.



The Question

Betty Burton Choate

Do you ever, in reflection,
Ask the question of yourself:
What am I, without the trappings?
With the trimmings gone, what's left?

Do I stand secure in proppings,
Bolstered up with what I own,
Finding strength in my possessions,
Daring not to stand alone?

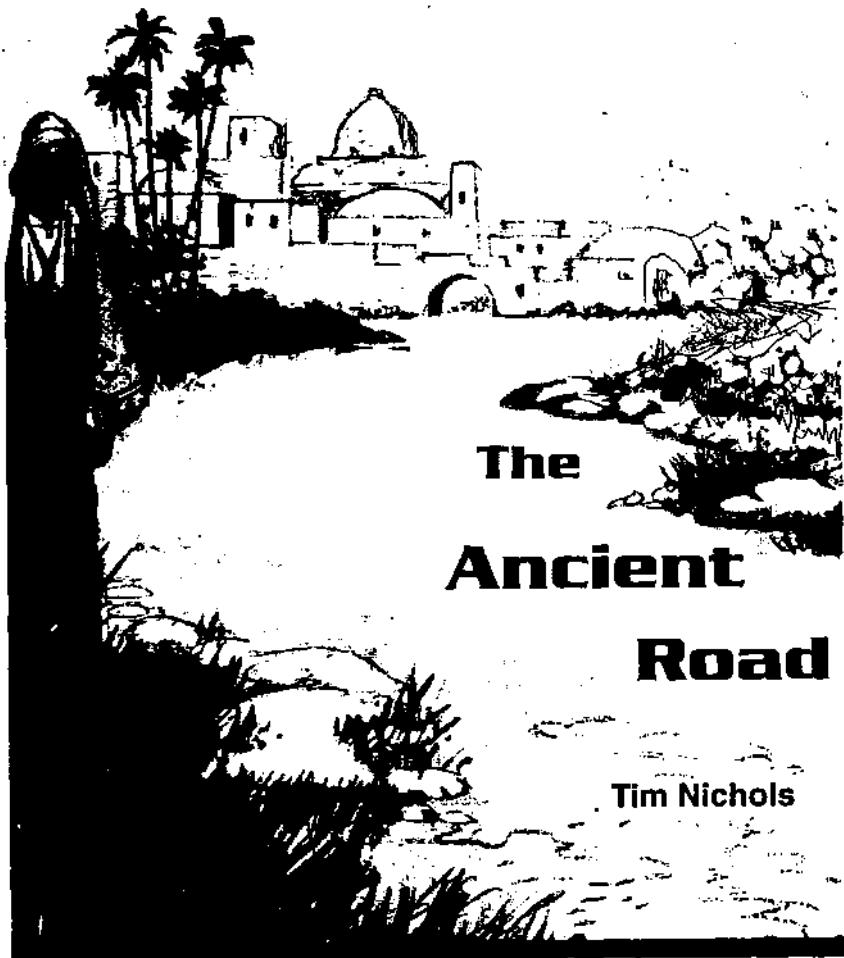
Do my clothes hide inner weakness?
Is my house a crutch to me?
Is the shine of gold and silver
All the sparkle others see?

If my clothes were rags and tatters,
If my house were but a shell,
If I had no proud possessions
Would I fare then quite so well?

If I stood alone, with nothing,
Having neither wealth nor debt,
Could I still by strength of merit
Gain the hearts of those I met?

Even greater is the question
(I must search my very soul)
If I stood bereft and barren,
Would I, myself, feel whole?





The Ancient Road

Tim Nichols

The ancient Romans built an impressive network of roads throughout their empire. Many of them have been in continuous use for centuries. Beneath the pavement of some of the modern highways of

Europe are the carefully laid stones of the Romans. It is not always easy to tell exactly where they are, because in many places they have been covered with asphalt, and the roads have been widened to accom-

THE CHURCH

moderate modern traffic, but tour guides are almost sure to remind tourists that they are there. It is a special pleasure to walk on the original stones that are still exposed, and to try to imagine the prominent historical figures who may have walked on them.

Jesus declared Himself to be *"the WAY, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6). Peter later wrote that it would be better *"not to have known the WAY of righteousness"* than to have known it and then turn from it (2 Peter 2:21). Aquila and Priscilla instructed the humble Apollos in *"the WAY of God more perfectly"* (Acts 18:26). Peter taught that false prophets would follow their own "pernicious ways," and that, because of their actions, *"the WAY of truth"* would be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:2). In these, and in many other cases, the word translated "way" is from a Greek word *hodos*, which means "road."

Jesus is the road that leads to heaven. The New Testament is our only road map. Although men have attempted to cover the original stones with centuries of "improvements," the original stones have not been lost. Since this road is constructed of truth and divine ideas that are revealed in God's Word, it does not deteriorate over time. It *"endureth for ever"* (1 Peter 1:25). It is *"strait and narrow,"* and it

leads *"unto life"* (Matthew 7:13-17). It is the road of peace (Luke 1:79, Romans 13:17), of love (1 Corinthians 12:1), of truth (2 Peter 2:2), and of salvation (Acts 16:17). It is sometimes persecuted (Acts 9:2), and it is grievous to those who forsake it (Proverbs 15:10). But it is the right road (2 Peter 2:15).

If you fail to walk on this road you will be on the road followed by most people. It is broad and wide (Matthew 7:13-17). God wants you to refrain from walking on this road (Psalms 1:1; 119:101), because He hates it (Psalms 119:104,128).

A few years ago we heard an older preaching brother exhort us to "get in the middle of the road!" He warned us to avoid the extremes of the liberal ditch on one side and the law-making ditch on the other. His point was valid, but it may need to be revised for our time. You see, they have widened the road. Trying to position yourself in the center of these extremes may result in your missing the ancient road. Instead of using the "ditches" as our reference points, why don't we just open the ancient road map and walk directly on the road laid by Christ and His apostles?

Let's not be distracted by those who seem to be to our far left or far right. But, let's continue to show them the map.

"THE FAITH"

Maxie B. Boren

Jude urged Christians to *"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). Obviously, he was not referring to the personal faith of individuals in giving such instruction, but that system of religion which Jesus brought to the world. "The faith" is equated with "the Way" in the New Testament. And since the Scriptures plainly teach there is only ONE way, then there is no other logical conclusion but that there is only ONE faith! As Jesus said, *"I am the way..."* (John 14:6), Paul declared that there is *"one faith"* (Ephesians 4:5).

... ONE LORD, ONE FAITH,
ONE BAPTISM; ONE GOD
AND FATHER OF ALL ...
EPH. 4:4,5

Therefore, people are in error when they think in terms of there being "many faiths." This fallacious concept is often manifested in conversations among people. Perhaps someone inquires of another, "What faith are you?" Actually, what they mean is, "Which church do you belong to?" Such terminology is employed because most people have been led to believe that there are many churches (and thus, many faiths), and that one is as good as

another, and that it doesn't matter which church a person belongs to.

The Bible teaches plainly that there is only *"one body"* and identifies that one body as being the church (Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 4:4). The fact that many so-called "churches" exist today does not alter the truth that Christ established only one. He said, *"I will build my church,*

and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). He purchased it with His own blood, giving His life for it (Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25). It is His church, and God gave Him to be the head of it (Ephesians 1:20-23).

When a person hears the Gospel of Christ, believes it, and obeys it (by repenting, confessing faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son, and being baptized), he enters into the body of Christ. He thus becomes a Christian, a member of the Lord's church. To be in the church is to be in the Way...it is to have embraced the faith...to be a child of God, and a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.

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



GOD ORGANIZED THE CHURCH

Gary C. Hampton

The Father made Christ to be the head of the church (Ephesians 1:20-23). Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). We must submit to that authority.

Our Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Membership is not voted on by men. Membership is open to all people throughout the world (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16). The New Testament does not give us an organization for the church universal, but it does for the local church. It appears that the apostles, under Christ, were over the church at Jerusalem and in Judea (Acts 6:1-4). Shortly thereafter elders are mentioned (Acts 11:27-30). Toward the end of their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas ordained elders "*in every church.*" Paul directed Titus to "*ordain elders in every city*" in Crete (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). He went on to give a list of qualifications a man should possess before being appointed to such an office (verses 6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

It is the job of the elders to oversee the flock they work with

(Acts 20:28). Peter reminds them that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). Also, the members should note that elders are to watch out for the safety of their souls "*as they that must give account,*" which would encourage careful consideration of their leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

Little is said about deacons, but we can piece together some important facts. Paul lists some qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The first seven men who may have held this office were those appointed at the direction of the apostles (Acts 6:1-8). Notice that they were assigned a specific task, and when it was carried out the Word of God increased and the church grew.

The New Testament also speaks of evangelists. Their duty is to preach the Word, not pastor the flock (2 Timothy 4:1-5). They should proclaim Christ and preach all of God's instruction (1 Corinthians 2:1-2; Acts 4:12; 20:25-27).

Gary C. Hampton is an evangelist from Mobile, Alabama, U. S. A.

TERMS BY WHICH THE CHURCH OF THE LORD IS DESIGNATED

Bill Nicks

The term most often used in the New Testament is simply "the church." It does not always refer to the church which Christ built. In Acts 19:32 it refers to an angry mob. In Acts 7:38 it refers to the Israelites in the wilderness.

"The church" means a group of people, never a building. In reference to the church, itself, it means those "*called out of darkness into light*" (1 Peter 2:9). There must be a "*translation out of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13f). There must also be an obedience to that "*form (pattern) of doctrine*" (Romans 6:17ff). Then, upon one's obedience to God, there must be an addition to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:38-47). There also must be a conviction that, since sins have been remitted, we must dedicate ourselves to serve and worship God, both in daily life and in the public worship assemblies of the church.

We cannot separate ourselves from the church, since Christ is its head (Colossians 1:18). What we choose to do or not do to the church, we choose to do or not do to Christ Himself (Matthew

25:40,45; Acts 9:1-5).

The church is also called "*My church*" by Christ (Matthew 16:18), and "*churches of Christ*" by Paul (Romans 16:16). These words designate ownership.

The church is referred to as the "*house, or family of God*" (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19; 3:15). This means God is our Father and we are His children, and we are brothers and sisters with brotherly love in the family (2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 3:26ff; Romans 12:9f; 2 Peter 1:5-7).

The church is also called "*the body of Christ*" (Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 1:10-23), emphasizing the headship of Christ, the subjection of members to Christ, and the functioning of members perfectly while heeding the commands of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). If one member is severed from the body, it cannot function properly.

It is vital that those who wear the name of Christ as part of His body honor Him as Lord.

Bill Nicks is a former missionary to Africa and is now serving on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies.



THE FIRST LOVE OF THE CHURCH



Don L. Norwood

Revelation 2:1-7 tells commendable things about the Ephesian church at the time the Lord sent this message to them: (1) They labored with patience in His cause. (2) They would not tolerate evil. (3) They tested those who claimed to be apostles. (4) They had not become weary in their labor for His name's sake. (5) They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (a group of people that was willing to compromise the truth and even uphold immorality). *Yet they had departed from their first love.*

What was the Lord referring to in saying that they had left their first love? One can be doctrinally correct and very zealous, but if the motive is not genuine love for God and mankind, it will profit the person nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 John 4:12-13; 5:1-2). The Ephesians were zealous for the Lord and His work, but they had lost that genuine tenderness and concern for the lost and for the struggling believer.

We can be doctrinally correct and despise the unbeliever or the erring brother. This we must not

do if we are to remain in a right relationship with our Lord. You will recall that in the first chapter of Revelation the Lord was seen by John, holding seven stars in His right hand, being in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Revelation 1:12-13,20). The stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches and the candlesticks are the seven churches. Ephesus was one of these churches. If they did not repent and return to their first love the Lord would remove the candlestick (Revelation 2:5). This means that they would be eternally lost.

Paul taught that a Christian *"...must not strive (be quarrelsome), but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will"* (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

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

WHO ARE GOD'S LEADERS?

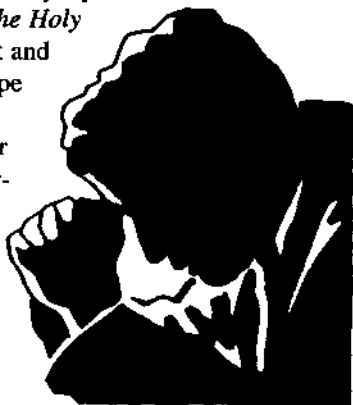
Dan R. Owen

God's leaders are obvious in the community of faith. If their hearts are right with God, the elders and preachers are some of God's important leaders, but other men and women of God who serve in God's ministries are also God's leaders. To accomplish the mission of Christ, we need many of these people. Consider the biblical characteristics of such leaders.

God's leaders are people who have *"set themselves to minister to the saints."* The Stephanus family had determined to serve others in doing the will of Christ. Their attitude of love and service and kindness was obvious to others. Paul told the rest of the church, *"... submit to such, and to everyone who works with us and labors"* (1 Corinthians 16:16). God's leaders are what the Bible calls "spiritual" people. These are the people whose perspective on life is shaped by the revealed Word of God. They are the kind of people who seek to restore the erring and who help to bear the burdens of others (Galatians 6:1-3). They are not people whose conduct is characterized by envy and strife (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

God's leaders are encouragers who promote unity. They are not self-serving pseudo leaders like Korah or Diotrophes, or those who led the factions in Corinth. God's leaders are people like Barnabas, who was called a "Son of Encouragement" by the apostles. Barnabas encouraged the Jerusalem church to accept Saul of Tarsus. He built the church at Antioch by his encouragement and teaching, because the people knew him as *"a good man who was full of the Holy Spirit and faith."* He believed in John Mark and saw his potential. God's leaders are this type of person.

We appeal to you to be leaders for God, and to be subject to the kind of leadership that has been described here. God's leaders are spiritual encouragers who promote unity and have set themselves to minister among the saints. You can be a leader for God.



Dan R. Owen works with the Broadway congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, U. S. A.

The Government of God's Church

Rod Rutherford

The churches of Christ follow the New Testament pattern for the government of the church.

Each congregation is led by men called elders, bishops, shepherds, or pastors. These names refer to one office. It is God's will that elders be appointed in each congregation as soon as there are men who meet the God-given qualifications (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). These elders are leaders only in the congregations where they are appointed (1 Peter 5:2). We never read in the Bible of a congregation having only one elder. Two or more are always required (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). With God's Word as their guide, elders oversee the congregation (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17).

Deacons are servants who work under the elders (Philippians 1:1). They must also meet the God-given qualifications before they can serve (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Evangelists are preachers of the Gospel. They are not officers in the church as are elders. They are ministers (servants) who teach and preach the Word of God. They may work with a congregation

under its elders or may be sent out to preach the Gospel in new fields (2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 21:8; 8:5-40).

Since the churches of Christ follow the New Testament pattern of church government, they have no head of the church on this earth. Jesus Christ is the ONLY head of the church of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus has all authority in the church (Matthew 28:18). In God's plan, given in the New Testament, there is NO place for a pope, president, chairman, moderator, or any man on earth to be the head of the church. This position belongs to Jesus Christ alone!

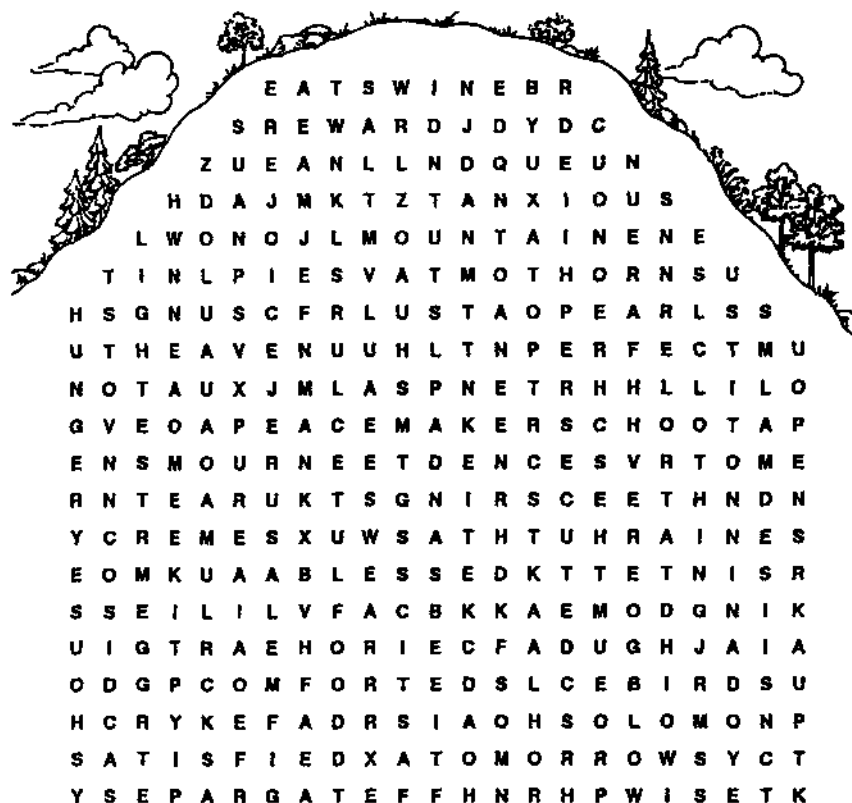
Any change in God's plan of government for His church is a sin (2 John 9-11; Revelation 22:18,19). No man has the authority to revise the laws God Himself has made. Let us be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, obeying His plan for His church in every way. Only by doing this can we receive the blessing of God.

Rod Rutherford works with *Truth For The World* in Memphis, Tennessee.

The Book of Matthew for adults

Sermon on the Mount

-Matthew 5:1-7:29



Circle these words from the book of Matthew. They may run sideways, up, down, backwards, or diagonally in any direction.

ALMS
ANXIOUS
ASK
BIRDS
BLESSED
CLOTHING
COMFORTED
EAT
EYE
FAST
FATHER

FIG
FIND
FLOOD
FOOD
FOOL
GATE
GRAPES
HEART
HEAVEN
HOUSE
HUNGER
JERUSALEM

KINGDOM
LIGHT
LILIES
LOVE
MASTER
MEEK
MERCY
MOUNTAIN
MOURN
NEIGHBOR
OPEN

PEACEMAKERS
PEARLS
PERFECT
PERSECUTED
POOR
PRAY
PURE
RAIN
REJOICE
REWARD
ROCK
SALT

SAND
SATISFIED
SOLOMON
SUN
SWEAR
SWINE
TEMPTATION
THORNS
TOMORROW
TREASURE
WISE

SEE INSIDE OF BACK COVER FOR ANSWERS.

AN ABBREVIATED STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT "HEART" Hollis Miller

When the writers of the New Testament spoke of the inner man, they frequently employed the word "heart." Their readers understood that the word incorporated their affections, passions, emotions, desires, and feelings — their inner man.

When Christ taught that such sins as evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, and false witness came out of the heart, He was affirming that the sins have their origin in the inner recesses of one's being (Matthew 15:19). That being true, can anyone wonder why, in the teaching of the New Testament, so much emphasis is placed on the heart?

On the birthday of the church (Pentecost), many Jews who had opposed Jesus were pricked, or cut, in their hearts when they became convinced by the preaching of the apostles that they had crucified their own Messiah (Acts 2:37). The very one for whom their hearts yearned had come to them, and they had rejected Him (John 1:11).

Paul recognized the crucial role the heart plays in one's faith, and went so far as to affirm that with it men believe (Romans 10:9-10). Although the Gospel is received and understood by the mind, or intellect, if it never penetrates the heart it fails to accomplish its mission.

It is on the heart that God writes His law, or the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:8-12; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

It is possible for one to know the Word of God with the mind, yet never involve the heart. In such cases, the inner man has been left unaffected by the love and grace of the Father. The Lord and His apostles knew that the assent of the mind without the corresponding agreement of the heart was inadequate to lead one into serving God. Therefore, Jesus gave full approval to the lawyer's statement that one should love God with all the heart, as well as with all the soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:25-28).

Hollis Miller is an evangelist in Elkton, Kentucky, U. S. A.

*For as he thinks in
his heart, so is he.
(Proverbs 23:7)*

IF DIRT COULD TALK

Owen Cosgrove



The Lord's "Parable of the Sower" (Matthew 13:1ff, Mark 4:1ff, Luke 8:1ff) has also been called the "Parable of the Soils." These soils represent four types of human hearts.

THE WAYSIDE HEART

In its honest moments, this heart reveals an astonishing indifference to God and His will. Satan snatches the seed of the Gospel away through pride, doubt, and indifference. The wayside heart talks about everything but God and His Word. Spiritually speaking, there is no room for God in this heart, and therefore, there will be no place in heaven for it.

THE SHALLOW GROUND HEART

In this heart the Word springs up quickly, but the least bit of persecution or difficulty wilts it. It believes for awhile, and then falls away (Luke 8:13). There is no depth of spirituality in this heart. This heart is fickle and shallow, capricious, and unstable. The Word in this heart lacks substance and roots, and so it withers and fades away.

THE BURDENED GROUND HEART

This heart will talk to you about all of its appointments, oblig-

ations, responsibilities, and duties. This heart is preeminently concerned with cares and riches and the pleasures of this life. Therefore, it brings no fruit to perfection (Luke 8:14). This heart says, "Please get somebody else. I am too busy. I do not have time."

THE GOOD AND HONEST GROUND HEART

This heart speaks the most beautiful lesson in the world: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). What a message! What a declaration! May our hearts ever speak this dedicated theme and bring fruits with patience (Luke 8:15).

Our hearts do talk. Our message of life is manifest before God and man. May our hearts be the soil out of which grows great spiritual fruit to God's glory. "*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer*" (Psalms 19:14).

Owen Cosgrove preaches Christ in Waxahachie, Texas, U. S. A.

IF "CHRISTIANS" WERE CHRISTIANS

W. Douglass Harris

Our premise is to project what some conditions would be in Christendom if all those who profess to be "Christians" were Christians in the biblical sense.

I. There would be no racial prejudice. Jesus and all His apostles were Jews. He said that salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22), meaning that it was through that nation of old that the divine scheme of human redemption was developed and unfolded, which included the coming of Christ as the promised Redeemer.

Jesus understood the prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans, because the Samaritans were a mongrel race, but He ignored it and requested a drink of water from a Samaritan woman at Sychar. He converted the woman and accepted the invitation of the Samaritans to abide with them. What a bold action on the part of our Lord to destroy the wall of prejudice that existed between the ancient Jews and Samaritans!

As far as God is concerned, there has been no racial distinction since Christ died (Galatians 3:26-29).

II. There would be no war among Christians. Christians do not settle differences by fighting them out by carnal warfare. Christ, who is the commander-in-chief of Christians, never led an army or fought a battle in carnal warfare.

When all professed "Christians" crown Christ king in their lives, wars among them will cease.

III. The world would be turned upside down morally and spiritually. This is what early Christians did by their teaching and practice (Acts 17:6). We need a burning zeal for Christ and His cause like they had. Regretfully, the love and zeal of many professing Christians have grown cold.

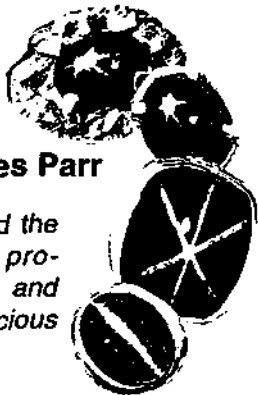
If "Christians" were Christians in the scriptural sense, there would be a return to first-century Christianity, with the Bible as the sole guide in religious matters, and the church of the New Testament as the only religious body. There would be a return to the true spirit of Christ, with His love for mankind and His desire to save the lost. Christians would have *purpose*.

W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger*, and lives in Decatur, Alabama, U. S. A.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN RUBIES

Frances Parr

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding, for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies" (Proverbs 3:13,14a).



Is there anyone who is not attracted by a beautiful ruby, especially when it is mounted in a striking gold or silver setting? Red, the vibrant color of rubies, is the warmest of colors and the chosen favorite of many. It affects emotions, stimulates the palate, and inspires action on the part of the observer. This jewel is formed in highly decomposed, igneous rock, and, depending on its size, a true ruby is more rare and valued more highly than a diamond. In addition to being lovely to look at, a ruby is tough. It has a hardness of nine, second only to a diamond.

Our God knew His humans would love beautiful jewels, gold and silver, and would put great value on them. Rubies, pearls, coral, along with gold and silver, are mentioned in the Bible. They decorated the first tabernacle, were used as gifts, presented to God for atonement for sins, and compared

with desirable personality qualities. John, in his description of heaven, cited every precious stone known to man as being a part of the splendor of the eternal home of ones who obey God.

Solomon, the son of David, was God's choice for king of Israel. God promised him anything he asked. With great humility, Solomon asked only for understanding to rule the people well. God was so pleased with his response that He not only gave Solomon great wisdom, but also honor and riches such as the world had never seen. Nevertheless, this king, demonstrating his wisdom, states that the possession of wisdom and knowledge is far more precious than rubies or any jewel man can own.

In his book of Proverbs, Solomon describes the attributes of a virtuous wife. The literal translation of virtuous is "valor and all forms of excellence." Her worth is

far above rubies. Considering his tremendous wealth and that he had hundreds of wives and concubines, he was in a position to know!

Within each ruby is an axis, or center line, which acts as a prism when light is introduced. The color and richness of the gem depend upon which way the light strikes the axis, whether transverse or parallel to the axis. Just as a ruby absorbs and reflects light according to the direction from which it comes, con-

sider this same principle working within a Christian.

Jesus said of Himself, *"I am the light of the world."* A person makes the decision as to how much or little his life reflects the light of the Savior. An open heart, letting in a full measure of light and reflecting it back for others to see, can become a beautiful jewel for Christ.

It is unknown whether a ruby is formed molecule by molecule around an axis or created instantly during the intense heat of a volcanic eruption. The name "ruby" actually means "small coal." When the first ruby was discovered, glowing red in the midst of cooled lava, the finder might have thought he'd uncovered a live coal. Sometimes during the formation of

a ruby, minute cavities are trapped within. These are like tiny needles piercing the heart of the gem. When light touches these particles the reflection is in the form of a six-pointed star. These stones are more valued because of their flaws.

Again, comparing a Christian with certain rubies, all have imperfections within. The light of Christ can take all our flaws, cleansing them and shining through, making us more wise and

understanding because we have known suffering. Paul states

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people."

in 2 Corinthians 4:6,7, *"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."*

God told the Israelites, *"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people."* Surely the people of His church can be just as special.

Frances Parr is a writer for several Christian magazines. She lives in Eldon, MO, U. S. A.

BEARING FALSE WITNESS

John Gipson

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). These words come from the Ten Commandments, and are familiar to all. Defamation of character is forbidden.

To avoid such tragedies God commanded, *"A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained"* (Deuteronomy 19:15).

Even with this safeguard, it is possible for witnesses to bind themselves together in lying and destroy the innocent. Such was the case with Naboth and Jesus Christ. On the testimony of suborned witnesses, both were put to death.

We can only guess at the misery, hurt, loss of reputation, and death which has been brought about

by false witnesses. Under the law of Moses those guilty of such deceit knew that it was going to be *"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."* The people were enjoined, *"You shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you."* Why? So that *"the rest shall hear, and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you"* (Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

In the words of Burton Coffman, "The lies men speak may go undetected. Vicious slander may achieve its goal. But the wrath of God is revealed against such wickedness. The base soul that stoops to murder the reputation of a human brother with a cunning, deceitful tongue shall not at last escape. God will punish the guilty."

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

BUT THE COWARDLY, UNBELIEVING, ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS, SEXUALLY IMMORAL, SORCERERS, IDOLATERS, AND ALL LIARS SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH. (REV. 21:8)

EXAMINE YOURSELF

Bill McFarland

As the Lord was eating the Passover with the twelve, He announced to them that one of them would betray Him. Upon hearing this, the twelve were deeply grieved, and each one began to ask, "*Lord, is it I?*" (Matthew 26:22). They were examining themselves.

The Scriptures make it clear that all of us have a continuing need to be doing the same thing. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, each person is to examine himself (1 Corinthians 11:28). When we try to help others we are to be watching ourselves, lest we also be tempted, and each one should examine his own work (Galatians 6:1,4). The apostle wrote, "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves*" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

It is not hard to see the practical wisdom of these instructions. For one thing, a person cannot begin to draw near to God unless he can examine himself. One who can only excuse himself and blame somebody else will never see his own need for repentance. Remember that those on the Day of Pentecost who asked, "*What shall*

we do?" were first "*pricked in their heart.*"

Next, examining oneself is the first step toward improving any situation. It won't do much good to spend all your time evaluating the other person, because you can't do what he must do. You can, however, look at yourself and work on you.

Finally, when we examine ourselves we take the first step toward being able to help others. A man who removes the beam out of his own eye can then see clearly to take the speck out of his brother's eye (Matthew 7:5). One who looks to himself can meet his obligation to restore a brother who is overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1). We never have the right to simply ignore trespasses, either in ourselves or others.

Paul said, "*So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Romans 14:12). It behooves us to be examining ourselves now, rather than trying to fix the blame for our words and deeds upon somebody else.

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

Cheer Up!

Dalton Key

Christian friend, have you forgotten how to smile? Has a sour, disgruntled disposition etched a perpetual frown upon your face? Do you scowl at strangers and speak harshly to friends and family? If this describes you, please read on. If not, go take a look at yourself in the mirror, and then judge for yourself.

If anyone on this earth has reason to be happy, it would have to be the child of God, the Christian. The Christian has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. He has been converted, transformed into a new creation. He looks to God as Father, to Christ as Savior, and enjoys *"all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"* (Ephesians 1:3). The Christian has a Shepherd to lead him, a Light to guide him, a brotherhood of fellow saints to encourage him, and a home in heaven awaiting him. The Christian has received from Christ *"life"* and has that life *"more abundantly"* (John 10:10). It is no wonder that inspired writers encourage Christ's disciples to *"rejoice evermore,"*

and to *"rejoice in the Lord always"* (1 Thessalonians 5:16; Philippians 4:4).

With so much to rejoice about, why are we not happier?

Could it be that we spend too much of our time looking inward, to self, when our attention should be directed upward, to God,

Could it be that we spend too much of our time looking inward, to self...?

and outward, to our fellowman? As we focus upon self, we lose perspective. We notice what we lack that others have. We come to view ourselves as overlooked, mistreated, and wronged by an unfair world.

The solution? Look up. Heaven has blessed us with blessings beyond measure. Be thankful for what you have. Rejoice in the goodness of God. And look out. Look out to the needs of others. Follow the example of Jesus who said, *"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (John 13:4-17; Matthew 20:28).

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

BEFORE AND AFTER

Bob Plunket

One of the most persuasive arguments for a product is the before and after effect. You see this a lot on television and in the newspaper. Sometimes they show a man without hair, then how he looks after he has his new hairpiece. Many times there is a noticeable difference. (Sometimes he looks worse than he did without hair.)



What kind of evidence are we to the power of the Word of God? Paul talked about his before and after with Jesus: "... though I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief" (1 Timothy 1:12-13). Paul's change was so dramatic that many people could not believe it. This caused people to ask questions and to investigate. It gave Paul an opportunity to tell men what changed his life. David could say, "*Before I was afflicted I went astray but now have I kept thy word.*" David is appealing to his before and after. Mark tells of the demoniac who lived in the tombs. Men had to bind him with fetters and chains, but he would break them into pieces. He was riddled with self-inflicted cuts from the stones, but after he had been with Jesus he was clothed in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus (Mark 5:1ff).

God has a picture of each of us before and after. Is he pleased with your progress? Are you a good recommendation for Christ? Peter talked about men and women who have become worse than they were when they started, and what a terrible fate. He said, "*It is like the dog turning to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed wallowing in the mire*" (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Remember, this is the ultimate and final evidence in a Christian's life — not how much Bible you know, nor how many church services you attend, nor how many prayers you pray, but rather, **are you like Jesus?** It was said of the early church, "*They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13).

Bob Plunket preaches for the Lord's church in Tuscumbia, Alabama, U. S. A.

THE BLESSING OF AFFLICTION

Edwin White

Augustine once commented that "God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering." Life is no smooth road for any of us. Job says, "*Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble*" (Job 14:1). Man is always in the forge or on the anvil. Every life is shaped by its trials and afflictions.

I have noticed that it is affliction that proves one weak and another strong. A house built upon the sand is just as good in fair weather as the one built upon a rock. It is when the rain comes and the wind blows that the difference is established. If you would know whether a staff is strong or rotten, you must observe it when it is leaned on and the weight is borne upon it. A cobweb is as strong as a cable as long as there is no strain upon it.

The truly virtuous person is like good metal — the more he is fired the more he is refined. God

polishes the jewels He especially loves, and intends to make most resplendent with many sharp-cutting instruments and rough files. The diamond that has been cut most is the one that sparkles most. The brightest crowns worn in heaven will be the ones that were tried, smelted, and polished in the furnaces of tribulation.

Foremost among the Christian's blessings is that his heart has been caused to bleed. God allows tribulation to visit His children, but He tells its purpose — that "*tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*" (Romans 5:4). For Jesus, the mount of transfiguration was on the way to the cross. For each of us, the cross is on the way to the mount of transfiguration. The cross-bearer on earth will be the crown-wearer in heaven.

Edwin White is a gospel preacher in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A.



Negative Gifts

Thank you, Father, for tears, for hurts, for knots in hearts and lumps in throats. Thank you for concerns that keep us awake all night and demand to be given voice again and again through prayer. Thank you for times of longing, of unrest, even of despair. . . .

If it were not for these gifts that seem so negative, how could we grow?

BBC

USING WHAT WE HAVE

C. W. Bradley

All of us know people who have an exalted concept of their own importance. They greatly overestimate their abilities. They become arrogant and puffed up. We actually feel sorry for them and wish that we could in some way help them become a little more humble. The Bible warns that a man ought "*not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think*" (Romans 12:3).

But, there is perhaps even a greater danger for some to think less of themselves than they should and to **underestimate** their abilities. It is rather difficult for most of us to truly believe that God has given us the ability to do what He wants us to do.

It is always easy for most of us to overlook the abundance of opportunities which come to us every day while we keep waiting for the opportunity to do the spectacular, the extraordinary. Why should we expect God to open up for us great opportunities until and unless we begin doing something about the many opportunities already around us? Jesus said, "He

that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much" (Luke 16:10).

My own observation has led me to believe that it is not always those with the greatest natural ability who make the greatest success in ordinary life or in service to God. Generally, success is determined, not so much by how much we have, but rather, by how well we use what we have.

There is no virtue in possessing great ability and intellect. There is no disgrace in possessing limited ability and intellect. We are going to be judged by the way we use what we do have.

May each of us learn to use what we have in helping build up the Lord's church. Let's not waste time feeling sorrow for ourselves because of what we don't have. May each of us learn to let our own light shine "... you in your small corner and I in mine."

C. W. Bradley preaches for the church in Olive Branch, Mississippi, U. S. A.

... There's a road out there, running into life, and I must walk upon it BBC

"REJOICE WITH THEM THAT DO REJOICE"

G. F. Raines

The apostle Paul says,
*"Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
and weep with them that weep"*
(Romans 12:15).

*"That there should be no
schism in the body; but that the
members should have the same care
one for another. And whether one
member suffer, all the members suf-
fer with it; or one member be hon-
oured, all the members rejoice with
it. Now ye are the body of Christ,
and members in particular"* (1
Corinthians 12:25-27).

It is, of course, impossible
for an envious person to rejoice
with those who rejoice. Therefore,
no envious person is a faithful citi-
zen of the kingdom of heaven!

The great American states-
man Benjamin Franklin said that
"whoever feels pain in hearing a
good character of his neighbor, will
feel a pleasure in the reverse" and
that base persons "are happy if oth-
ers can be depressed to a level with
themselves."

Envy frequently destroys
those who possess it instead of
those whom it endeavors to ruin.

"As a moth gnaws a gar-
ment, so doth envy consume a man"
(Chrysostom).

*"The envious man grows
lean at the flesh: but envy the rot-
tenness of the bones"* (Proverbs
14:30).

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

But Once

Malcolm James McLeod

I shall pass through
this world but once. Any
good, therefore, that I can do
or any kindness that I can
show to any human being, let
me do it now. Let me not
defer or neglect it, for I shall
not pass this way again.

Keep your heart free
from hate, your mind from
worry. Live simply, expect lit-
tle, give much, sing often,
pray always. Fill your life with
love. Scatter sunshine.
Forget self. Think of others.
Do as you would be done by.
— These are the tried links in
contentment's golden chain.

HOLDING UP ONE ANOTHER'S HAND

Joe Malone

"And . . . when Moses held up his hand . . . Israel prevailed . . . But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun" (Exodus 17:11,12).

The noble assistance given to Moses by Aaron and Hur holding up his hands in that battle ought to be an inspiration to all of us in the army of the Lord. Don't we all receive added strength when we unselfishly commend each other's labor of love, and thereby hold up one another's hands?

Our common interest in the greatest work in this world, the work of the church of Christ, surely prompts all of us to lay aside self-interest, petty jealousy, complaining that is born of resentment, and backbiting, and with charity toward all and envy toward none, hold up each other's hand in the triumphant battle which is being waged to the glory of almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ. *"Bear ye one another's*

burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

How many weary soldiers of the army of the Lord, whose hands and hearts were heavy, have been sustained in the good fight of faith and have gone on to win an ultimate and glorious victory because fellow soldiers of the faith have unselfishly held up their hands in their humble and noble endeavor!

On the other hand, how many tired soldiers of the army of truth and righteousness, with heavy hands and hearts, in life's greatest battle have fallen in the valley of dark despair because their own comrades in the conflict have been guilty of "man's inhumanity to man!"

Be an Aaron! Be a Hur. Help your brother and your sister in the faith! Hold up each other's hand.

"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25).

Joe Malone has preached the Gospel for more than fifty years. He now lives in Dallas, Texas, U. S. A.

I think that most Bible students would agree that Paul was one of the strongest Christians who ever lived. When he learned the truth about Jesus as the Son of God, he "obeyed from the heart." He never looked back to his old way of life. He became a new creature in Christ. He gave up everything for the sake of Jesus.



EVERYONE NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT

Harvey Porter

We might think it strange that one so strong as he would ever get discouraged, but we know he did. All of us do at times. Even Jesus was discouraged on occasions by the hardness of heart and unfaithfulness of some of His disciples. And that it still true today. He is hurt by our unfaithfulness, too.

In the closing verses of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke included these touching words, *"The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged"* (Acts 28:15).

It had been a long and unbelievably hard journey. Paul left

Caesarea in late October, and it was now early spring when he landed on Roman soil. He had suffered two weeks in a devastating storm at sea, had been shipwrecked on the shore of Malta, and finally, after winter was over, they went on their way to Rome.

He had never been to Rome, the largest city in the world. He had always wanted to go there and meet with the church there. He had planned to do so three years before all these happenings. He was a prisoner of the Roman government because his own countrymen had falsely accused him. He did not know if any of the Christians even knew that he was on his way for imprisonment and trial.

The Christians at Rome had heard that Paul was on his way to Rome. In fact, some of them traveled forty-two miles (sixty-seven kilometers) to the Forum of Appius and thirty-three miles (fifty-three kilometers) to Three Taverns. This was an unexpected surprise for Paul. No wonder, *"At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged."* He was given new courage by their presence. He thanked God for them. They had the same faith, the same love for the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. There is always strength when we are with those of the *"like precious faith."* In fact, Luke used this same word *"good courage"* in his account of Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem. He wrote of the *"great uproar"* when Paul was tried before the Sanhedrin. *"The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks"* (Acts 23:10). And then verse eleven tells us, *"The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.'"*

The Lord is our greatest source of encouragement and

strength. Paul later wrote to the Philippian Christians, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). It is true for all Christians. Jesus is always there; He knows when and how and how much help we need. The strength He gives is divine. The earth cannot provide this kind of strength. It is not found in pills, alcohol, human philosophies, sex, or physical fulfillment. This kind of heavenly encouragement is for the soul, the mind, the heart. It brings lasting substance to our lives. The Greek word literally means to *"be confident, to be courageous."* Life was meant to be lived that way.

The Christian is most encouraged by the Lord and fellow-Christians. The world does not have much to offer in this area. All it has to say is only temporal, and the soul needs more than that.

Look for encouragement from the Lord and His people.

Harvey Porter preaches for the Lord's church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



TIME IS

*Too slow for those who wait,
Too swift for those who fear,
Too long for those who grieve,
Too short for those who rejoice,
But for those who love the Lord,
Time is Eternity.*

TAKING A STAND

Tom Kelton

God calls us to declare publicly which side we are on.

Beginning with our first parents (Adam and Eve), the alternatives are clearly spelled out: obedience or disobedience; life or death; loyalty or disloyalty. Take your choice. But you must choose.

"And the Lord God commanded man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (God to Adam and Eve, Genesis 2:16-17).

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him" (Moses to the people of Israel, Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me

and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua to the people of Israel, Joshua 24:15).

"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (Elijah at Mt. Carmel, 1 Kings 18:21).

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Jesus, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:24).

"No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Jesus, to a would-be follower, Luke 9:62).

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (the Holy Spirit to the churches, Revelation 3:16).

From Genesis to Revelation the challenge is the same: Choose your side! Be committed! Declare yourself! Take a stand!

Reasons to Stand

There are some compelling reasons for taking a stand. I'd like to suggest three.

(1) **Integrity** compels us to declare ourselves. Jesus was right. No one can be loyal to two masters at the same time.

(2) **Obedience** compels us to declare ourselves. One is obedient from the heart to the doctrine of Christ and is made free from sin when one is baptized. We pledge ourselves to stand with Christ all the rest of our days. To do this we must contend for the faith that once and for all has been delivered to the saints.

(3) **Love** compels us to declare ourselves. *"For the love of Christ controls us"* (2 Corinthians 5:14). We must give ourselves wholly to a defense of the Gospel. Although one can give without loving, one cannot love without giving. God loved us so much that He gave. When we truly love Him in return, we also will give: of our lives, our commitment, our ambitions, our money, our time, our talents, our all.

When we do that, we, the world, and God will know whose side we are really on.

Tom Kelton is a writer and preacher living at Pharr, Texas, U. S. A.



CONFIDENCE FOUND IN PAUL'S WRITINGS

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

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God . . ." (Romans 1:16).

"I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord . . ." (1 Timothy 1:12).

" . . . I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:16).

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

" . . . I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1).

" . . . I am ready to preach the gospel to you . . ." (Romans 1:15).

" . . . I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6).

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).



JESUS DID NOT QUIT

Raymond C. Kelcy

Jesus did not quit meeting with His disciples because Judas was a thief, nor because Peter was fickle at times. He did not quit preaching and living right because some of His brethren were unforgiving and unkind. He did not quit His post of leadership because He had in His presence the adulterous woman, a gang of Pharisees, or narrow-minded demon-worshippers. Jesus did not quit.

Have you been tempted to quit? Have you quit? What was the reason for it? Any reason you might name, Jesus could have given the same. He had every reason to be discouraged. His own disciples were so slow to learn. His enemies were bent on His destruction. But He did not quit. He said,

"Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).

And when the end of

His earthly life was in sight, Jesus said to His Father, *"I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"* (John 17:4).

He did not quit. He finished His task.

When you come to the end of life, will you be able to say, "I have finished the work God has given me to do"? Or, will you be compelled to say, "I started, but quit"? Will you stand before the judgment bar of God and admit that you were a quitter?

Eternal life is promised to those who endure to the end (Matthew 10:22). There will be no consolation on the judgment day to point back to your baptism, unless you can also point back to a life of faithful endurance.

Before his death, Raymond C. Kelcy was a professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

David Deffenbaugh

"You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

It would be a challenge to find a religion on the face of the earth that did not have its priests, or at least something very similar. These individuals serve as the mediators between the deity and the people. They administer that religion. In this sense, Christianity has no priests. That is, there is no special group of people through whom the Christian must go to reach God. That is because each Christian is able to *"draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16). But, it is this very fact that leads Peter to make the statement he does: **all Christians are priests.** It is this fact that every Christian needs to understand and appreciate.

As a priest, the Christian is afforded great privilege. Just as Aaron and his sons were initially

separated from the people for the purpose of services to God (Exodus 28:1ff), so is the Christian. Peter wrote to Christians experiencing rejection and persecution from the world (1 Peter 4:4,12-16). He wanted them to know that no matter how the world treated them, as Christians, as priests, they were in an honored and privileged position before God.

With every privilege comes responsibility in the exercise of that privilege. Aaron and his sons were *"ordained"* (Exodus 28:41) as priests. Literally this meant *"to fill the hands."* At least a part of the significance of this phrase was that they were given work to do. Their hands were filled with responsibility. So also the Christian priest. Peter speaks of offering *"spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* This is no small responsibility. We find the spiritual sacrifices of the Christian spoken of elsewhere in the New Testament. *"Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to*

God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased" Hebrews 13:15-16). "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1). In worship, in service, in all the duties of Christian living, as priests, Christians offer sacrifices to God.

It is of no small significance that these sacrifices must be offered through Christ. This is consistent with what Jesus claimed and what Paul taught (John 14:6; Colossians 3:17). Only sacrifices offered through Christ are acceptable. However, matters such as faith (Hebrews 11:6), spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), accordance with God's will (Matthew 7:21), and so forth, must be given consideration. You see, it is a tremendous responsibility to offer sacrifices to God, a responsibility not to be taken lightly.

Priesthood carries great privilege, as well as responsibility. Since every Christian is a priest, Christianity carries great privilege and responsibility. Christians must never minimize the importance of their position before Almighty God.

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

You and Preaching!

There isn't a word that a preacher can say,
No matter how lovely or true,
Nor is there a prayer that his eager lips pray
That can preach a sermon as you.

You vowed to serve Christ, and men know that you did,
They're watching the things that you do.
There isn't one action of yours that is hid,
Men are watching and studying you.

You say you're no preacher?
Yes, but: you preach a powerful sermon each day.
The acts of your life are the things that you teach,
It isn't the things that you say.

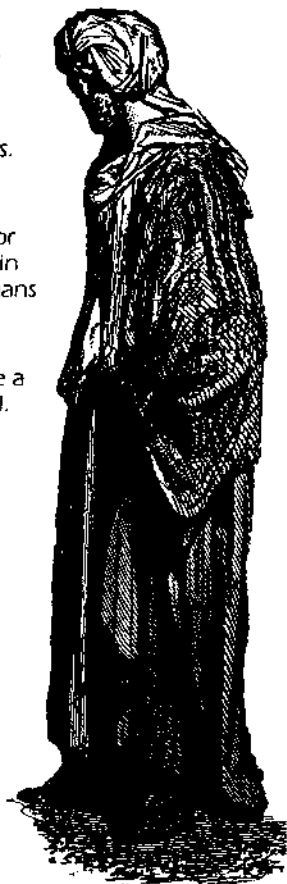
So Christians, remember you bear His name.
Your lives are for others to view.
You are living examples, men praise you or blame,
And measure all Christians by you.

— Anon

Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word. I am a good example to follow as a Christian.

1. **100** I lived during the first century A.D.
2. **90** I was a Jew, working in the city of Corinth. (Acts 18:1,2)
3. **80** My occupation: Tentmaker. (Acts 18:3)
4. **70** My wife's name was Priscilla.
5. **60** We were banished from Rome, along with other Jews, by order of Claudius.
6. **50** We became workers with the apostle Paul, as fellow-Christians. (Acts 18:1-3)
7. **40** When we returned to Rome, the church of our Lord assembled for worship in our house, as it had in Ephesus and other places. (Romans 16:3-5; 2 Timothy 4:19)
8. **30** In Ephesus we taught Apollos the truth more fully, and he became a powerful preacher of the gospel. (Acts 18:26)
9. **20** When Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Corinth, I sent greetings to those Christians, along with my wife, Priscilla. (1 Corinthians 16:19)
10. **10** Paul said that we were such devoted Christians and helpers that we would have laid down our lives for him. (Romans 16:4)



My Score

See answer on inside back cover.



THE WORTH OF A WOMAN...

Within Herself

Betty Burton Choate

"Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. . . . So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him." (Genesis 2:19,20)

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" (v.18)

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'" (V. 21- 23)

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." (Genesis 3:20)

Can we mentally turn back the centuries and imagine that first human couple? What was their relationship? Was the woman merely a servant to Adam, designed to fill his needs? In some cultures today that is the woman's role in life. But is this what God intended?

There is no record that in any other area of creation God took a part of one living being to form the basis of another. In this, Eve was unique. Concerning the creation of humanity itself, God had said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to our likeness. . . ." (Genesis 1:26) So Adam was made of the dust of the earth, but in the likeness of God, as God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils in order that he might become a living soul.

But woman was formed from a rib taken from the side of man. In this she was unique in all of creation: formed in the image of God as a living soul, yet also one flesh with Adam.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

What was Eve's role? God pronounced her "comparable to man". She was the completion of Adam. Just as, physically, God placed part of the reproductive system in man and the other part in woman, even so, in every other way man and woman complete each other. The woman's gentleness and home-making qualities blend with man's strength and his drive to provide for the needs of his family. Man reaches out to form a working bond with the community; a woman at her best is in the home, forming strong family bonds from which will develop generations of emotionally stable families. Spiritually, the man leads the way in worship to God, while the woman in the home teaches the children the concepts of godly living, day by day.

Another word is used in the Bible to describe the role of woman: she is a helper. As a person *capable* of completing man, God intended that Eve form a *willing* partnership with Adam, *helping* him in whatever ways were possible. If

women today cultivated this attitude toward their husbands, many common family problems would not arise. Our homes would be the places of peace and support God planned them to be.

At the same time, though, Eve realized that she was an independent soul with a direct relationship to God. When Cain was born, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." (Genesis 4:1) The wording of her statement is a pattern for women of all time. She acknowledged that God Himself had given the gift — in this case, a son — and that she, herself, was the recipient. Between the Giver and the receiver was an open avenue of recognition. Eve realized her relationship and worth to God, as well as her role in the structure of the home. Women today, though far removed in time from our first mother, would do well to follow her example.

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

GOD DOESN'T PROMISE that serving Him won't be painful. Loving mankind has been painful for Him ever since sin entered the world. Pain will continue for Him, for us, for all, until sin is destroyed. . . . **BBC**

BEAUTY OF A CHILD

Frank Chesser

Who can describe the beauty, sweetness, and innocence of a child? A child is more lovely than a sunset joining heaven and earth and infusing the sky with resplendent color; more captivating than a rose dipped in glowing red and bathed in the morning dew.

A child is more enchanting than a starlit night or a meadow of green; more delightful than a spring morning leaping from the womb of night by the gentle kiss of the rising sun. In the sparkling, trusting countenance of a child lies a beauty unequalled in the winsome world of nature.

Jesus loved children. *"Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 19:14). Picture Jesus surrounded by children, laughing, talking, and playing with them, clasping them to His breast in an embrace of love divine.

Fortunate indeed is the home that is blessed with children. Their voices of gaiety and laughter resound throughout the house, giv-

ing life to brick and mortar, and converting four walls into a citadel of joy. True, there are exasperating moments in the parenting experience. But, if we knew that tomorrow those small fingers would lie cold and stiff in death, would they vex us then as they often seem to now?

How swiftly time passes, how quickly they grow. Crawling, walking, running, starting to school, graduation; how soon they fly from the nest of home. No more good-night kisses, toys on the floor, endless activities, and "Daddy, will you play with me?" Give them your love, time, and companionship today; tomorrow may be too late.

Life is as transient as the movement of a weaver's shuttle, the wilting of a flower, and the passing of a shadow (Job 7:6; 14:2). The spring of childhood swiftly blossoms into the summer of manhood. *"Is it well with the child?"* (2 Kings 4:26). The heart of each parent contains the answer.

Frank Chesser preaches in Jacksonville, Florida, U. S. A.

A Favorite Child?

Betty Burton Choate

Once there was a father and a mother. They had two boys. They were a fine family, but they had one problem: the older boy was the father's favorite child, and the younger boy was the mother's favorite.

Today we often see and hear of such inequalities around us. Parents proudly show off their favorite child and announce their partiality for all to hear. The children also know it well.

Sometimes the inequalities show up in other ways: the favorite child is given more and better food, if there is any shortage; he may be better clothed; he may receive most or all of the family inheritance; he may receive special treatment in the home, being spared discipline and being given a better education than the other children.

Returning to our story, we said that in that family there was

one problem: favoritism! Can it be possible that partiality among children is a serious problem? Is real damage done by such doting love? Let us look to the story and see.

In Genesis 25:28 the Scriptures say, "And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob."

The boys grew to be men, and the time came when Isaac wanted to give his

older son a special blessing. Rebekah overheard their conversation and sent Jacob instead to Isaac, who was blind. Jacob convinced his father that he

himself was Esau, and so he was given the blessing. When Esau learned what had happened, he was so angry he declared that he would kill his brother. Rebekah was told of Esau's intention, so she sent Jacob away to live with distant relatives until peace could be restored between the boys. Jacob lived for



twenty years as an exile from his family, and he never saw his father and mother alive again (Genesis 25-33).

Can favoritism be a real problem? Can it do serious damage in family relationships?

In the family of Isaac, favoritism caused these problems and tragedies: (A) Competition between parents; (B) Competition between children; (C) Lying to the father; (D) Deceit of the father; (E) Hatred of Jacob by Esau; (F) Intention to kill Jacob in Esau's heart; (G) Jacob's life-long exile from his family; (H) Loneliness and grief for all family members.

Was favoritism a tragic thing in the family of Isaac? Certainly it was, and it is also harmful and wrong in today's world.

All children have emotions and feelings. All need to have self-esteem. All need to feel confident of the love of father and mother. When we, as parents, bring children into the world, it is our duty and responsibility to give them these basic requirements. It may not always be possible to give them ample food, or clothes, or whatever they want of the physical things, but we can and must give them a full measure of love and the resulting self-esteem that are so necessary in the proper development of any child.

Let us not be guilty of

causing hurts in tender hearts by rejecting one child with the cruel words spoken proudly of another: "He is my favorite!"

Acts 10:34 says, "... In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality." (See also Romans 2:11,12; 1 Timothy 5:21; James 2:9). "But wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

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

Touch the Future... Teach Children

I tried to teach my
Child from books;
He gave me only
Puzzled looks.

I tried to teach my
Child from words;
They passed him by
Often unheard.

Despairingly, I turned
aside.

"How shall I teach this
Child?" I cried!

Into my hand
He placed the key:
"Come," he said.
"Play with me."

THE TRAINING OF A CHILD

Joe Rowe



"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Such responsibility bears heavily upon my heart, as I hope it does yours. The responsibility is so great that we should consider it daily, and develop a workable plan so we may discharge such responsibility with some joy and satisfaction. Proper training will assure us that our child will become a responsible citizen, a loving husband or wife, a careful parent, and an obedient servant of the Master!

It is one matter to *control* a child, and a different matter to *train* a child to *control himself* through the practice of self-discipline. If it is done, it will be done with much careful (and prayerful) planning and patience. It will require strict discipline of your own life in all matters which you hope to instill in him. Only then will you be able to initiate within your child a practice of self-control and self-imposed abstinence from those things which are detrimental to his physical and spiritual well-being. The training is not

complete until you have instilled in the child a strong desire to choose the best, and to accept responsibility for those choices made.

The wise parent will encourage a child's initiative to think for himself, but it is the parent's grave responsibility to direct that initiative. The training is incomplete until the child exercises the ability to think properly, by making judgments and decisions which are firmly grounded in a Christ centered value system. If a child is trained and encouraged to make righteous decisions, and is trained to live by them, the parent may relinquish control at the appropriate time in life with assurance that the "child" will not depart from the way of righteousness even when he is old. What could be a greater blessing of parenthood?

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

Our Lord is deeply concerned about young people and their well-being. At times it seems as though there is not much said in Scripture concerning youth, but if we pause to really look at passages like Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:20, we see much that the Holy Spirit has revealed about the young.

"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 thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3). Why did the Holy Spirit reveal this to Paul? Because it is for good! God does not bind things upon us that are not good for us. To the children, God gives this command and adds a promise: if you honor your parents, *"... it will be well with you and you will live long upon this earth."*

God wants children to obey and honor their parents for two basic reasons: first, because of the position which they hold as natural protectors, rulers, and providers;

secondly, because of the parents' love and concern for their children.

Loving parents, devoted to the Lord, have a real concern for the good of their children. They want what is best for them. God has given children parents. Age, experience, and wisdom make parents

better able to make decisions and know what is best.

Therefore, the Lord wants children to submit to their parents. The

child who submits to his parents will be happier, better

adjusted, and better prepared for life here, as well as better prepared to face God in eternity.

How parents and children deal with this great command from God will not only determine the future of our homes, but the future of our churches, our communities, even our nations, for no nation can be better balanced and more moral than its people and its homes. God is deeply concerned about these interwoven parts of His creation.

Milton Caraway works with the Jefferson Street church in Hobbs, New Mexico, U. S. A.

Children and Obedience

Milton Caraway

HOW CAN DIVORCE BE PREVENTED?

Ken Tyler

1. Realize God's plan is for marriage to last until death (Romans 7:2).

2. Learn to express your love to your mate. Love is never out of style nor out of date. We still need to be loved, whether we are 25 or 50.

3. Learn to live within your means. Piling up debts has a way of breaking down a marriage.

4. Learn to compromise with each other. Never forget that the sweetest words ever to fall from human lips are, "I'm sorry, please forgive me."

5. Don't let society draw you apart. We must make time for each other.

6. Make God's will your life. The Bible tells you how to be a good husband or wife.

7. Remember that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

The home is being torn asunder because we will not listen to God.

I wonder, are YOU listening?

Ken Tyler is a gospel preacher living in Arab, Alabama.

A Christian Father Will . . .

1. Put the kingdom of God first in his life and teach the same to his family (Matthew 6:33).

2. Teach his children to love, respect, and obey their parents.

3. Be a loving and considerate father and husband.

4. Provide both the physical and spiritual things for his family.

5. Be honest in all of his dealings with others.

6. Set aside the first day of the week for his family to worship (Hebrews 10:25).

7. Rule his household with great love.

8. Never speak or act in manner that is unbecoming to a Christian father.

9. Be big enough to love and respect the desires and freedoms of each family member.



Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the gospel of John.

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (verse) _____

2. John 1:3. _____ were made through Him, and _____ nothing _____ that _____.

3. John 1:14. And the _____ became _____ and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of _____ of the _____, _____ of _____ and _____.

4. John 1:19,23. Who cried in the wilderness? _____.

5. John 1:34. What did John call Christ? _____.

6. _____ first found his own brother _____, and said to him, "We have found _____" (which is translated, _____). (John 1:41)

7. _____ (verse). The _____ was given through _____, but _____ and _____ came through _____.

8. John 1:4. In Him was _____.

9. Name 5 men mentioned in John 1.

1. _____ (v. 6) 2. _____ (v. 40)

3. _____ (v. 43) 4. _____ (v. 45)

5. _____

10. John 1:1,3. Where was Jesus "in the beginning"? _____

Was He created? _____

What was made through His power? _____

The Gospel of John

Writer: Through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John, the apostle, the brother of James, beloved of the Lord, wrote the book.

Time: Late in the first century.

Purpose: "...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:21)

This rendering of the gospel was intended for all readers, not a particular group. Instead of emphasizing miracles and parables, the Holy Spirit directed John to cover some of Jesus' great spiritual discourses. *[See inside of back cover for answers.]*

THE BURNING BUSH

T. Pierce Brown

In Exodus chapter 3 we find the story of God appearing to Moses in the burning bush which was not consumed. Although we do not know all the lessons Moses got from the story, we find a few that we think may be of value to you.

First, if we have enough spiritual interest and willingness to turn aside from our ordinary pursuits to hear a revelation from God, we may discover that God has a greater commission for us than He did for Moses. He was to help God in delivering people from the bondage of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. We have been commissioned to help in delivering people from the bondage of sin in all the world! To many of us, Matthew 28:18-20 is still just a passage to be quoted regarding something that was said by someone about 2,000 years ago. You need to turn aside and see the burning bush, or hear what God says!

Second, before we can be fitted for the job, we must recognize the power and purity of God. *"Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground where thou standest is holy ground."* Peter tells us, *"Be ye*

therefore holy as he who called you is holy" (1 Peter 1:15). The fact that we are able to *"come boldly to the throne of grace"* (Hebrews 4:16) does not deny the fact that we should serve God *"with reverence and Godly fear"* (Hebrews 12:28).

We need to understand that both words and actions can not only **indicate** reverence, but **help to create** reverence. This does not mean we should try to force upon others either the form of words they use or the posture of the body they should have when they pray, but it **does** mean that we should teach people the principle that when the use of "thee" or "thou" or the bowing of heads and/or closing of eyes helps to create or indicate reverence, it is proper to do so. Lack of reverence for God **always** leads to lack of respect for His Word, and consequent sin and disobedience of every sort.

Third, it may be that when Moses saw that the bush was not consumed, he felt that there was permanence and stability in that with which God was involved. A scandal in the ruling body of a nation may

cause that government to be shaken, but we have a *"kingdom that cannot be shaken"* (Hebrews 12:28), and Moses had a God that would still be there in a burning bush when all other bushes might be consumed.

Fourth, we need to understand, as Moses surely did, that even such a trivial or seemingly insignificant thing as a bush or a rod can be used of God to demonstrate His presence and power, and do great and wonderful things. A little boy with five loaves and two fish, a widow with one or two mites, a strong man with a jaw bone of an ass, a little boy with a sling and a small rock, or **YOU, IF YOU DO WHAT YOU CAN, WHERE YOU ARE, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE** can accomplish, by God's power, all that needs to be done!

Fifth, we need to quit offering excuses — whatever they may be — for failing to carry out the Great Commission. Whatever the excuse is, "They will not hear," "I cannot speak," or "Who am I?" it is invalid. Remember that the same *"I AM"* who sent Moses and empowered him is the *"I AM"* that is *"with you always even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20). Now, put your shoes back on, take your rod in your hand, and **GO!**

T. Pierce Brown lives and preaches in Wartrace, Tennessee, U. S. A.

BORN TO REPRODUCE

Lewis G. Hale

When God created everything it all began with a miracle. God caused trees and plants of all kinds to have "seed in itself." He decreed that everything should bring forth after its own kind.

If these created things fail to reproduce themselves, they become extinct. This has happened!

Over the centuries, there have been various religions that have taught celibacy as a tenet. It would never happen, but, if everyone were converted to that and practiced it, the human race would become extinct.

Have you considered this same principle in the spiritual realm? We are born again to reproduce! We are saved to save others. The only way the Gospel will be spread is for those who believe and obey it to tell the good news to others. If the Gospel has done anything good in our lives, surely we would want to tell someone else about it.

When a baby is born, most families are filled with both joy and pride. Think of the joy and pride you will feel when a sinner is reborn in Christ and becomes a part of your spiritual family!

Lewis G. Hale preaches for Southwest church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

THE *Great* COMMISSION

Bill Keele

The Great Commission. What would one say that could entitle it to be called "Great"? Consider these thoughts.

First, whatever the Son of God brings right out of heaven is great. The best that man can do is limited to this earth and time. Yet, out of heaven itself comes the message called the Great Commission.

Second, it could be called great because it encompasses the entire world! Few things are for everyone. The old Greek and Roman gods were limited in their area of influence, both geographically and socially. For a message to be given and be declared for "every creature" or "all nations" would indeed be great.

Third, it surely would be called great because it holds the hope of the forgiveness of sins, the release of guilt, and the hope of heaven. While not promising physical health or economic gain, it promises something greater. It looks at the eternal salvation of the soul from sin.

Fourth, it is great because it is entrusted to ordinary people for its obedience and proclamation. It is not limited to the educated or the ignorant, the rich or the poor, not by race, sex, or nationality. It is great because every Christian is privileged to tell the Gospel to everyone.

Fifth, it is great because it is based upon the greatest and highest authority . . . ever! In Matthew 28:18, before giving the Great Commission, Jesus claimed all authority in heaven and on earth. It was after

He made this statement that He gave the Great Commission.

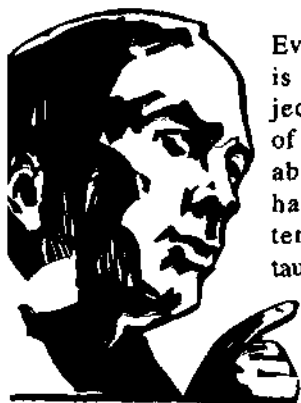
The list could continue. However, one thought question before the article closes: Is the Great Commission really great enough so that I am compelled to personally carry the Gospel to my world after having enjoyed its soul-saving benefits myself?

Is the Great Commission really great enough so that I am *compelled* to personally carry the Gospel to my world after having enjoyed its soul-saving benefits myself?

Bill Keele is the evangelist for the Lord's church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM AND YOU

George Akpabli



Evangelism is one subject many of us speak about or have listened to taught quite

a number of times.

Many

preachers love to teach the subject of evangelism, rather than get into the real act of evangelizing the damned. Many good Christians are terribly afraid. They hardly ever think of daring to teach those real good family members, those close friends, those co-workers, etc. who are certainly walking into fiery Hell. It just so happens, also, that the greater majority of Christians do not even look upon evangelism as a part of the Christian life. How sad! There are no two ways about it — we must evangelize.

We have also relegated the teaching of the Gospel to the paid evangelists.



Unfortunately, many of them are so occupied with church administration and welfare they have no time for doing any evangelism. In the New Testament, both the leaders and the members were engaged in serious teaching of the lost (Acts 8:4,14,15,25). I once heard a preacher say, "We have restored the New Testament plan of salvation, but have failed to restore the New Testament spirit of propagating the restored plan." I agree with him. Ever since, I have been asking myself why we have not been aggressively pursuing the lost as was the case in New Testament times.

Look at Acts 5:40-42 and the immediate result in Acts 6:1, which says in part, "*And in those days . . . the number of disciples multiplied . . .*" The reason for the multiplying of the number of disciples was because "*. . . daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*" When preaching is done, there is always a religious awakening and more people become Christians (Acts 11:19-21). The

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Lord's precious church will grow when we preach more and more to the lost.

We cannot afford to be unconcerned about evangelism. Chances are that your own soul may be damned for failure to obey the Lord's command to propagate His Gospel.

Many people do not know what to say in an evangelistic situation. We give below some real simple suggestions just to motivate you to begin now to evangelize the lost.

1. Tell people what YOU did to become a Christian. This should be rather easy, unless you did not know what you did to become a Christian. Learn that NOW and tell others to do the same thing you did.

2. Tell with great enthusiasm what Christ has done for you. Has Christ not given your life a new direction? Tell others about this. If the Gospel is good news, and it is, this is all that it is about.

3. Live in such a way that people will see Christ in your life. Be the living epistle of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:3; 1 Peter 3:1). Exert a good influence so that others will want to imitate your life. Be a role model in behalf of Christ. Not too long ago, two women came to

our services. They wanted to become members because they have seen the attractive life of a young Christian woman. She converted these two, first, because they admired her life in Christ, and second, because she told them Christ can change their lives.

4. Build your congregation up. Invite people to each service at every opportunity that you have. Tell them they will find a difference at the Lord's church. Tell your non-Christian friends of the great lessons being taught there, and ask them to visit. Let people know of the special evangelistic activities going on in your congregation. Tell them of the friendly welcome reserved for visitors.

If in your Christian life you have not yet led someone in a direct and personal conversion to Christ, you are missing one of the greatest personal joys in life. As for me, nothing gives me greater joy than to join the great heavenly host (Luke 15:10) in celebrating the repentance of a person I have led to Christ.

We seriously desire that you begin with the evangelization of your family and friends.

George Akpabli is from Ghana and is doing mission work in the Republic of Benin, West Africa.

Father, help us to have the vision to see, not necessarily the end of the way, but the beginning . . .

BBC

EVANGELISTIC FERVOR

Tony W. Boyd

Jesus loved the lost, and desired their salvation so strongly that He gave up heaven (Philippians 2:1-11) to live as a human. God's justice demands death as punishment for sin (Romans 6:23), and Jesus accepted our punishment by offering Himself on the cross (Hebrews 9:12-28). He stated that His mission on earth was to *"seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). That is why He was born, and why He died — to purchase salvation.

The apostle Paul said, *"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh..."* (Romans 9:2-3). Also, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"* (Romans 10:1). Paul's desire was more than a wish, he actually felt this burden in a personal way. *"For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel...that I might by all means save some"* (1 Corinthians 9:16-22). Paul's attitude was: *"For I am ready not to be bound only, but also*

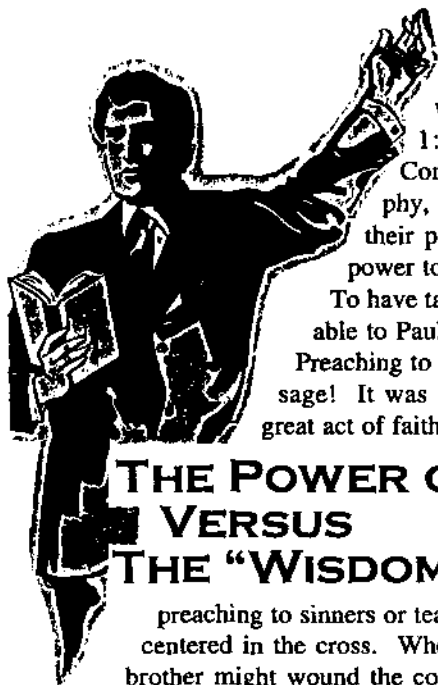
to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). *"For I am ready to be offered..."* (2 Timothy 4:6).

Every Christian owes his eternal future to: **Jesus**, who made heaven reachable; **the apostles** (including Paul), who preached and wrote so we would know about heaven and how to get there; **whoever had enough love** to warn of the death deserved by sin and the way to remove sin (and its punishment). The only way to repay that kind of debt is to duplicate those actions in our own lives. We must love those around us enough to tell them of Jesus. Often this means we *"save with fear, pulling them out of the fire: hating even the garment spotted by the flesh"* (Jude 23).

It is likely that none of us will be required to die to preach the Gospel. Few, if any, of us will be jailed for preaching the Gospel. Yet, each one of us must love the lost enough to tell them of salvation in Jesus. How strong is your desire to see salvation come to the lost?

Tony W. Boyd works with the Jadwin congregation near Salem, Missouri, U. S. A.

Avon Malone



Paul's purpose in preaching was to save sinful men (Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9; 1 Corinthians 9:16,22). Human philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry all have their place — but none of these have any power to save the soul from sin and its guilt.

To have taught such would have been unthinkable to Paul. He was consumed with the cross. Preaching to him was not a method; it was a message! It was "*Christ and Him crucified*." That great act of faith, Bible baptism, is crucial because it is "*into His death*".

THE POWER OF GOD

VERSUS

(Romans 6:3; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

THE "WISDOM" OF MEN

Whether

preaching to sinners or teaching saints, Paul's message always centered in the cross. When Paul is concerned that the strong brother might wound the conscience of the weak, he will plead for "*the brother for whose sake Christ died*" (1 Corinthians 8:11). When Paul is exhorting Christians to avoid sexual immorality, he reminds them, "*Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price*" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). In urging disciplinary action, Paul reminds, "*For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ; wherefore let us keep the feast not with the old leaven*" (1 Corinthians 5:7,8). As he urges, "... *flee from idolatry*" (1 Corinthians 10:14), he asks, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?*" (1 Corinthians 10:16). A proper partaking of the Lord's Supper is a way that Christians "*proclaim the Lord's death till he come*" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Since the Word of the cross saves (1 Corinthians 1:18), and since the Scriptures are inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16), it follows that the preacher must simply preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2). The proclaimer must determine to know only "*Christ and Him crucified*" as his constant theme, and the inspired Scriptures as his only authority.

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

Living Sacrifices

Wayne Barrier

The mention of the term "living sacrifices" causes a wide range of thoughts, concepts, and ideas to come to mind. Misunderstanding in this area of religion is the basis of many unreasonable beliefs. The Bible teaches that the Christian must offer himself as a living sacrifice to God.

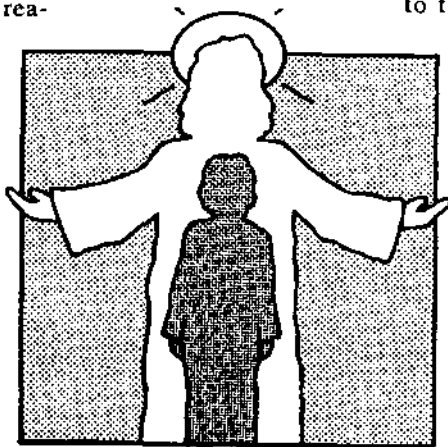
The apostle Paul states in Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This passage leaves no doubt

regarding the extent of commitment God demands from the Christian. The Christian is to give himself completely (body, mind and soul) for the service of God. In doing so, we must be transformed from a being of this world to a being that is acceptable to God.

Straight-forward instruction that describes the "living sacrifice" is provided in Romans 12:2-13:7. First, the Christian must develop the proper attitude toward himself (Romans 12:3-8). We are told not

to think of ourselves

too highly, but to think soberly. God has dealt to each of us different gifts that when used along with the gifts of others, produces the service expected of us by the Lord. As separate parts of Christ's body, regardless of personal talent and ability, we are incapable of pleasing God



"As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him..."

-Colossians 2:6

solely on our own. Our work together, however, will result in the accomplishment of God's mission.

Second, the Christian must develop the proper attitude toward his brethren in the church and toward his fellow man (Romans 12:9-21). Personal character traits needed to behave properly toward others include: (1) genuine love, (2) hatred of evil, (3) brotherly love, (4) diligence, (5) rejoicing in hope, (6) patient in tribulation, (7) continual prayer, (8) support of brethren in need, (9) hospitality, (10) forgiving spirit, (11) humility, (12) ability to empathize, (13) peace loving, and (14) willingness to leave "vengeance rendering" to the Lord. Conformance (through transformation) to these characteristics demands great sacrifice.

Finally, our life of sacrifice must include development of the proper attitude toward the governing authorities of men (Romans 13:1-7). Romans 13:1 reads "Let every soul be subject to governing

authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." Rulers and governments of men are authorized by the Lord, as a living sacrifice to God, we are asked to submit to them. The kingdom of Christ is not a civil, earthly kingdom. It deals primarily with spiritual needs of men. Governments of men are in place for a purpose. We are to obey, to pay taxes, to render customs, to give honor, and to fear, as due. Obedience of this commandment sometimes demands great sacrifice. Many First-century Christians died unmercifully at the hands of the civil government. God will deal with the rulers of those governments.

As Christians, we are to be living sacrifices to God so the Gospel can be taught to all men. We belong to God and are to be used to serve Him.

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Al and is part of the World Evangelism team in the United States.

The Freedom of Truth

It is true that men have devised religions, and those religions are imprisoning chains on society, binding people to foolish laws and beliefs. One way that we can determine whether or not a religion is actually from God is by evaluating its effects on its followers. Error will limit and thwart the development of man; but truth frees him, ennobling his soul, so that he becomes greater than he could ever be if left to his own thinking and guidance.

BBC

WILFUL SIN?

Ray Hawk

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26).

Wilful sin is a serious matter. Under the Patriarchal and Mosaic systems, one sin put you under condemnation (Hebrews 2:14,15; 2 Corinthians 3:7,9). When one obeys the Gospel of Christ, he is no longer under that threat (Romans 8:1). Yet, there are false ideas that have been developed from the above passage. The idea has been advanced that if one wilfully commits a sin, he can **never** be forgiven, no matter how much he seeks it. To reinforce this false idea, the following passage is used: *"... Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"* (Hebrews 12:16,17).

The reason Esau could not regain his inheritance is because he sold it. It no longer belonged to him.

All of us are guilty of wil-

ful sin. If we cannot be forgiven for a wilful sin, then all such sin is *"unpardonable"* (Matthew 12:32)!

Those who had left Judaism had departed from a system of animal sacrifices which could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). They had obeyed the Gospel of Christ (Romans 6:16-20). Jesus' blood had cleansed them (Hebrews 10:10-18). For some reason, they had rejected Jesus and His blood and returned to the blood of those animal sacrifices. It is only when they return to Christ that their sins could be removed by His blood.

Any sin that a person wilfully or deliberately remains in, refuses to repent of, and dies in, will condemn him. Will one be forgiven as long as he wilfully or deliberately remains in sin? *No.* May he be forgiven when he wilfully sins? *Yes.* If he repents and confesses it (1 John 1:7-9).

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

ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

J. R. Chism

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Regarding a man like Paul, who would suffer as he did for the Gospel, I am sure none would want to accuse him of compromising the truth. Paul did not say he became carbon copies of all these different kinds of people. He became like them. He identified with them, he understood them, he viewed the world through their eyes, and understood the problems they had in departing from a life-long religion and embracing that new thing called Christianity!

Perhaps it was his background, perhaps his nature, but Paul had the ability to "feel" for the other person. He had the ability to realize that there are other people just as sincere and as honest as he was prior to his conversion. This is

something we need to develop. Everyone who is a bit different from us is not necessarily a vile sinner. He may be, but Paul approached all people as one who would at least try to understand who they were and consider their background. He was highly successful, in many places, perhaps not so successful in others; however, he applied the best knowledge available to him in his work, that of the Holy Spirit. We could learn from him.

Why did Paul do all these things? It was his privilege, duty, assignment . . . call it what you will, but he said, ". . . that I may share in its blessings."

Think on this.

J. R. Chism is the preacher for the East Amarillo congregation in Amarillo, Texas.

GRIEVE NOT THE SPIRIT

Gaylord Cook

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

Paul's charge here is that we are to take care not to make the Spirit sorrowful of a heavy heart — we are not to grieve Him. The context in which this passage is found makes clear a number of things that would grieve the Spirit, and that are thus to be avoided. For example, back in verse 22 he had said, "... *put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*" and in verse 23 he indicated what was to replace the old life by saying, "*and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*" So, when we profess to be Christians, but do not change our lives, we grieve the Spirit. It is grieving to the Spirit to see us fail to live distinctive lives as Christians.

Some of the specifics of what this new life involves are outlined, beginning at verse 25. Lying, being angry in such a way as to sin, stealing, failing to work in order to be able to give to those in need, and bad speech are all mentioned as specifics of failing to be renewed.

Paul says the new man he is advocating is a creation of God, and he is created "*in righteousness and true holiness*" (verse 25).

Later in the chapter he says that all bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamour are to be put away, along with evil speaking and all malice. All of these will, I think, be readily recognized, with the possible exception of "clamour." The Greek word translated here, in its five other usages in the New Testament, is translated "cry" or "crying," and is here speaking of complaining. Do we often think of the fact that we are grieving the Spirit when we complain? Likely not, but Paul says that is the case.

If we have indeed been changed into new creatures by dying with Christ and being raised with Him to a new life, we are to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. The forgiveness we are to extend to one another is to be "*even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" Think about the significance of that. God

has, for Christ's sake, forgiven us completely, lovingly, willingly, lastingly. We must, therefore, forgive one another in the same way, or we grieve the Holy Spirit. While grieving the Spirit is not the same thing as that to which Jesus refers in Matthew 12 (where He speaks of a sin that shall not be forgiven, in regard to the Holy Spirit), it should be sobering to realize that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying to the Spirit, as recorded in Acts chapter five.

Let me appeal to each of us to carefully consider the danger of grieving the Spirit. Let me also observe that it must grieve the Spirit greatly to see our casual attitudes about spiritual things today. How it must hurt Him when we do not care enough about fellowship with one another and with Christ to assemble at every opportunity! How He must be hurt when we do not use the opportunities we have to proclaim the Word that has been revealed by the Spirit. How it must hurt Him when we live, day by day, in the company of those who have no understanding of the truth, and yet we never say a word.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Gaylord Cook is an evangelist for the church in Dalhart, Texas, U.S. A.

WHAT NAME SHALL WE WEAR?

Christian: "And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

Christian: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4:16).

Christian: "Would to God that all party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms were forgot" (John Wesley, Methodist).

Christian: "Should not and will not, all these divisions be merged into the high and holy name 'Christian'?" (Albert Barnes, Presbyterian).

Christian: "Let me speak the language of heaven and call you simply 'Christian'" (Henry Ward Beecher, Congregationist).

Christian: "I pray, leave my name alone and not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians" (Martin Luther).

Christian: "I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name live forever" (Charles Spurgeon, Baptist).

Christian: "... almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Agrippa, Acts 26:28).

Why not become a CHRISTIAN today?

"SO FAR AS IT DEPENDS ON YOU"

Joe Goodspeed

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all mankind" (Romans 12:18).

In our families sometimes, as Christians, we certainly wish that other members of our family would act differently from what they do. It bothers us when they won't listen to suggestions that we make which to us are very important.

In some cases, mates will not even attend worship services with faithful Christians. Sometimes we keep suggesting, and even pressing some point. But they have their own minds, and sometimes do not seem to listen.

And then we remember that Peter has some sound advice in 1 Peter 3:1-3, which amounts to saying: "You do and be what's right, and don't feel that you are to control your mate's behavior."

We are sometimes heart-broken when members of our family and dear friends fail to follow through with their faithfulness to the Lord. There will always be things that we can do to encourage them, but we need to remember this prin-

ciple: "So far as it depends on you." They are not puppets. They have wills of their own in which they must make decisions. We can pray and suggest, but there is a limit to what we can do. We have to remember the great principle: "So far as it depends on you."

We see immorality all around us, and we feel responsible to do what we can to counteract this. We feel that there are moral stances which should be reflected in our laws and in the officials of our community and country. But remember, we are only responsible "so far as it depends on us."

Even in our lives as members of the church, this truth has an application. When the Lord was writing to the church at Thyatira, He mentioned that some there were seriously sinful for what they were permitting (suffering) (verse 20). Yet, He went on to say, "He that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end . . ." all would

go well with him (verse 26). In other words, no matter what others in the church might do or not do, the Lord would reward the faithful.

Then in Revelation 3:1ff, the Lord really made a stern accusation against the church at Sardis, yet in verse 4 He said, "*But you have a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments.*" Though some in the congregation there were unfaithful and untrue, there were others who were dedicated and loyal disciples.

Not any one of us is the whole congregation. And as a congregation, we are not the whole brotherhood. We could make ourselves miserable with guilt and anxiety in our concern of what others are doing or are not doing, and we do need to be concerned, but when it comes right down to it, we can influence matters only "*as far as it depends on us.*"

May the Lord help us to realize this principle in all matters, and with the energy He supplies, to do our best to be faithful and true, and yet to be saved from the anxiety and loss of peace which can come from worrying about matters which are beyond our control.

Joe Goodspeed preaches for the church in Conroe, Texas, U. S. A.

IF

If Christ is the Door, you are the doorkeeper to open or close it for others.

If He is the Light of the world, you are the bearer of that light to the end of the earth.

If He is the Vine, you are the fruit-bearing branch that draws life from that vine.

If He is the Bread of life, you are to break it to feed those who hunger.

If He is Truth, you are the truth-bearer, the interpreter of the truth.

If He is the Bright and Morning Star, you are to brush aside the clouds that veil His beauty from the world, that humanity may see and live forever.

Oh glorious truth, that We are an indispensable part of the great plan and program of the Father.

The Fountain Opened for Sin!

Zech. 13:1

Zech. 14:8-9

OLD TESTAMENT

1. HIS VICARIOUS ATONEMENT

Isa. 53:4-6; Jno. 15:13
1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 2:9

2. THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Acts 28:20; Job 19:25-26;
Psa. 16:9; Heb. 10:1-4

3. OPENED IN HIS DEATH

Mt. 26:28; Jno. 19:35;
Col. 1:14; Rom. 5:8-10



NEW TESTAMENT

4. HIS BLOOD IS LOCATED

1 Cor. 5:7; Acts 20:28;
Heb. 10:29; 1 Jno. 1:7

5. OPENED FOR ALL NATIONS

Heb. 9:22; Heb. 10:1-4;
Heb. 9:15-17; Eph. 1:7;

6. HOW TO REACH BLOOD

Eph. 2:13-15; Rom. 6:3-4;
Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:13.

GARDEN OF EDEN

END OF TIME

Dillard Thurman

JESUS WEPT

John 11:35

J.C. Choate

Introduction:

1. *All of us are familiar with the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)*
2. *Note some different translations:*
 - a. "Jesus burst into tears." Moffatt.
 - b. "Jesus shed tears." Goodspeed.
 - c. "And Jesus Himself was weeping." Basic English.
 - d. "Tears came to Jesus' eyes." Living Bible.
3. *Weeping is not a sign of weakness.*
4. *To weep means several things:*
 - a. The person is capable of feeling emotions.
 - b. He is deeply touched.
 - c. Suffering
 - d. Sorrow.
 - e. Personal concern.
 - f. Conviction.
 - g. Sympathy.
 - h. Sincerity.

Discussion:

- I. *Jesus wept over an individual (John 11:1-46).*
- II. *Jesus wept over a city (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34; Luke 19:41-48).*
- III. *Jesus wept for a nation (Luke 7:31-35; John 1:11).*
- IV. *Jesus was concerned for the world (Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 23:46; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:14-18).*

Conclusion:

1. Jesus is interested in and vitally concerned about each one of us.
2. It must hurt deeply to be rejected often by His own people, thus to be crucified afresh.
3. It must grieve Him to see the world in the lost condition it is in, since He died to bring salvation.
4. Think how He must hurt when we fail to carry out His command to take the gospel into all the world.
5. May God help us to be more dedicated, and not to be the source of pain for our Savior.

WHY WORSHIP GOD?

Psalm 95
Max Patterson

Introduction:

1. Worship is as old as man. Consider Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.
2. We are commanded to worship God (Revelation 22:9; Acts 14:15; John 9:31).
3. There are three kinds of worship described in the New Testament:
 - a. Vain (Matthew 15:9)
 - b. Ignorant (Acts 17:23)
 - c. True (John 4:24)

FOUR REASONS WHY WE SHOULD WORSHIP GOD AS STATED IN PSALM 95:

- A. **For the reason that He is above all gods (verse 3).**
 1. He is above man (Acts 10:25,26,34,35; Isaiah 55:7-9).
 2. He is above the angels (Revelation 22:9).
 3. God alone is worthy of worship (Revelation 4:5; 1 Kings 20; 18:17-39; 1 Samuel 5:1-6).
 4. The gods of today are more subtle than the idolatry of the Old Testament:
 - a. The god of self (Matthew 16:24)
 - b. The god of money (Acts 8:20; Matthew 6:24)
 - c. The god of power (3 John 9)
 - d. The god of popularity (1 Corinthians 4:6)
 - e. The god of worldly pleasure (Romans 12:2)
 - f. The god of life itself (Revelation 2:10)
- B. **For the reason that He is the Creator of all things (verses 4,5).**
 1. God created the world (Genesis 1,2; John 1:1-3).
 2. God created the world in six days (Exodus 20:11).
 3. Revelation 4:11 states that God *"created all things."*
 4. It is God who gives life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25).
 5. God is a faithful creator (1 Peter 4:19).
- C. **For the reason that He is the Good Shepherd (verses 6,7).**
 1. The Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23:1).

2. He is portrayed as the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18.
 3. He is said to be "*that great shepherd of the sheep*" (Hebrews 13:20).
 4. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).
- D. For the reason that the neglect of God's Word and His ordinances had cost a whole generation of Israel's fathers the loss of Canaan (verses 8-11).**
1. The Jews wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, during which time all but two and their families, aged twenty and above, died.
 2. Background of this is in Numbers 14:29,34.
 3. Paul uses this as an example for us (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).
- Conclusion:** For all these reasons, is there any alternative but to worship the true God of heaven?

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

THE REVELATION OF GOD

The universe with all of its many parts, declares that God is; but we would be in total ignorance of who God is if it were not for the fact that God has revealed Himself to us through the Bible, which is as complete in its many parts as the universe. It is from this book that we learn of God, His creation of our environment, and of man, of our fall, of sin, redemption, and how that by compliance with His will we obtain it.

God has indeed been gracious to us in all things. Let us show our appreciation by studying His revelation and complying with His will.

God's Best Gifts

Some people think that God's gifts are on shelves one above the other; and that the taller we grow in Christian character the easier we can reach them. But I find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other. It is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower. We have to go down, always down, to get His best gifts.

— F. B. Meyer

Did Jesus really mean that His followers must hate their parents and loved ones?

Dayton Keesee

What did Jesus really mean when He said, *"If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26)? How could Jesus say that one must love his neighbor **AS HIMSELF** (Matthew 22:39) and here state that one must hate himself and his nearest kin to be His disciple?

It should be obvious that Jesus, who taught that we are to love even our enemies (Matthew 5:44), was not calling on us to abhor our closest relatives. Rather, He was calling on us to love less family members who would keep us from following Christ as His disciples.

Second, consider the fact that one essential facet of love is hate! If you truly love someone, you hate what would harm that loved one. God is love (1 John 4:8), but He **hates** the person who spreads strife among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19). The enormity of both God's love and hate explains heaven

as an eternal home and hell as a punishment for sinners (Matthew 25:46; John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:8).

Note this application in closing. A lady dying with cancer was about to be baptized into Christ until she recognized that burial in water (Romans 6:3,4) was contrary to the sprinkling her dead mother had received while she was still alive. This dying lady faced a crucible. If she obeyed the truth in Christ's covenant, she was concerned that she must thereby admit that her mother (who did not so obey) did not get into Christ (Ephesians 4:5; Acts 8:36-39; Mark 16:15f). As I attended her funeral later, knowing why she refused to be baptized as Scripture teaches, I **hated** that a doctrine accepted by a loved one kept her from becoming one of Christ's disciples. How great the cost when family members become a choice over Christ! Does that help you understand why Christ said what He did?

Dayton Keesee preaches in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

Can a homosexual be a Christian?

Jimmy Jividen

There has been a lot of discussion in religious groups about whether or not a homosexual

can be a priest or pastor. A more basic question is, "Can a homosexual be a Christian?"

The Bible says, "*Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Language cannot be plainer. These words cannot be qualified by saying that the Bible condemns homosexual immorality because it was a cultural taboo then, but it is now accepted in our culture. There was probably a greater ratio of homosexuals in the ancient Greek and Roman world than in the modern world. The Scriptures went cross-grained to the culture then, as well as now. The difference is that first-century Christians did not try to lessen the sin of homosexual immorality.

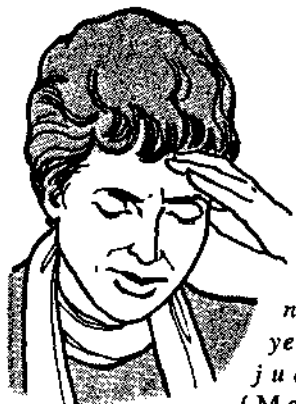
To condemn homosexual immorality is not to nullify grace. God's judgment is against all

immorality — including homosexual immorality. The most loving thing one can do is to tell the soul enslaved by sin and damned to hell about this judgment. Only by such confrontation can a sinner be motivated to repentance.

Immediately after condemning such immorality, Paul makes a powerful declaration. He says, "*Such were some of you*" (1 Corinthians 6:11). Those who had been condemned as homosexuals were "*washed,*" "*sanctified,*" and "*justified.*" The grace of God is sufficient to cover all sin. Homosexuals became Christians.

Paul's affirmation, "*Such were some of you,*" shows they were no longer living that lifestyle. The demands of repentance meant they quit practicing homosexual immorality. A homosexual, if he repents and obeys the Lord, can become a Christian.

Jimmy Jividen preaches for the Baker Heights Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, U. S. A.



*"Judge
not, that
ye be not
judged"*

(Matthew

7:1). Those words of our Lord have probably been more abused and misused than any other of the words of Holy Scripture. Frankly, I don't believe that most people understand what the Lord is really saying in that passage. I do know that He is not ruling out the judging of others.

We should be prepared for an emotional prejudice against most judging by many in the world. We are all inclined to dislike any confrontation with others relative to our faults. Many, thinking they are properly applying Christ's words (quoted above), feel that they should be allowed to live whatever way they desire, without what they consider to be harassment by meddling Christians. To even conceive of the notion that sin exists in another's life, according to this view, is tantamount to interfering sinfully in another's private relationship with God. When the

Is all judging bad?

Garell L. Forehand

homosexuals of Sodom attempted to forcibly take the two angels of God, Lot told them, *"Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!"* (Genesis 19:7). Those men answered, *"Stand back! . . . This one [speaking of Lot] came in to sojourn, and keeps acting as a judge"* (verse 9). Jesus said that many sinners in the world hate to have the true light shine upon their evil deeds (John 3:19-21).

By reading the context of the *"Judge not"* statement (verses 1-5), it is easy to see that the Lord is warning people against being critical of others while remaining negligent in their own affairs. There is simply no excuse for one's not seeing sin in his own life when he is capable of recognizing it in others. The evil judgment referred to in this passage is a hypocritical type — the focusing on the speck in our brother's eye, while ignoring the plank in our own.

Obviously, Jesus is not ruling out all judging in this passage, because He goes on to give the remedy to the problem that He is addressing: *"Hypocrite! First*

remove the plank from your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye" (verse 5). Just a few verses later (verses 15-20) Jesus commanded His disciples to judge whether or not men were false prophets. Such judgment requires a special discernment technique, due to the fact that wolves often come dressed in sheep's clothing. The method is this: "By their fruits you will know them" (verses 19- 20).

"Judge not" in Matthew 7 no more forbids all judging than Christ's command of "Work not for the food which perishes" (John 6:27) forbids us from ever working for a living! The contextual backgrounds for all such statements must be understood before interpreting the passages. Besides, Jesus also commanded (using the very same word for judging), "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Righteous judgment is required of us.

They that are whole are in no need of a physician. But, those who do need a doctor also need to know they need one! Part of our job is to help them know.

Garell L. Forehand is the preacher for the Granbury Street church in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.

WHO SHOULD READ THE BIBLE?

The young: to learn how to live.

The old: to know how to die.

The ignorant: for wisdom.

The learned: for humility.

The rich: for compassion.

The poor: for comfort.

The dreamer: for enchantment.

The practical: for counsel.

The weak: for strength.

The strong: for direction.

The haughty: for warning.

The humble: for exaltation.

The troubled: for peace.

The weary: for rest.

The sinner: for salvation.

The doubting: for assurance.

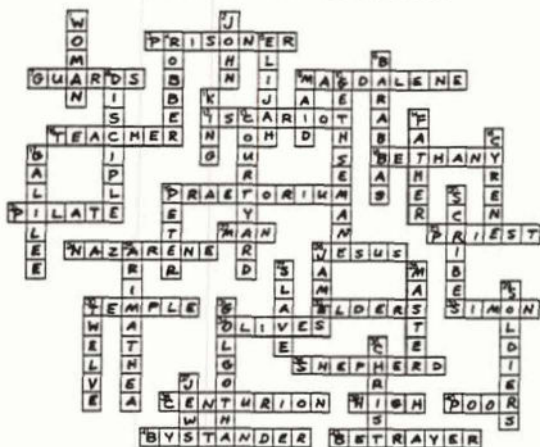
All Christians: for guidance.

***"Thy word is a lamp
unto my feet, and a
light unto my path."***

(Psalm 119:105)

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

The Book of Mark for adults



from page 25

Who Am I?

(from page 73)

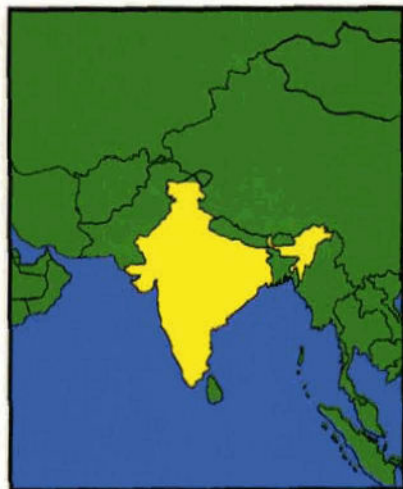


Peter

Verse Search - 2 (from page 82)

1. Cana; Galilee
2. A wedding
3. Mary; mother
4. Jesus; His disciples; wedding
5. In order to qualify to be His apostles.
6. They ran out of wine.
7. (1) Jesus (2) Mary (3) the servants (4) the master of the feast
8. True
9. First
10. (2)
11. They were making God's house a place of buying and selling.
12. This temple; three days I; raise
13. death; resurrection
- (5) the bridegroom (6) the disciples

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



The Republic of India

Independence, August 15, 1947



Government: REPUBLIC, Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations

Prime Minister: NARASIMHA RAO

President: VENKATARAMAN

Secular Facts:

Location: South Asia, the Sub-continent of India, Eastern Hemisphere

Land Mass: 1,269,340 square miles

Population: 8,900,000

Cities of 1,000,000 or more:

New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad, Kanpur, Nagpur, Pune

Ethnic Groups:

Indo-Aryan (Caucasian).....	72%
Dravidian.....	25%
Mongoloid/Other.....	3%

Languages: (18 major languages)

Hindi (National Language).....	28%
Telugu.....	8%
Bengali.....	8%
Marathi.....	8%
Tamil.....	7%
English.....	
.....Widely used as 2nd language	

Literacy: 41%

Religion:

Hindu.....	83%
Muslim.....	11%
"Christian".....	2%
Sikh.....	2%
Buddhist.....	2%

The Church:

Congregations: Appr. 3,000-4,000

Membership: Appr. 600,000

History: Tradition says the apostle Thomas preached the gospel in South India. He was martyred and buried in San Thome Church in Madras.

Modern History: Through indigenous effort, people left the Presbyterian church in Mawlai, Assam, East India, to obey the gospel and form the church in the '50's. Preachers from Canada and the U.S. followed, to establish congregations in many of the major cities and most states. Among these men are **J.C. Bailey, David Hallett, J.C. Choate, Gary Walker, Wayne Davis**, and numerous others.

Churches worship at:

E/10/B Defence Colony, **New Delhi**
 7/Davis Road, **Bangalore**, Karnataka
 Sunny Meads Ln, **Trivandrum**, Kerala
 13 Sai Nagar, Jawahar Nagar, **Madras**
 Busivari St., **Kakinada**, Andhra Pradesh

Evangelistic efforts include: Public preaching, radio broadcasts; books, Bible correspondence courses, magazines; preacher training schools, leper colonies, children's homes.