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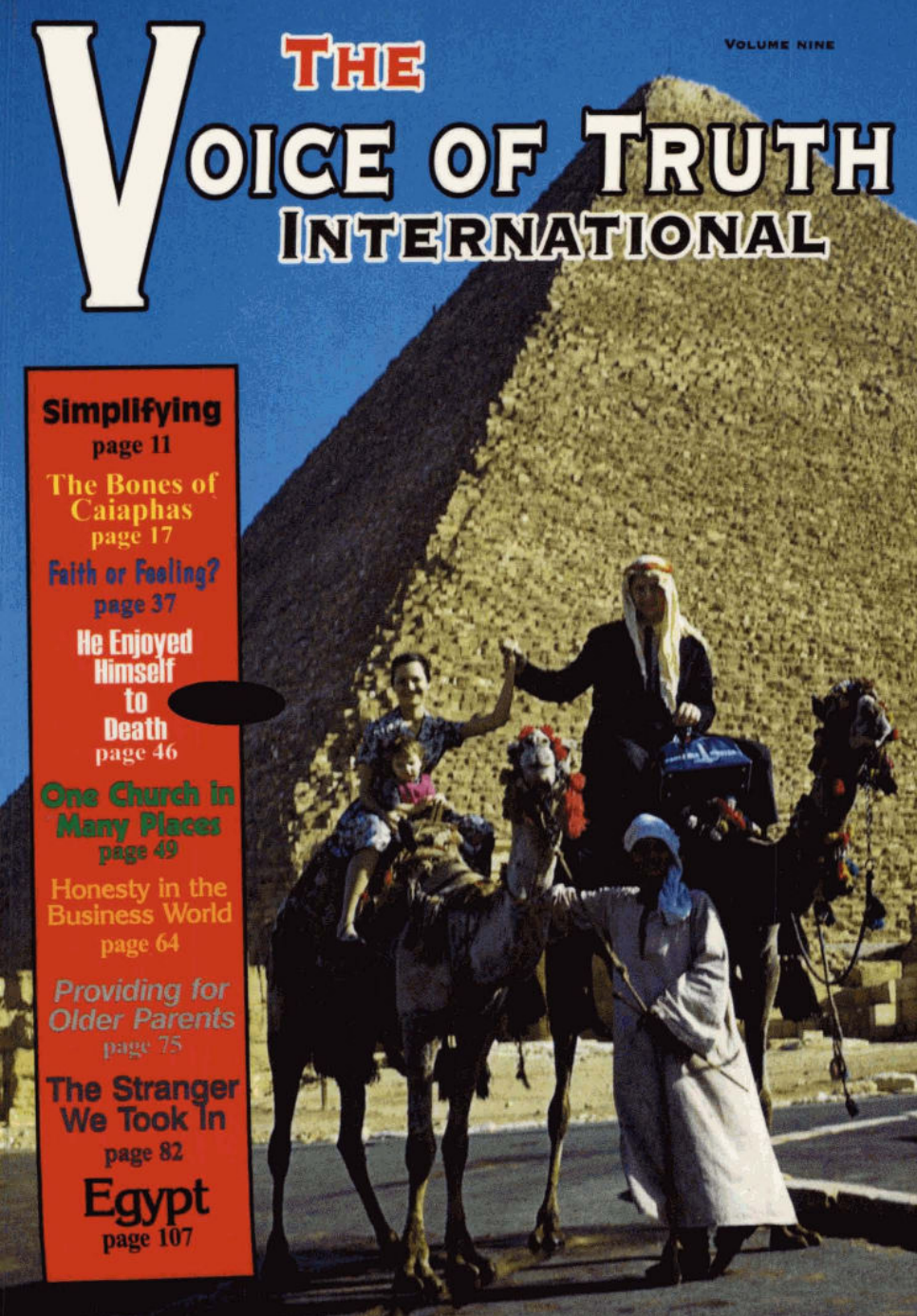
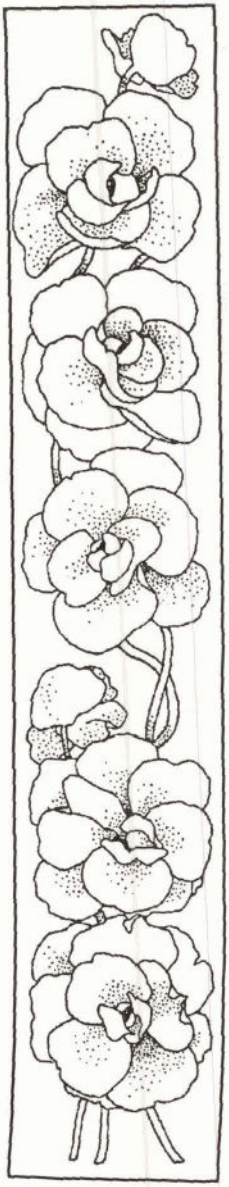


We Have Not Known Thee



We have not known Thee as we ought,
Nor learned Thy wisdom, grace, and power;
The things of earth have filled our thought,
And trifles of the passing hour.
Lord, give us light Thy truth to see,
And make us wise in knowing Thee.

We have not feared Thee as we ought,
Nor bowed beneath Thine aweful eye,
Nor guarded deed, and word, and thought,
Rememb'ring that our God was nigh.
Lord, give us faith to know Thee near,
And grant the grace of holy fear.

We have not loved Thee as we ought,
Nor cared that we are loved by Thee;
Thy presence we have coldly sought,
And feebly longed Thy face to see.
Lord, give a pure and loving heart
To feel and own the love Thou art.

We have not served Thee as we ought;
Alas, the duties left undone,
The work with little fervor wrought,
The battles lost or scarcely won!
Lord, give the zeal, and give the might,
For Thee to toil, for Thee to fight.

When shall we know Thee as we ought,
And fear, and love, and serve aright?
When shall we, out of trial brought,
Be perfect in the land of light?
Lord, may we day by day prepare
To see Thy face, and serve Thee there.

— T. B. Pollock

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

A WORD . . .

If in the work you are trying to do, you have done all that you can,
Be still:
God is working. And though you may not now be able to see or hear or feel what He is doing, **know that He is not idle.** ✝

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

In lieu of a subscription rate, a donation of **$4.00** is suggested for single issues, **$12.00** for four issues. Make checks payable to **World Evangelism Foundation,** and mail to **Byron Nichols, 2148 N. National, Springfield, MO 65803;** Telephone: 417-862-7772.

Changes of address and articles for publication should also be sent to **Byron Nichols** in Springfield. **Please be sure to include both old and new addresses so that the computer record can be corrected.**

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

PREACHING *THE* KINGDOM

J. C. CHOATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Throughout the Old Testament a great deal was said about the coming of *a spiritual kingdom.* Isaiah foretold that in the last days *the Lord's kingdom* would be established (Isaiah 2:2,3). Daniel said that God would set up *a kingdom* which would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44). Joel said that the Lord's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh at that time (Joel 2:28,29), and Peter explained that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled in the momentous happenings recorded in Acts 2.

John the Baptist came preaching that *the kingdom of heaven* was near at hand (Matthew 3:1,2), and Christ said that some who were standing in His presence would not taste of death until they saw *the kingdom* come with power (Mark 9:1). Finally, Christ said that He would build *His church* upon the rock, the fact that He was the Son of God (Matthew 16:18,19; 1 Corinthians 3:11). He promised that He would give to the Apostles the keys of *the kingdom,* the authority to tell men and women what they could do to enter *the kingdom or the church.*

In Acts 2 we see that the prophecies were fulfilled concerning the establishment of *the kingdom* in Jerusalem as the power of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles and they began to speak

with tongues, or in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This was *the kingdom* that John had said was soon to be established, the one that was from heaven, and the one Christ had said He would build. The Apostles, then, used the keys of *the kingdom* or *the church* as they preached the gospel for the first time and revealed to sinful man how he could be saved. Those who heard, believed, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of their sins were saved and added to *the church* by the Lord himself.

The kingdom and *the church* were therefore the same institution, being *the house of God* or *the spiritual body of Christ* (1 Timothy 3:15; 1Corinthians 12:27). Paul, speaking to the church at Colosse, said concerning God, *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into* ***the kingdom*** *of his dear Son"* (Colossians 1:13). The Hebrew writer said, *"Wherefore we receiving* ***a kingdom*** *which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"* (Hebrews 12:28). Now of *what kingdom* was he speaking? *The kingdom of God, the kingdom* which was from heaven, *the Lord's church,* comprised of people the Lord saved and added to it, making them members of *His body, the spiritual body of Christ,* again being *the church* (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18).

Now after the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, the record says concerning Christ, *"To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking things pertaining to* ***the kingdom of God"*** (Acts 1:3). In other words, Christ was giving final instructions to the Apostles concerning *His kingdom* or *church* which would shortly be established in Jerusalem. He went on to exhort, *"But ye shall receive the power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

So in Acts 2 *that kingdom, the Lord's church* itself was established with some 3,000 obeying God and being added to it (Acts 2:40). The gospel was preached again and again both in Jerusalem and in Judea with thousands more obeying the Lord and being added to *that same church.* But there is more. At this point, the record

says, *"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them"* (Acts 8:5). Continuing, we read, *"But when they believed Philip preaching things concerning* ***the kingdom of God,*** *and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women"* (Acts 8:12).

So what do we have? We see how the Lord instructed the Apostles concerning *the kingdom of God,* and then Philip preached *Christ* to the Samaritans. But, amazingly, in doing so he also preached *the kingdom of God* to them! Why was there so much emphasis on *the kingdom or the church?* Because it was the culmination of God's efforts for mankind; it was the vehicle through which He would provide salvation. It was from God, it had been prophesied, the Lord had promised it, and the saved were added to it! *Its importance cannot be overstated.*

Sometimes we hear people saying the church is not important and that we should not talk about it so much. It is true that the church is not *the saviour,* since it is made up of *the saved,* who are human beings; but *Christ* is *the saviour* of the church, having died for it and having purchased it with His own blood, and therefore we must be members of it if we want to be saved and to go to heaven.

If you remove from the scriptures all of the things said about *the kingdom or the church,* how much would you have left? Furthermore, if *Christ* built *the church,* is head of it and saviour of it, serving as its foundation and calling it by His name, if He has promised to return for it and present it to God, how could anyone think that it is unimportant? And how will men know about it, of its divine origin, of its purpose and mission, and of its tremendous place of importance in God's overall plan unless we preach it to the world?

In conclusion, let us appreciate the church, love it as the Lord loves it, be thankful to be members of it, and let us eagerly tell others about it so that it may truly spread throughout the entire world. As Paul said, *"Unto him be glory in* ***the church*** *by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:21) ⇧

"... BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE ..."

BYRON NICHOLS
MANAGING EDITOR

Surely we have all been impressed with some of the statements made by outstanding statesmen of the world in times past. Included among the more notable ones are Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death," Winston Churchill's "I have nothing to give but blood, sweat, and tears," and Henry Clay's "I'd rather be right than be President." Such words of commitment and exhortation have helped countries and causes to be victorious instead of suffering defeat.

As great as these proclamations of courage and dedication were and are, they do not measure up to the significance of many declarations found in the Bible. It would be hard to find one more inspiring than a statement by Joshua in his farewell speech to the people of God just before his death. In Joshua chapter 24 the faithful leader of the Israelites reminds them of all that God had done for them and their ancestors, delivering them from their enemies and providing all their needs for them, including a special land in which to live. He then proceeds to tell them that they have a great decision to make: Are you going to serve pagan gods, as your fathers did at times, or are you going to render loyal service to the God who has delivered you and lovingly provided for you? Then, in the last part of verse 15, Joshua makes this great statement of commitment, dedication, and determination:

"... but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."

Joshua was able to make this remarkable declaration because of his great love for God, his Israelite brethren, and his family. His words were prompted by his deep gratitude to the Lord for all that He had done for Joshua and all those he loved. Surely more of us would join with Joshua in these words if we understood what Joshua understood. Surely few of us would drift very far away from the Lord while fully comprehending all that He has done for us and continues to do for us.

It's one thing to make a commitment for ourselves, but it's quite another thing to make a commitment for others. How could Joshua speak for his family when he said, "*. . . but as for me **and my house** . . . .*"? He could do so in the sense that he was determined to do all within his power to see to it that his family members were as committed to faithfully serving the Lord as he was. His loved ones still had the freedom of choice; they could become like the pagan nations around them if they so chose, but it would not happen without his having made every possible effort to get them to share his deep love and gratitude for God.

Many more husbands and fathers need to follow Joshua's example. An alarming number of families, even Christian families, are in great need of spiritual repair. God has given the husbands and fathers the major responsibility in such matters, as is clearly shown in Ephesians 5:22-6:4.

Perhaps there is an even greater need for more elders and preachers who will fearlessly take their stand with Joshua and echo his commitment. It is a very elementary fact that no group, religious or otherwise, will ever succeed beyond the level of its leadership. The church of the Lord absolutely must have men as its leaders who will duplicate the determination of Joshua to stand with and for God, regardless of the opposition, even if the opposition should sometimes come from within the church itself. Satan will never make it easy for God's people to loyally serve the Lord, and at times he even uses some of God's own people, as was true in Bible times, to lead the church astray. As a result, there is perhaps a greater need than ever before for elders who will lovingly and boldly live up to the words of such notable passages as Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:4,5; and Titus 1:9-16. Preachers, too, are called to be faithful to the admonitions of such passages as 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and Titus 2:1, just to name a few.

Knowing that each one of us will one day be called before the Lord in judgment, dare we live our lives now with less of a commitment to Him and His Word than that of His loyal servant Joshua? May God's children everywhere dedicate themselves fully to Him and to the furtherance of His great cause here on the earth. Let's be sure that God can depend on us. ✝

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HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS MAGAZINE?

NEVER HAS THE NEED FOR KNOWING AND DEFENDING THE TRUTH BEEN GREATER THAN IN OUR PRESENT AGE. ATHEISM, HUMANISM, PAGANISM, AND IGNORANCE ARE ON THE RISE, GAINING NEW STRENGTH. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE LORD'S PEOPLE EQUIP THEMSELVES WITH A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD, TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM BEING LED INTO ERROR. THAT IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY PURPOSES OF THIS MAGAZINE.

THE SECOND GREAT PURPOSE FOR THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL IS THAT IT MAY BE USED AS AN EVANGELISTIC TOOL FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. GOD HELP US TO DO THIS.

JCC

Such a Love

Betty Burton Choate

One soul, longing
For the safety of
another soul,
Much loved,
Cries,
"Oh, God,
If prayers and tears
— if hurt —
Could do it,
He would have
been won
So long ago."

With burning tears
Falling in the heart,
The answer comes
Unspoken:
"Yes . . .
If even death itself
Could do it,
He would have
been won
So long ago —
You see . . . I love him
even more:
I gave My Son."

Our God's Love for Us

O. P. Baird

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus, God's Son, came into the world to save people from their sins and give them eternal life. In order to do that, He had to die on the cross as the sacrifice for us. When we think of the suffering Jesus endured for us we can begin to understand how great God's love is.

It is difficult to imagine what terrible suffering was endured by those who died by crucifixion. Criminals who were crucified raved and screamed, and cursed those who crucified them. But with Jesus it was very different. He patiently endured His agony. When He did cry out, it was not a cry of hatred and anger, but instead it was a cry of love. He called out to His Father in heaven and said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"* (Luke 23:34).

How could Jesus have that kind of love for His enemies who hated Him and were torturing Him to death? It was because He came to save sinners. That was an act of divine love (John 3:16). He knew He would have to die for sinners in order to save them, and His love for them made Him completely willing to do that. Even the terrible treatment He received from them could not take away His love for them. When we remember this, we cannot doubt His perfect love for us.

God sent His Son to die for us because He wants all people to learn

the truth and repent and be saved: *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:3,4). *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9).

Now, with God's love for us in our minds, let us consider this very important question: "Who truly loves God?" That is a vitally important question because God's blessings are for those who love Him.

Jesus showed us God, the Father. He said, *". . . He who has seen Me has seen the Father. . . ."* (John 14:9). We see Jesus when we learn what the Bible tells us about Him, and that makes us love Him and His Father. Loving God involves a feeling of deep affection, but it is much more than emotional feeling. Let Jesus tell us who it is that loves God: *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me . . . If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me"* (John 14:21,23,24).

The apostle John says, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. . . ."* (1 John 5:3).

God's love in us drives out of our heart the love for sin and fills us with the love for righteousness. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of love, and *". . . if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His"* (Romans 8:9). The Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, is the Holy Spirit. That Spirit in the heart will fill the heart with God's love: *". . . the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"* (Romans 5:5).

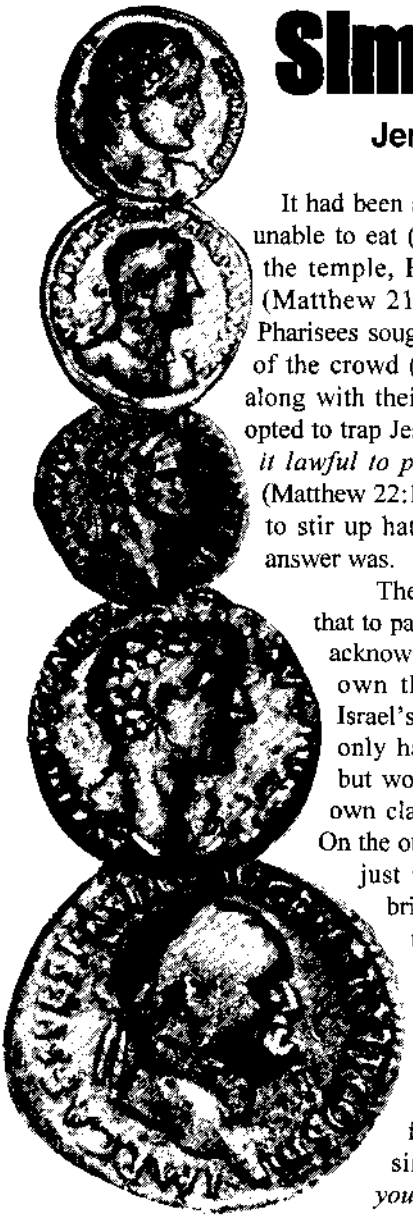
When our hearts are filled with God's love we can understand what it is like to be a Christian. God's love in us will make us love others. It will cause us to love even our enemies and sincerely desire their forgiveness, as Jesus desired the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.

Let us open our hearts to God's love so we can love Him. Then we will repent of our sins, keep on learning God's truth in His Word, the Bible, and we will obey His commandments. ✞

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

Simplifying

Jeril (Polly) Cline



It had been a hard day. He had been hungry but unable to eat (Matthew 21:18,19). Upon entering the temple, His authority had been challenged (Matthew 21:23). Later the chief priests and Pharisees sought to seize Him, but waited for fear of the crowd (Matthew 21:45,46). Instead, they, along with their previous enemies, the Herodians, opted to trap Jesus with this explosive question: *"Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?"* (Matthew 22:17). Volatile in nature, this was sure to stir up hatred and strife, no matter what His answer was.

The Nationalist Movement maintained that to pay the tribute money to Caesar was to acknowledge his royal authority and to disown that of Jehovah, Who alone was Israel's King. To answer, "Yes," would not only have shocked His people's feelings, but would have cast great doubt upon His own claim of being Israel's Messiah/King. On the other hand, to have replied, "No," was just what the leaders were waiting for, bringing Him into direct collision with the Roman civil authorities, and it would have been taken as a command to rebel by such fanatic Jewish groups as the Zealots.

In this potentially explosive atmosphere, our Lord moved them from the seemingly complex to the simple: *"'Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the coin used*

for the poll-tax.' And they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, 'Whose likeness and inscription is this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' Then He said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" Simplifying . . . Simply put, He went to the heart of the issue. The answer was not "which one" . . . "either, or" . . . but, "**both, and!**" *"And hearing this, they marveled, and leaving Him, they went away"* (Matthew 22:22).

Jesus had cut right through the complexity of the civil problems of their day. Whether it concerned a woman who was married to seven brothers, or the religious question — *"Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*— the simple answer of God quieted the confusion of man.

Could it be that the heart of their problem/question is ultimately at the base of mine? Jesus simplifies the matter when He asks them: *"Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the scriptures, or the power of God?"* (Mark 12:24; Matthew 22:29).

In other words, you do not know the what and why of life or the Power available to carry out that "what and why."

He ends the discussion with one of His own questions meant to lead them to the Who of life when He asks: *"What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He . . . how does David in the Spirit call Him, Lord . . . ?"* (Matthew 22:44).

Who, What, Why . . . God not only answers our questions, but simplifies the answers so that we cannot fail to understand. Then He supplies the power to carry out His will, if we are willing (2 Corinthians 3:5; 4:7). ✞

Jeril (Polly) Cline is a Christian writer living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, U. S. A.

Out of Nothing

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

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

In the beginning
God was — and is.

— Brunice C. Cole, Jr.

JESUS, THE MASTER TEACHER

Kenneth Tipton

Many religions will concede that Jesus Christ was a good teacher, even if they deny that He was the Messiah. What made Jesus such a master teacher? What methods and techniques made Him so good as a teacher? Perhaps the best way to examine His methods can be found in one of His longest recorded classroom lectures, what we call the "Sermon on the Mount."

In Matthew 5:2 the introduction begins, *". . . He began to teach . . ."* Jesus begins by teaching about relationships between cause and effect in Matthew 5:3-11. Some examples given are: they who mourn . . . will be comforted; the meek . . . will inherit; those hungry . . . will be filled; and those pure hearted . . . will see God.

Students are called the *"salt of the earth"* and the *"light of the world,"* as Jesus uses common materials to illustrate His point in Matthew 5:13-16. There was no need for fancy materials.

In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus uses references such as "you have heard" to introduce His quotations, and uses subjects that are current, as well as familiar topics like: murder, adultery, divorce, and even swearing. His teaching involved keeping things relevant.

Jesus challenges students who already have good behavior to achieve to an even higher level (Matthew 6:1-18). Those ideals are seen in giving alms without announcing it, praying privately (not openly), and covering up instead of flaunting one's fasting.

In Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus teaches His students how to handle their possessions and how to handle worry. These are concepts that are personally applicable to each individual learner.

Relationships with others are taught by Jesus in Matthew 7:1-23. Here He teaches about judging others, asking others for help, and recognizing those who are evil-doers.

In His conclusion in Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus describes those who follow His teaching as being wise, compared to those who do not fol-

low His teaching as being foolish.

The narrative by Matthew continues in Matthew 7:28 by saying that the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one having authority.

As a life-long educator, I would suggest that if we want to be successful teachers, we should follow the same pattern and teach cause and effect relationships, use simple and common materials to illustrate our points, and use references and quotes that are familiar to our students.

If our students are already good, we should challenge them to go to an even higher plane, personalize the lessons to apply to the needs of the individual, and continue to teach about the importance of relationships.

If we have done these things as well as Jesus did them in His teaching, our students will also be wise and not foolish.

Like it or not, we are all teachers, either formally or informally. In Matthew 28:19,20 the outline is (1) teach, (2) baptize, and (3) more teaching.

Therefore, we must strive to improve our teaching methods and techniques to be like **Jesus, the Master Teacher.** ✝

Dr. Kenneth Tipton is a faithful Christian and is a public school superintendent in Maysville, Missouri.

What is a Teacher?

1. A Teacher is one who affects the eternity of others.

2. A teacher is one who helps another learn.

3. A teacher is one who imparts knowledge.

4. A teacher is one who awakens another to his needs.

5. A teacher is one who corrects, inspires and guides others.

6. A teacher is more important to the teaching/learning process than the method, the setting, or the visuals.

7. A teacher is the product of conscientious labor.

8. A teacher is able to pump abilities from the resource.

9. A teacher is ninety percent of the curriculum.

10. A teacher is a sculptor of souls.

11. A teacher is God's ambassador on earth (2 Corinthians 5:20).

TODAY is here. I will begin with a smile and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste the valuable time God has given me.

TODAY has one thing in which I am equal with others — time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours.

TODAY I will not waste time because the minutes I wasted yesterday are as a vanished thought.

TODAY I refuse to waste time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

TODAY I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow I may be needed, and I must not be found lacking.

TODAY I begin by doing, and not wasting my time. In one week I will be miles beyond the person I am today.

TODAY I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. I will make a success with what I have.

TODAY I will act toward other people as though this will be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.

— Selected

Who sins?

God's word is very plain. Romans 3:23 says, "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." 1 John 1:8 adds, "If we say that we have no sin, we *deceive* ourselves...."

You would look at the sweet face of a baby or a child and object, "No! Children are not sinners! They are innocent!" And Jesus would agree with you, for He said, "...unless you are converted and *become as little children, you* will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

So, who are the 'all' who are sinners? Romans 3:12-18 identifies sinners as mature people who have *chosen* evil rather than good: "They have all *gone out* of the way...there is none who *does good....*" Their ...mouth is full of *cursing and bitterness.*" "There *is no fear* of God before their eyes."

Sin is not created or imposed on humans; sin is the *choosing* to disobey God.

Babies and children are safe; they are not evil, because they are not knowledgeable enough to choose; but *all normal-minded adults have sinned and must answer to God.*

Next: Is there a way out?

That You May Believe

Hollis Miller

Of his Gospel, the apostle John wrote: *"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been 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 20:30,31).

Men pass a milestone in life when they understand that nothing they learn today, however much it may be, can undo a fact of the past. So important is this bit of knowledge that it can sometimes stop slides into spiritual oblivion. Things that have already happened in the world are indelibly imprinted on the pages of time. The Jews, Jesus, the apostles, the Bible, the church, and a host of other personalities and events surrounding Christian faith cannot be erased. They can be discussed, believed, disbelieved, or ignored, but they cannot be deleted from time.

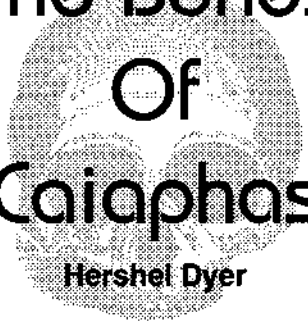
For some strange reason, what the Bible records is sometimes judged either correct or incorrect according to how well it agrees with other ancient records and the theories of men. But why should it be that way? Some who deny the historical existence of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph seem to have no difficulty accepting the historicity of other ancient personalities. Were the Israelites a people without ancestry? If not, then why not accept the Patriarchs as real historical personalities?

Who decides whether the early Christians were right or wrong in their appraisal of Jesus? Why should that decision be made by someone who never met Him, saw Him, touched Him, or witnessed His works, or by someone who has an antibiblical theory to defend?

There is no valid reason why a Christian should surrender his or her faith to the skeptics of the world. The apostle Paul speaks even today: *"The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons"* (1 Timothy 4:1). Dear reader, may we all be admonished by these apostolic words. ✝

Hollis Miller is a gospel preacher living in Cadiz, Kentucky 42211, U. S. A.

The Bones Of Caiaphas



Hershel Dyer

Charles H. Roberson, professor of Biblical Archaeology, used to say to those of us in his classes, "Where archaeology touches the Bible, it has always confirmed it."

The recent finding of bones in a box at Jerusalem, labeled "Joseph, son Caiaphas," has stirred the Biblical world. Have the archaeologists, in this ornate ossuary discovered a little over a mile south of the temple area, come upon the remains of Caiaphas, who condemned Jesus to death? (See Matthew 26:57-66.)

That Joseph was the name of the High Priest at Jesus' trial and that the family name was Caiaphas tends to be confirmed by the Jewish historian Josephus. He speaks of "Joseph, who was called Caiaphas, of the high priesthood" being replaced by Jonathan, a brother-in-law of Caiaphas (Antiquities of the Jews, book 18, chapter IV, paragraph 3).

The bones are those of a man about sixty years of age. A coin found in a neighboring ossuary was minted in 42 or 43 A.D., during the reign of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1). That the bones in these casket-boxes were interred in the first century seems certain. Little reason remains, therefore, to doubt that the ossuary inscribed, "Joseph, son of Caiaphas," could be and probably is what remains of the High Priest who was determined to put Jesus to death.

With this done, the historicity of this character associated with the life and death of Jesus will be all the more settled. Archaeology will once again have touched the Bible and confirmed it.

Bible believers are always thrilled at the finding of tangible bits of evidence that supports their faith. The accuracy of the Scriptures as to historical names, peoples, cities, etc. has many times over been enhanced by archaeology — the science of the pick and spade. While most of us have obtained a trust in Scripture that does not depend upon these discoveries, we are, nevertheless, grateful for them. This is especially so when these cause rational persons to view sacred Scripture in a more credible light. ✝

Hershel Dyer is the preacher for the Tenth and Rockford church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

Christianity: The Gospel for All Cultures

Roger E. Dickson

In the defense of Christianity that Luke makes in the book of Acts, he informs us that the early disciples went first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. After the initial establishment of the church, the disciples preached to the Jews only (Acts 11:19). However, Jesus stated that the Gospel would be preached to all nations (Luke 24:47). In Luke's defense, he proves that this was carried out in the lives of the disciples. He presents cases of how this mission was accomplished. He records evidence of how God miraculously communicated to the disciples that the Gentiles should receive the message of the Gospel.

EVIDENCES

A God that would be the one true God of all humanity would reveal Himself so as to establish a religion that was applicable to all men for all time. True Christianity is this type of religion. Because it is applicable to all men is proof that it has been truly revealed from the one true God.

Luke's central argument is to uphold Jesus and the church as the means by which the brotherhood of humanity can be accomplished. The fact that there is one God and one Lord Jesus Christ establishes a foundation upon which all men can be religiously one. The church, therefore, is a brotherhood into which all cultures of the world can come and serve the one true God. It is a brotherhood that will establish peace between men of all cultures of the world. Only the God of heaven could have established such a community. This is Luke's argument.

A. The Gospel Went To The Samaritans. Luke first records how the Gospel went to the Samaritans, whom the Jews socially rejected. *"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them"* (Acts 8:5). As a result, *". . . multitudes with one accord heeded those things which Philip spoke. . . ."* (Acts 8:6). *"When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized"* (Acts 8:12).

B. The Gospel Went To The Gentiles. In Acts 10 and 11 Peter and six Jews went to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius. While they were in the house of Cornelius, God poured out on this Gentile household the gift of the Spirit (11:15-17). When Peter and his witnesses returned to Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem first contended with Peter about his going into the house of a Gentile. They protested, *"You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"* (11:3). However, Peter explained to them the vision which he had where God told him that He had made all things clean (10:9-16). The voice of the vision stated, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common"* (10:15). Peter followed the instructions of the vision. He went to the house of a Gentile and preached the Gospel. When the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem heard Peter's defense, they said, *"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life"* (11:18).

C. The Gospel Went To The Gentile World Through Paul. Paul was personally called by Jesus on the Damascus road. The purpose of the calling was to send Paul to the Gentiles with the message of the Gospel (Acts 9:15). Throughout his ministry, therefore, Luke records incidents where he fulfilled this special ministry.

When the unbelieving Jews rejected the Gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas told them that they were turning to the Gentiles. He said to the Jews, *"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life,* ***behold, we turn to the Gentiles****"* (Acts 13:46). Luke also records, *"Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord . . . ."* (13:48).

The same thing as the above happened in Corinth. When the unbelieving Jews opposed Paul and blasphemed, *". . . he shook his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.* ***From now on I will go to the Gentiles****'"* (Acts 18:6). As a result, many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized (18:8).

When the Jews in Rome rejected the Gospel, Paul said to them, *"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"* (Acts 28:28).

Luke's argument on behalf of Paul and Christianity was that the Gospel was for all the world. It was not for the Jews only. In fact, the Old Testament prophets had prophesied that the Jews would harden their hearts against the Gospel (Acts 13:47; 28:26,27; see also Isaiah 6:9,10; 42:1,6; 49:6; Jeremiah 5:21; Ezekiel 12:2). This hardening of hearts would spur the Gospel on to the Gentiles throughout the world.

The fundamental truths upon which Christianity is based are necessary for salvation. Such truths are applicable to all cultures of the world. They are truths which are not culturally linked; that is, **they are not truths which are identified by or characteristic with any one culture of the world.** Because the fundamental beliefs of Christianity are such is evidence that Christianity was revealed by the one true God. The fundamental beliefs of Christianity which are revealed in Luke and Acts are those truths that are necessary for salvation. They compose the simplicity of the Christian faith. They are God's directions for godly living and holiness which are applicable to all cultures of the world for all history. ⇧

Roger E. Dickson is Director of International School of Biblical Studies in Cape Town, South Africa.

"How good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

The Testimony of Archaeology

Perry N. Hall

The study of Christian Evidences is an exciting and rewarding experience. My interest in Biblical archaeology, history, and geography was greatly stimulated when I visited the museums of Europe and went to the Bible Lands for six weeks in 1963. In the past two centuries, while the Bible was being vigorously attacked by skeptics, God in His providence revealed through the spade of the archaeologist a vast amount of information that harmonizes with the Bible record. Multiplied mounds, murky, well-preserved tombs of Pharaohs, and isolated caves containing ancient Biblical manuscripts have yielded up their secrets. The past has come galloping into the present, giving external evidence to the fact that God has revealed Himself to man. Our understanding of the Bible message and its environment has been increased through study of the artifacts of art, architecture, language, literature, tools, weapons, customs, dress, and other such remains.

While we are convinced that internal evidence is more than sufficient to prove that the Bible is the verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant, all-sufficient deposit of eternal truth from God, it is comforting to observe that archaeological discoveries have been found to be in harmony with Biblical declaration. We would expect this to be the case, since Biblical writers were miraculously guided by the Holy Spirit in their recording of the Divine message (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Jude 3).

Every statement of the Bible must be true if it is of God. That includes its comments on history, locations, customs, characters, geography, civilizations, etc., as well as that which is God's revealed obligatory will for man. While much of that which has been uncovered does not seem to relate directly to the biblical text, they still give us a wealth of information about the times. This, in and of itself, is of great value in our study of the

Bible. More than twenty-five thousand sites, only a few dozen of which have been excavated, serve as a potential source of almost unlimited information and exciting discoveries

Occasionally there are discoveries that relate directly to the biblical record by referring to actual people, places, and events of the Bible. One such discovery was made by Sir Henry Layard, when he excavated the ancient city of Calah or Nimrud, established by Nimrod (Genesis 10:10ff). In time it became one of the capital cities of Assyria. Between the years of 1845 and 1851, three palaces were uncovered containing much sculpture and statuary, and from which the celebrated Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser (859-824 B. C.) was recovered by Layard. It is today located in the British Museum in London. This limestone obelisk stands six feet six inches high and contains twenty panels, five on each side. All of the panels depict tribute being brought to Shalmaneser III. On one side, second row from the top, a figure is shown on his hands and knees paying tribute to the Assyrian king. The obelisk declares the figure to be the Israelite king, "Jehu, Son of Omri." The powerful Assyrian army (see Nahum 2:3ff and 3:2ff) marched from Calah under Shalmaneser III to attack a coalition comprising Israel, Damascus, and the coastal city-states in 841 B. C. Jehu of Israel chose to become a tributary to the Assyrians, and the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser depicts the tribute of the royal staff, silver, golden vessels, tin, and fruits that Jehu paid.

Jehu, tenth king of Israel came to the throne during the time of the prophet Elisha. He exterminated Ahab's line according to prophecy (1 Kings 19:16,17; 2 Kings 9,10).

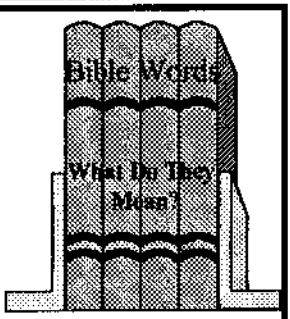
Jehu is the only king in either Israel or Judah whose "picture" or likeness we have thus far today. This testimony from the mounds of Calah agrees with the historical accuracy of the Bible. Our faith in the Bible is reinforced. ✝

Perry N. Hall preaches for the University church in Tyler, Texas, U. S. A.

"... You established the earth, and it abides" (Psalm 119:90).

It Helps to Enrich Your

BIBLE WORD POWER



BY FENTER NORTHERN

Are you sure you are understanding the richest meaning of the Bible? Test your comprehension of the following words used in the context found in Hebrews 10:22-33. After making your choices, turn the page for the correct answers.

1. **wavering** *n.*— A: signifying a greeting. B: not inclined to move. C: riding the surf D: leaning
2. **provoke** *v.*— A. to rebuke. B: to harass. C: incite to action. D: to invoke
3. **forsaking** *v.*— A: abandoned. B: miss a church service. C: getting a divorce. D: to be disobedient.
4. **assembling** *v.*— A: gathering together. B: to favor someone in appearance. C: resolving differences of opinion D: to be easily irritated.
5. **exhorting** *v.*— A: making a speech. B: to rebuke. C. take advantage of. D. a comforting entreaty.
6. **gazingstock** *n.*— A. to bring upon a stage for the purpose of holding one up to ridicule. B: animals that watch for the whole herd. C: a restraining yoke. D: to look at stock animals.
7. **wilfully** *adv.*— A: restrained. B: deliberate, or in full awareness as opposed to ignorance. C: reluctant. D: agreeable
8. **judgment** *n.*— A: the day of the Lord. B: an opinion. C: verdict. D: divine decision concerning right or wrong.
9. **indignation** n.— A: wrathful. B: fervent minded; excited emotionally. C: aloof D: chagrin
10. **devour** *v.*— A: eat rapidly. B: to totally consume. C: burn. D. gorge
11. **adversaries** *n.*— A: blasphemers. B: a mentally retarded person.. C: those set against Christianity. D: persecutors
12. **covenant** *n.*— A: a compact; an agreement by 2 or more. B: a religious party. C: a unilateral agreement. D: a church order.
13. **despite** *n.*— A: to praise. B: to insult. C: to return evil for evil. D: regardless of circumstances.
14. **vengeance** *n.*— A: be tolerant. B: to swear C: to do good. D: a punishing revenge.
15. **recompense** *v.*— A: to requite. B: pay a debt. C: not keep a promise. D: default on a loan.
16. **illuminated** *v.*— A: lit. B: to make see. B. burning. C: extinguished. D. smart.
17. **affliction** *n.*— A. hurt. B. duress. C. to lay hands upon. D. to press together.

Authority: Strong's Greek Dictionary

Answers to

"It helps to Enrich Your Bible Word Power"

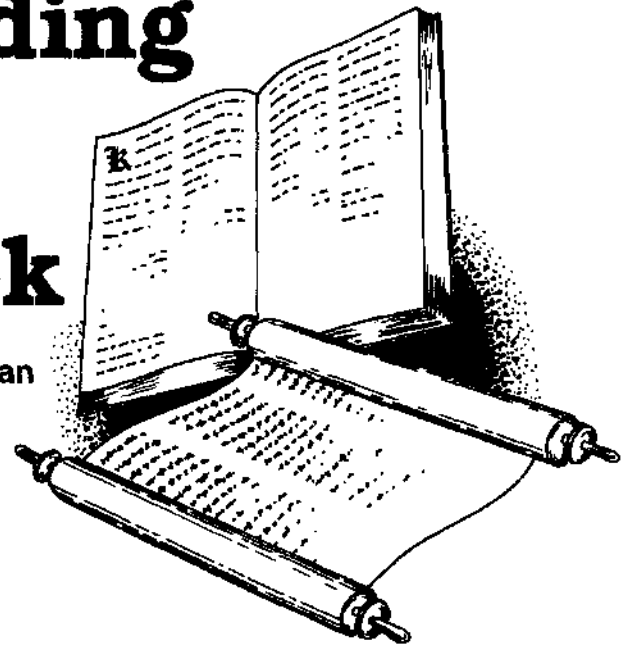
1. **Wavering:** (Gk. [illegible]lines) B: not inclined to move; the idea is to remain faithful unto death.
2. **provoke**—(Gk. paroxusmos) C: incite to action. In context, to eagerly urge each other to love God, each other and be ready to undertake any good work
3. **forsaking**—(Gk. eqkataleipo) A: abandoned; in context: to leave in a strait or emergency and not return. Quit the church and return to the former way of life before knowing Christ.
4. **assembling**—(Gk. episunagogue) A: a gathering together. In context, meaning the regular worship gatherings of the church.
5. **exhorting**—(Gk. parakaleo) D: a comforting entreaty. In context, to answer a call and stand beside one in time of need. Consoling each other in times of persecution and strengthening.
6. **gazingstock**—(Gk. theatrizo) A: to bring upon a stage for the purpose of holding one up for ridicule. In context, to be arrested for your faith and the be placed on display for people to gaze at you like a common criminal.
7. **wilfully**—(Gk. hekousious) B: deliberate, or in full awareness as opposed to ignorance. In context, to put Christ to shame and discredit by sinning intentionally against him after believing and being baptized.
8. **judgment**—(Gk. krisis) D: divine decision concerning right or wrong.
9. **indignation**—(Gk. zeolos) B: fervent minded, excited emotionally. In context, the heated display of punishment from God upon all who turn their backs on Jesus after once confessing him.
10. **devour**—(Gk. estheo) B: to totally consume; eat up. In context, those who apostatize will be "eaten up" with the fiery anger of an avenging God for the ill treatment of his love and grace shown in Christ.
11. **adversaries**—(Gk. hupenantios) C: those set against Christianity. Those opposed to Christians.
12. **covenant**—(Gk. diatheke) A: a compact; an agreement between 2 or more. In context, the agreement in which God will be a Father to the new convert, and the convert is to be an obedient child.
13. **despite**– (Gk. enubrizo) B: to insult.
14. **vengeance**—(Gk. ekdikesis) D: a punishing revenge.
15. **recompense**—(Gk. antapodidomi) A: to requite. In context to repay with penalty.
16. **illuminated**—(Gk. photizo) B: make to see. In context, became knowledgeable about God's grace.
17. **affliction** —(Gk. thlipsis) D: to press together (under great pressure; hence, mental strain)

Vocabulary Scale

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

Finding the Book

Jack Harriman



During the reign of King Josiah, the book of the law of God was found. Who lost it and how long it had been lost, no one knows. Its discovery initiated a series of events that touched the life of every person in Israel and Judah (2 Kings 22 and 23). When King Josiah read it, he was extremely alarmed. He was alarmed because their lives and doctrine were not in harmony with the teaching of the book. Then he and all the people made a covenant with God to carry out that which was written in the book. Josiah then led the people in the removal of all the things which the book condemned. He also led them in the doing of all that the book commanded. As a result, a great reformation took place.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have a reformation in our community like that one? In this example we have the simple formula for such a reformation. First, like Josiah of old, we must find the book of the law of God and read it. In our day, that book is the New Testament. It is not lost in the sense of being out of sight. It is lost on book shelves and coffee tables. It is lost in plain sight. It is lost because it is not being read. What we need

most today is to read the book and hear the book read. The New Testament is God's present day message for you and me! Turn off the television, cancel subscriptions to numerous magazines. Throw the junk mail in the trash can. **Read the book!**

Secondly, like Josiah of old, we must make a covenant with God to obey it. It does little good to read the book if we do not obey — all of it! This will require some soul-searching and cost-counting. Read Luke 9:57-62.

Thirdly, like Josiah of old, we must stop doing all those things the book condemns and start doing all those things the book commands. Here is the real key. There must be **doing**. And the doing of it is both negative and positive. Some things we must exclude, others must be included. Some must be stopped and others started.

This is the answer to troubled homes and broken marriages. This is the answer for drug abuse and suicide. This is the answer for crime and violence. This is the answer for lying and cheating. This is the answer for rape and child abuse. This is the answer for hunger and strife. **Find the book!** ✞

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

Stories

I read a story of war,
Of kings and princes fair,
A giant killed by a
boy's slingshot,
A man whose strength
was his hair.

Of miracles and wanderings
To find a promised land.
Of men who built their
homes on rock,
And some their homes on
sand.

I read a story of love,
Of a God-Man come to
earth
To live, to die, to live
again,
To give man's soul its
worth.

Of all the books I've read,
Of all the stories heard,
None has moved me quite
as much
As stories from God's
Word.

—Jessie Granville

The Bible's Honesty

David Deffenbaugh

Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, Jacob could be cunning, Moses was reluctant, Gideon was fearful, David was scheming, and Elijah became despondent. These certainly aren't the characteristics for which these men are fondly remembered. However, they are qualities that on occasion were displayed. Such is a testimony to the Bible's honesty. That grand book not only reveals God and His will to man, but it also calls man to submit to that will. One way that is achieved is by telling us about people with whom God dealt directly and how they responded. The Bible, though, in its honesty, does not hide their faults and shortcomings. That honesty serves a great purpose.

First, these individuals, who obviously found God's favor, were human, just like us. We are able to identify with the fact that they had faults and shortcomings. But if we can identify with their weakness we should also identify with their strength. Noah was obedient, Abraham showed great faith, Moses followed God's lead, Gideon relied on God's strength, David repented, and Elijah recovered. We too, in spite of the unmistakable fact that we are human, can do God's will.

Second, even great people make mistakes. It is easy to become too demanding of people. We often have expectations of elders, deacons, preachers, Bible school teachers, and other fellow Christians that many Bible heroes couldn't live up to. Though God never has condoned the faults of men, he has always allowed room for recovery.

Of course, we expect the Bible to be honest. If it weren't, it wouldn't be the Bible. But its honesty challenges us to actively pursue God's will in our lives, knowing full well we are weak. After all, we know others who were weak, as are we, who pleased God. It also challenges us to respond to weakness in others as God responds — with patience, compassion, understanding, and encouragement. ✝

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

The Relevant Gospel

Tim Nichols

The death of those close to us reminds us of the brevity of life. In just the past few weeks I have attended the funerals of two friends. One had lived a "long" life, and one left us while still very young, as the result of a tragic automobile accident. I have just talked with the parents of another old friend who had recently died of a heart attack. He was a few years younger than I am.

I attended my 20 year high school reunion and discovered that ten of my classmates have already passed from this life. I remember them all as young and healthy. Two of them had participated with me in a gymnastics tournament when we were in school. Another was a star athlete who seemed to always force me to another weight class in wrestling because I could not compete with him for a spot on the varsity team. Another I remember as a giggly girl who called me "Timmy Toodles" on the back of her senior picture.

I don't think that any of these, or their families, would mind my mentioning them here. They all remind us that life upon this earth is truly brief. Hopefully, they will all remind us that Christianity is very real. Those who tell us that the truth we preach is "irrelevant" because it is not "lively" enough to capture the attention of our sensuous generation, or "open-minded" enough to encompass all of the things that the world wants to believe and practice, have missed the whole point.

The truth is relevant for our generation precisely *because* it is simple enough to be understood and applied by all men and women everywhere, who will one day pass from this fleeting existence into eternity. The Gospel (when it is obeyed) is, in effect, our "ticket" to heaven. Heaven is the goal, and the Gospel is the means by which we can attain it. Who would refuse to attend a ball game because the ticket was not, in his or her opinion, ornate enough? Who would refuse to cash a check for a million dollars because the check was too plain?

The faith for which we contend was delivered just as it ought to have been delivered in the first century. It perfectly meets the needs of

all those who are traveling between the cradle and the grave: the teenager, the old farmer, the librarian, the contemporary musician, the introvert, the extrovert, the groundskeeper, and the college president. Anyone, in any of these categories, who demands that we change the Gospel to accommodate his or her "special needs" simply does not understand the purpose of the Gospel. To change our teaching and practice of the Gospel to accommodate any one of these groups would exclude some of the others, and it would invalidate our "ticket."

The "special need" that the Gospel is designed to meet is shared by all equally. We all need hope for the day when our mortal remains will be placed in the grave. We all need to have our sins forgiven. We all need to be restored to fellowship with God. If these truths seem to be too "simple" for you, we are sorry to tell you that we have no right to change them. The simple Gospel of Christ is the only "ticket" to heaven that we can show you. If you want a more elegant or entertaining ticket, you will need to look elsewhere, but we can offer no assurances that it will be honored when this life is over and eternity awaits. ✝

Tim Nichols preaches for the Church of Christ in Keyser, West Virginia, U.S.A.

There Is No Death

There is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown
They shine forever more.

There is no death! The forest leaves
Convert to life the viewless air,
The rocks disgorge to feed
The hungry moss they bear.

There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

And marching on unseen before us,
The dear immortal spirits tread,
For all the boundless universe
Is life — "There are no dead."

— Anonymous

The Bible . . . Hope Of The Nation

W. T. Allison

In this age of much skepticism, unbelief, infidelity, immorality, and open ridicule of God and all things holy, let us consider some reasons for believing the Bible.

In spite of all the claims of the evolutionists, the Bible gives the only reasonable and sensible explanation of the origin of all things.

The Bible has withstood all the attacks made upon it through the ages. All efforts made to destroy it and disprove it have ended in miserable failure. As Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible gives strength and comfort to those who study and live by it in life and hope in death. Paul spoke of this in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Indeed it tells us of a better place for those who prepare for it (Matthew 25:34).

Obedience to the Bible brings happiness and peace now, and the hope of even more later (Psalm 1; Philippians 4:7).

Those who disregard the Bible, ignore its teaching, and violate its laws bring upon themselves unhappiness and misery. As Paul wrote, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Galatians 6:7,8).

Those who refuse to believe and obey the Word of God and live faithful to it will be eternally lost.

The Bible is man's hope — his guide in life. Have you obeyed it? ✝

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Quick Commentary On Crucial Verses

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

The apostle strongly urges

Every Christian in the Lord's church

Because of what has been said in the previous verses

As a recipient of God's mercy, one must sacrifice his life to Him

Present openly yourself on the altar for God's inspection

Only a faithful, clean life is an acceptable offering to God

Formal religion is unacceptable, as God looks upon the heart for faith and agreement

—Fenter Northern

John's Emphasis on Truth

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

We believe the Holy Spirit used words to communicate divine truth (1 Corinthians 2:13). However, it appears that the Spirit chose words consistent with the style, vocabulary, and personality of the various writers of Scripture. Such accounts for the uniqueness of style as seen in John's writings. John used words like love, life, witness, testimony, and **truth** often.

Note his emphasis upon **truth** in 1, 2, and 3 John:

Truth, according to John, is something to be known. The theme of 1 John is our confidence in Christ. **Know** is the key word. Truth can be known and understood! No mystery! No speculation!

Sadly, many have espoused the view that no matter how intense one's desire, he can never really know what the truth is. Sad, because if one can't know truth, he can never be free, for truth makes us free (John 8:32).

Truth, according to John, is to abide in us, as we abide in it. John praised and commended all those who have known the truth—because the truth abides in us (2 John 2). He goes on to say that when we do not abide in the doctrine (truth), we have not the approval of the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

Doctrinal truth is so important that those who do not bring it are not to be received (2 John 9-11).

Truth, according to John, is to govern our practice. It is more than mental knowledge. It must be applied to life. John commended Gaius because he *"walked in the truth"* (3 John 3). It was a joy for John to know that Christians were faithfully walking in truth. So, truth not only is to be **known**, but **practiced**!

Truth, according to John, is something in which we share. When we receive those who bring the truth, we become fellow-workers for the truth (3 John 8). We become partners in truth, as we love it, teach it, and practice it.

In these times when there is such a low commitment, we need to saturate our hearts with John's emphasis on **truth**. ✝

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Fellowship in the Lord

Rick Cunningham

How can we identify true Christians? Here is a list of characteristics often used:

> If people are confident in their religious beliefs, showing themselves to be religious in everything they do; if they dress appropriately, attend all religious services, and can teach what they believe to be true; if they are fastidious in their beliefs and practices, and are soul-winners concerned about mission efforts; if they keep their religious commitments as they think best; if they give a tenth of everything back to God; if they are concerned about clean appearances; if they honor the past and the religious heroes of history; if their religious positions are unalterable; if they think independently as they serve God in their own determined way; such people are thought to be sincere worshippers, with unquestionable motives, worthy of fellowship in Christ's church.

But Jesus condemned just such a group as hypocrites, sons of hell, blind fools, blind guides, whitewashed tombs, murderers of the prophets, snakes, and a brood of vipers. That was Jesus' description of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Read the chapter.

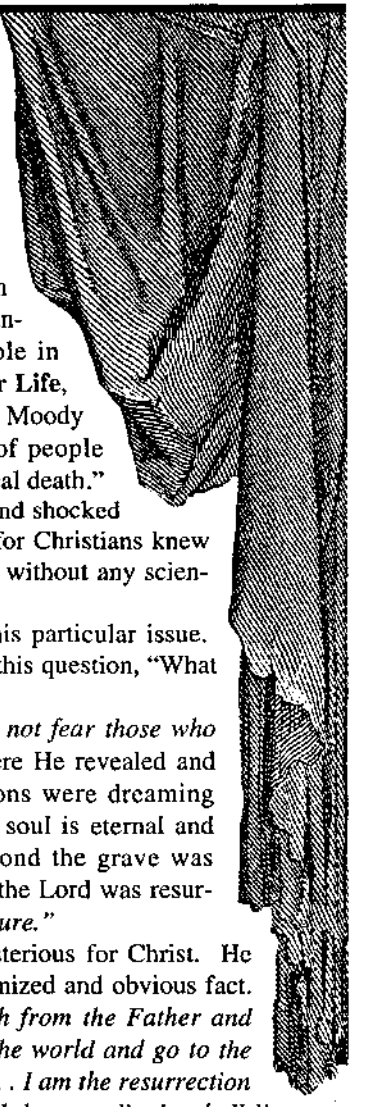
True Christians are identified by their **obedience** to Jesus. There is no other measure of a Christian. To open our fellowship to include all who fit the qualities above would be to include the Pharisees in fellowship with the church of Christ. What a flagrant misidentification that would be!

Fellowship does not extend to every sincere religious person. It is only extended to those who obey Jesus as Lord.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). ✞

Rick Cunningham is the preacher for the church in Clyde, Texas, U. S. A.

Opening the Curtain



Arthur Ohanov

About two years ago a book from America was translated into the Russian language and made a sensation among people in Ukraine. The title of this book is **Life After Life**, and its author is Dr. Raymond Moody. Dr. Moody investigated the experience and feelings of people who passed the condition of so-called "clinical death."

Lots of people were deeply impressed and shocked after reading this book, but not Christians, for Christians knew what was going to happen after earthly life, without any scientific investigation or proof.

Let's consider what God tells us on this particular issue. Yes, to Jesus, and only to Him, we can ask this question, "What will be after death?"

In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."* Here He revealed and confirmed for us what previous generations were dreaming about and vaguely guessing — the human soul is eternal and undestroyable. The existence of life beyond the grave was excellently proved by Jesus Himself, when the Lord was resurrected *"on the third day, according to Scripture."*

This transition to eternity was not mysterious for Christ. He spoke of a future life as a universally-recognized and obvious fact. Jesus knew what He said — *"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father"* (John 16:28). And He also said, *". . . I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"* (John 11:25,26).

Jesus illustrated His revelation on future life with parables and true stories. One of His wonderful parables is a parable of a rich man and a beggar

named Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). The Lord opens this curtain that separates visible from invisible, and a mysterious picture of life arises before our eyes. We see the happiness of a righteous man and the terrible tortures of a sinner.

In His parable Jesus shows us two places where the life of men will be continued, and He also points to the two different fates: eternal happiness and endless tortures.

We can make some very important conclusions based on this parable:

(1) Hades is a place of suffering: *". . . I am tormented in this flame"* (verse 24).

(2) Hades is a place of mournful rememberings: *". . . Son, remember . . . ."* (verse 25). Our memory is the only thing we will take there with us. We will recall everything.

(3) Hades is a place of unrealizable desires and unreciprocated prayers: *". . . Father Abraham, have mercy on me . . . ."* (verse 24).

(4) Hades is a place of realizing our responsibility for a bad example we served to other people on earth: *". . . send him to my father's house"* (verse 27).

(5) Hades is a temporary place for sinners, with Hell following as the eternal dwelling place of this most disgusting and foul society (Revelation 21:8). It is the place prepared for Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

Deepening in a study of a future life, we realize that eternal happiness and everything prepared by God for the redeemed surpass all our imagination: *". . . Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him"* (1 Corinthians 2:9). God prepared such a place that we cannot describe with words and feelings. That is our home, and there is our citizenship (Philippians 3:20).

And one more conclusion that we were about to miss from our Lord's parable: Nothing wrong, sinful, or unjust can be in our home in Heaven, because there is a "great gulf" that separates us from others.

Praise God for His mercy!
Thank Him for His plan!
Hallelujah! Amen!

Arthur Ohanov is a young Christian in Donetsk, Ukraine, and he is now preaching the Gospel there.

Verse Search

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

1. Jesus saw _ ___ _____ ____ ___ _____. (V. 1)

2. How did He heal the man? (V. 6,7)

3. What was the response of the Jews when they realized that the man had been healed? (V. 8,9)

4. On which day was this miracle done? (V. 14)

5. What did some of the Pharisees say about Jesus? (V. 16)

6. Others asked, "_____ ___ __ ____ ___ __ __ _____ __ ____ _____?" (V. 16)

7. When they asked the man who had been healed, what did he say? (V. 17)

8. Why did the man's parents not answer clearly? (V. 18-22)

9. What did the man say when the Pharisees went to him again? (V. 25)

10. The people denounced Jesus and the healed man, saying, "___ ____ _____ _____" (V. 28)

11. In amazement the man answered, "Now we know that ____ ____ ___ ____ _____; ___ ___ _____ __ __ _____ __ ___ ___ ____ ___ ____, He hears him." (V. 30,31)

12. "If this Man ____ _____ ____ ____, ___ _____ _____ _____." (V. 33)

13. When the Jews excommunicated the man, so that he was cut off from being able to worship God, what did Jesus do ? (V. 34,35)

14. Jesus said to him, "___ ____ _____ ____ ____ ____ ___ _____?" (V. 35)

15. How did Jesus identify the Son of God? (V. 37)

16. What did the man do in response? (V. 38)

17. Jesus said that He had come into the world for what? (V. 39)

18. Why were the Pharisees not forgiven of their sins? (V. 41)

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

Faith Or Feeling?

Frank Chesser

Are you walking by **faith** or by **feeling**? How you answer this question will determine your eternal destiny. How do you know you are saved? Many people respond to this question by saying, "Because I feel it in my heart." How tragic that one would allow something as important as salvation to be based upon mere feeling. In no other area of life does one allow feeling to be the basic criterion for determining the rightness or wrongness of a particular thing or course of action.

One does not bake a cake by "feeling." Instead, a recipe is consulted in order that one might know the proper ingredients to use, the correct amount of each ingredient, and the proper temperature at which to bake. A contractor would never attempt to build a house by "feeling." Rather, he consults a blueprint in order that he might know exactly how the house should be constructed. One would not think of taking a cross-country trip by "feeling." Instead, a road map is consulted so as to know the exact route to take, when to turn right, left, etc.

Furthermore, in baking a cake, one would not argue for the use of fifteen additional ingredients on the basis of the failure of the recipe to specify that such ingredients were not to be used. If a blueprint calls for three bedrooms, a wise contractor would obviously not act so presumptuously as to add a fourth bedroom and then attempt to justify his actions by saying, "But the blueprint doesn't say not to." A traveler desiring to reach a certain destination does not feel at liberty to go in just any direction on the basis of the road map's failure to eliminate such routes with a "Thou shalt not . . . ."

Many people seem unable or unwilling to apply this same logic to religion. We are commanded to *"walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7). God's Word is the only source of faith (Romans 10:17). Thus, to walk by faith is to walk according to the teachings of the Word of God. It is not possible to engage in an act *"by faith"* if that act is not authorized by the Word of God. God's Word is a divine recipe, blueprint, or road map.

One cannot know he is saved simply because he "feels" saved. One cannot know that his worship is acceptable to God simply because he "feels" that it is. Neither is it possible to know that one is on the road to Heaven merely on the basis of feeling. God's Word, which is our blueprint or road map, must be consulted. As Moses was careful to follow the divine pattern for the construction of the physical tabernacle (Exodus 25:40), even so must we exercise diligence in following God's divine pattern for the construction of our spiritual lives.

It is imperative that we recognize the unreliable nature of feelings. Subsequent to war, women have sometimes remarried, "feeling" that their husbands were dead, only to discover months or years later that they were alive. Truly, feelings are deceptive and unreliable. What seems right from a human perspective may be wrong. *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 14:12).

Feelings are often produced by the acceptance and belief of testimony. For example, a man receives a message stating that a loved one has just been killed in an automobile accident. He is immediately overwhelmed with grief. A short time later, he receives another message informing him that a terrible mistake had been made: the previous message was in error, and his loved one is alive and well. Immediately his feelings undergo a dramatic transformation. He is filled with joy. One's feelings respond in direct relation to the nature of the information or testimony received. If one receives a sad message and believes it, he will be sad, regardless of whether the message is true or false. This is why feelings are so unreliable, both in everyday life and in religious matters.

Many people are in religious error because they have allowed their feelings to be their guide, and their feelings are based upon religious teaching which is not in harmony with the Word of God. One can feel just as spiritually secure in error as in truth. Prior to becoming a Christian, Paul was a devout Pharisee. He described himself as one who was *". . . taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God . . . ."* (Acts 22:3). He had lived in all good conscience before God

(Acts 23:1). Paul felt spiritually secure. He felt that he was right, but he was wrong. Had Paul been determined to "walk by feelings," he would never have renounced Judaism and embraced Christianity.

Far more is involved in "walking by faith" than just believing in God and the deity of Christ. Even the devils *"believe and tremble"* (James 2:19). Jesus spoke of certain Jews who *"believed on him"* (John 6:30), yet He later described these same Jews as children of the Devil (John 8:44), because they refused to employ their faith in action by complying with His will. Among the chief rulers of the Jews, many believed on Christ, *". . . but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"* (John 12:42,43). Agrippa believed what the prophets said concerning Christ, yet he fell short of becoming a Christian (Acts 26:27,28). *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24).

The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. The faith that avails is that *". . . faith which worketh by love"* (Galatians 5:6). In order to please God, one must be characterized by the *"obedience of faith"* (Romans 16:26). Who shall enter the kingdom of Heaven? Jesus answered, *". . . he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). Salvation is reserved for a select group, *". . . them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:9).

Consequently, man is saved by divine grace and blood when he responds to God's will in obedient faith. Having heard, believed, and obeyed the will of God, man enjoys the reality of salvation by grace, and thus experiences a "great feeling." A Christian does not appeal to his good feelings as "proof" or "evidence" of his salvation. He appeals to divine truth as is set forth in the Bible, and his compliance with that truth. *"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). However, employing one's faith in obedience to the will of God, and thus enjoying salvation by grace, certainly affords ample reason for good feelings.

Are you walking by **faith** or by **feeling**? Remember, the untaught heart is *". . . deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked . . . ."* (Jeremiah 17:9). Solomon affirmed, *"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool . . . ."* (Proverbs 28:26). Place your trust in God and His Word, not in the fickle nature of human feelings. ✞

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Salvation *in Christ* Is Salvation *in His Church*

Basil Overton

"Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10). Salvation is in Christ Jesus. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Salvation from sin can be had nowhere except in Christ Jesus.

To be in Christ is the same as being in the church of Christ. *"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: . . . And let the peace of God rule in your hearts to the which ye are called in one body"* (Colossians 1:2; 3:15). Those at Colosse who were in Christ were in one body. But that one body is the church. *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18).

Christ is the Savior of all men in the sense that all men who *want* to be saved *can* be saved. Only those *will be* saved by Christ who *do* what He tells them in the New Testament to do to be saved. *"Though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; being then made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:8,9).

When a person obeys Christ, he believes the Gospel; he *believes* that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 3:23). He *repents* of his sins (Acts 17:30). He is *baptized* into Christ (Romans 6:3). When one thus gets into Christ, he is saved *by Christ*, for salvation is *in Christ*. That is why baptism is necessary; baptism puts one *into Christ* (Galatians 3:27). That is why Peter said: *". . . Repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins . . . ."* (Acts 2:38). ✝

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Reasons Why Some Do Not Obey the Gospel

John Thiesen

Why don't all people who have heard the Gospel obey it and become Christians?

It is difficult to understand why not, especially when we consider the marvelous benefits of becoming a child of God: the forgiveness of sins, peace of mind, purpose in life, and after you die, a glorious body given in the resurrection to wear throughout eternity! Who would knowingly turn down these good things?

Various reasons are given for failure to respond to the Gospel invitation. Let's look at some of these hindrances.

Love of sin. Many are not willing to give up some of their sins for Christ. These mean too much to them, and the idea of parting company with them is unthinkable. That's what Jesus meant when He said, *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil"* (John 3:19). The love of sin has too strong a hold on them. But Jesus asked, *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* (Mark 8:36). What particular sin is really worth clinging to to the point of losing out on eternal life? What is worth more than life? Not even the whole world!

Some don't see their need for a Savior. These are people who do not see themselves as lost. They think of themselves as good, law-abiding, and of high morals. They may feel that they are doing as well as they can, and that God ought to be satisfied with that. They may have high standards, but what about those times when they do sin, as all men and women do? The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). They need a Savior to die for those sins, and Jesus is the only one who can fill that role. It is only in Him that they may receive a cleansing through His blood (1 John 1:7).

Fear of being ridiculed. Jesus said that at His glorious coming He will be ashamed of anyone who was ashamed of Him in this world (Luke 9:26). I would rather stand with

Jesus now and be shunned by some of my peers than to spend eternity with those same people in hell at the Lord's coming.

Inconsistencies of some professing Christians cause some to turn away from Christianity. But why should I allow a few hypocrites in the church to discourage me from being with all the faithful Christians there who are in the majority? Why should I be headed for the same dreadful place awaiting the hypocrites?

Some are afraid their sins are too bad to be forgiven. However, Jesus said that *" . . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37).

Finally, **there are some who are postponing the matter.** They think they are going to live another day and have plenty of time to get right with God. James warns these, *"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (James 4:14).

None of these excuses are acceptable to God. Of excuse-makers the Lord said, *" . . . That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper"* (Luke 14:24). ✝

John Thiesen lives in Mobile, AL, U.S.A., but is very involved in spreading the Gospel in the country of Malawi, in Africa, where his family served as missionaries for many years.

The World We Make

We make the world in which we live
By what we gather and what we give,
By our daily deeds and the things we say,
By what we keep or we cast away.

We make our world by the beauty we see
In a skylark's song or a lilac tree,
In a butterfly's wing, in the pale moon's rise,
And the wonder that lingers in midnight skies.

We make our world by the life we lead,
By the friends we have, by the books we read,
By the pity we show in the hour of care,
By the loads we lift and the love we share.

We make our world by the goals we pursue,
By the heights we seek and the higher view,
By hopes and dreams that reach the sun
And a will to fight till the heights are won.

What is the place in which we dwell,
A hut or a palace, a heaven or hell
We gather and scatter, we take and we give,
We make our world — and there we live.

— Alfred Grant Walton

Washed

Leon Barnes

Everything tends to get dirty. Even people must be washed often or they both look dirty and the smell indicates a problem. But the greatest need for washing is one which is not seen from the outside at all. It is the need for cleansing on the inside. Sin enters every life and stains us with its filth (Romans 3:23). We have all, like sheep, gone astray, each one to his own way. This sin in our lives separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1,2; Ephesians 2:1-3). Unless something is done to cleanse us from sin and its effects on us, we will suffer eternal ruin away from God (Romans 6:23).

Because of God's amazing love and grace toward us, He has made it possible for all of us to be cleansed from our sins. We can be washed and made as clean as if we had never sinned at all. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul described the horrible sins one can get into and the fact that if we continue in them we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. He listed: *"Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers."* He then said, *"And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord and in the Spirit of our God."* No matter how dirty and filthy we have become in sin, we can be washed through the blood of Christ and have a new start. By such a washing we can become justified in the Lord's sight and set apart for the greatest service of all.

It is this washing which sets us apart as the church. In Ephesians 5:25-28 Paul was describing the church when he said, *"Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."* The church is not innately good. It has been cleansed. It is made up of those who have been dirty in sin,

but have been cleansed. It is the washing which will make it possible for God to have us presented as a glorious, spotless, wrinkleless church. This washing is done in water.

In Titus 3:5 Paul explained the washing further. He said, *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."*

The strange thing about this washing is that it doesn't have anything to do with cleansing the outside, but the inside. In 1 Peter 3:20,21 the Bible says, *"Who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

The washing is done in water at the time of baptism, but the cleansing is done to the heart or conscience by the blood of Christ. Remember Revelation 7:14, *"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb."*

The question isn't, Have you ever gotten dirty on the inside? It is, Have you been washed? And, Are you living daily as one who has been washed, remaining in the cleansing flow of the blood of Christ? Truly the church is made up of those who have gone far down into sin but were washed and made clean in Christ's blood. But to have the cleansing, one must be washed in the water by the Word, or have the washing of regeneration as described in John 3:3-8.

Have you been washed? ✝

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Admonition

All the water in the world,
however hard it tried,
Could never, never sink a ship
unless it got inside.

All the evil in the world,
the blackest kind of sin,
Can never hurt you one least bit —
unless **YOU** let it in.

— Anonymous

Is One Church As Good As Another?

Dalton Key

While living upon this earth, Jesus promised, " . . . *I will build my church* . . . ." (Matthew 16:18). What did He intend to build?

Did the Lord plan to establish a denomination? No. A denomination, by definition, is a named part of a larger whole. The scores of denominational bodies around us, which claim at least some allegiance to Christ, purport to exist as but parts or units of the larger, universal body of Christians. They are distinguished one from another by peculiar doctrines and practices. Christ could not have had a denomination in mind when He promised to build His church, for that which He built was to be, not a part of a larger whole of redeemed people, but the whole itself. After the church was established on Pentecost Day, as recorded by Luke in the second chapter of Acts, the saved were being added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). If the saved were in the church, and the church was meant to be made up of those saved, the church could not possibly have been designed as a part or unit of a larger whole.

No, the church which Jesus promised to build is simply the body of people saved by the blood of Christ and who submit to Him as the body's head. Because all those who obey the Gospel and are saved are added to the church, *"There is one body* . . . ." (Ephesians 4:4). Wherever and whenever faithful saints are found, who have received salvation from sin by the grace of God at the time of their Gospel obedience, the church may be found. As the body of Christ, operating under His headship (Ephesians 1:22,23), the church of Christ must submit itself to His divine will in all matters pertaining to work and worship (Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:17). The church which Jesus built is both singular and exclusively His.

In light of these facts, who can honestly say, "One church is just as good as another"? ✝

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He Enjoyed Himself to Death

C. Bruce White

We have all heard the statement, "He worked himself to death." We realize the implications and warn ourselves and others of the impending danger. I wonder if the opposite extreme has been adequately researched.

We live in a pleasure-oriented world. It is not my intent in this brief article to exhaust the implications of this situation. My purpose is to expose an attitude which may find expression in every quarter of life.

Paul wrote of this in 1 Timothy 5:6, *"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."* The context is making recommendation for widows whom the church may support. It appears that Paul is impressing the fact that church business is serious.

It may be that this impression needs to be emphasized once again. It does not take an in-depth study of the church to observe the need. The casual observer of the development of church functions, action, and programs can attest to the move.

There are preachers who spend more time searching for a quaint story, a lively illustration, or a wittier joke than they do in researching the biblical basis of their sermon. The pressure is on him to perform; after all, the audience must leave thinking well of him and having "enjoyed the sermon."

It is not unusual to find the entire worship service motivated by "what the people enjoy." The songs must be entertaining, not too slow, not too many verses, not morbid. The prayers should be short, fresh, and alert. The sermon must be refreshing, uplifting, positive, invigorating, and, by all means, brief. The entire episode is underscored by the theme, "Give them what they want, or they may not come back."

The question which ultimately must be faced is this, "Is their coming back of any value?" The business of the church is serious.

This same attitude exists in the Christian's approach to life.

Recently, a divorcee told me that he "didn't think that he could live his life alone." He was saying that his physical pleasure was of greater value than his spiritual well-being. It is pertinent to observe that one would be better off without a mate for the rest of life than without God for the rest of eternity. But that kind of teaching upsets people, and they cannot interpret it as reality, since it isn't fun or contributing to their personal pleasure. It is, however, very similar to the teaching of one Who said, *"If your right hand offends, then cut it off . . . ."* (Matthew 5:30).

The frequent response to this is that the church should be planning more programs, building more centers for activities, and providing more opportunities for the members to play, rather than teaching serious lessons on how to live. The question that must be faced is this, "Will there be any **real** members of the church to occupy these places?" The business of the church is serious.

Now, am I opposing everything that is not serious? Obviously, I am not. But the emphasis of the church needs scrutiny. We must be alert to the pressure to *"conform to this present generation."* We cannot be guilty of reading *"they will follow their own lusts and heap to themselves teachers who will scratch their ears"* (2 Timothy 4:3), and then practice the error.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and insisted on an introspection. In 1 Corinthians 16:13 he charged them, *"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."* The emphasis in this verse is to distinguish between behaving as men (courageous, strong, mature) and as children, or weaklings. Surely, we do no harm to this text by saying that Paul wants the church to "get serious." Maybe that is what we need to hear today. We don't want to be found "enjoying ourselves to death." ✞

C. Bruce White preaches for the Beltline Church of Christ in Decatur, Alabama, U. S. A.

The only way to be good is to obey God, love your fellowman, and hate the devil.

The Church Is Us!

Ron Bryant

Speaking of the citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, Jesus said, *"Ye are the salt of the earth . . . ye are the light of the world"* (Matthew 5:12ff). He then urged His disciples, *"Let your light shine . . . let men see your good works and as a result come to glorify your Father in heaven."* He urges simply that His followers function as a distinctive and saving influence in the world.

The Kingdom of God's dear Son is made up of men and women, boys and girls, that have been translated out of darkness. They have been reconciled unto God through the blood of Christ. These reconciled ones also have come to a post of duty. They are called by God to personify and to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the world.

In any community members of the body represent the Kingdom in that community. It is obvious that in a given place the body can never be more effective nor dynamic than the individuals that compose it. In simple terms, if we belong to Christ, we represent Him. It is our faith and our love, our devotion and our commitment that the world observes. It is only as we consistently and effectively personify and proclaim our Lord that His body is able to function effectively. In even simpler terms: If the church is a warm, caring fellowship it will be so only if we are warm and caring. If the church is growing spiritually and numerically, it will be so only as we are studying, sharing, praising, following, and encouraging others to do so. If it is a generous and liberal body, it will be so only as you and I give liberally and sacrificially to the work of the Lord. If it is a spiritually strong, biblically sound body, it will be so because you and I are, above all else, committed to the Word of God. If it is a soul-winning body, it will be so because you and I are daily proclaiming and personifying Christ. The church is us. ✞

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

One Church in Many Places

Royce Frederick

The New Testament uses the terms "church" and "churches." Did Christ build many churches, or only one church?

First, we need to understand the meaning of "church." The New Testament was written in the Greek language. The word "church" in English Bibles is translated from the Greek word "ekklesia," which means "the called out." It refers to people who have been called out and assembled together. For example, the city clerk at Ephesus said, *"But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly* [ekklesia]*"* (Acts 19:39).

The church is **people**, not a building made by men. The church is made of **Christians and Christ**. When sinners obey the Gospel, they become "Christians" (Acts 2:36-41; 11:26). All true Christians in any place are the "church" in that place, with Christ as their Head (see Acts 2:47; 5:11; 14:23,27; Romans 16:5; Philemon 2; Ephesians 1:22,23).

Old Testament Israel was *"the congregation* [ekklesia] *in the wilderness"* (Acts 7:38). The people were called out of slavery in Egypt — not to wander through the wilderness separately — but to go to Canaan together as God's nation.

We are called out of sin — not to wander through life separately — but to be united in Christ and travel toward heaven together. The Lord directs Christians (the church) to assemble on the first day of each week to worship and to encourage each other (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Hebrews

10:23-25). He also teaches us to cooperate like the parts of a human body (Romans 12:3-8). When *". . . every part does its share . . ."* it *". . . causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* (Ephesians 4:16). The church "grows" when people obey the Gospel (Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7) and when members learn and obey more of God's Word (Hebrews 5:12-14).

We are called out of error — not to scatter spiritually into different denominations — but to be united in one body and follow only the doctrine of Christ. On the night before He died, Christ prayed, *"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me"* (John 17:21).

So, in one sense, Christ has **only one "church."** He did not begin any denominations. "Denomination" usually refers to a group of churches organized under a man-made name and following man-made doctrines. Christ promised to build **one** church: *". . . I will build My church . . . ."* (Matthew 16:18). The church is the "body" of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23). Like a human body, the Lord's church has **one head** and **one body**. Christ is not the head of many denominations. *"There is one body . . . one Lord, one faith . . . ."* (Ephesians 4:4,5). We continue to be part of His church if we continue following the "one faith" — one set of beliefs given by Christ.

However, the Bible also speaks of **"churches,"** such as *"the churches of Galatia"* (Galatians 1:2). These were not different denominations. These churches were in different locations in Galatia, but they taught the same doctrine. Paul wrote, *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you . . . ."* (1 Corinthians 1:10). Man-made religious names and man-made doctrines cause divisions. If we follow doctrines of men, our worship becomes worthless (Matthew 15:9). But if we continue in the teachings of Christ, we are truly His disciples (John 8:31,32). *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9).

If we are not in Galatia, we cannot be called "the churches of Galatia." But everyone who truly obeys the Gospel and follows Christ is **"in Christ"** (Romans 8:1; 6:3,4). Anywhere on earth, churches which truly follow Christ are **"the churches of Christ"** (Romans 16:16). ✞

Royce Frederick preaches in India four months each year and edits *International Gospel Teacher*. He lives in Lufkin, Texas, U.S.A.

The Church Is Important

Dayton Keesee

The church that belongs to Christ is profoundly important, but you are in danger of being deceived concerning that importance. That danger is evident by poor church attendance, the mass of mankind seeking fellowship and happiness in other places, and many who want Christ but not the church. Religious division seriously attacks the significance of the Lord's church. Inside the church, indifference and biblical ignorance and fractured fellowship all further identify a problem concerning the importance of the church.

How do we know the church is important? Because Christ purchased the church *"with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28). How important is your blood to you? Is it worth more than your house? Is it worth more than your bank account? Is it worth more than your job? How much was Christ's blood worth to Him? When you answer that, you will know how important the church is to Christ, because He gave His blood for the church! If you were to give your blood for the church, would that be positive proof

that the church is important to you, or are you deceived as to its importance?

The church is important because Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Do you want Christ to be your Savior for eternity (Hebrews 13:20f)? Then you need to be a faithful member of the church until death (Revelation 2:10). Since being a member of the church is essential for Christ to save you (Acts 2:38-47), that makes the church so important to you for all your tomorrows — and eternity (2 Peter 1:10f).

The church is important because it is the fullness of Christ who *"filleth all in all"* (Ephesians 1:22f). Whatever is involved in Christ making us full or complete (Ephesians 3:14-19, especially verse 19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11; Matthew 5:48) we must be in the church to gain that fullness because the church is the fullness of Christ. Whatever He can do for mankind, He intends to do it through the church. That makes the church important to you personally.

Another graphic way to see the importance of the church is to note the biblical figures of speech that identify the church. The church is the body over which Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18). What a ghastly sight is seen when a body is separated from its head! Is your body important to your head? To that degree the church is important to Christ.

To say the church is not important would be like taking the blood (of Christ) from the body. My brother-in-law is a mortician. I have seen him preparing a body after death. A body without blood is not a pleasant sight! Since Christ gave His blood for the church, God forbid that we try to remove His blood from the body by denying the importance of the church.

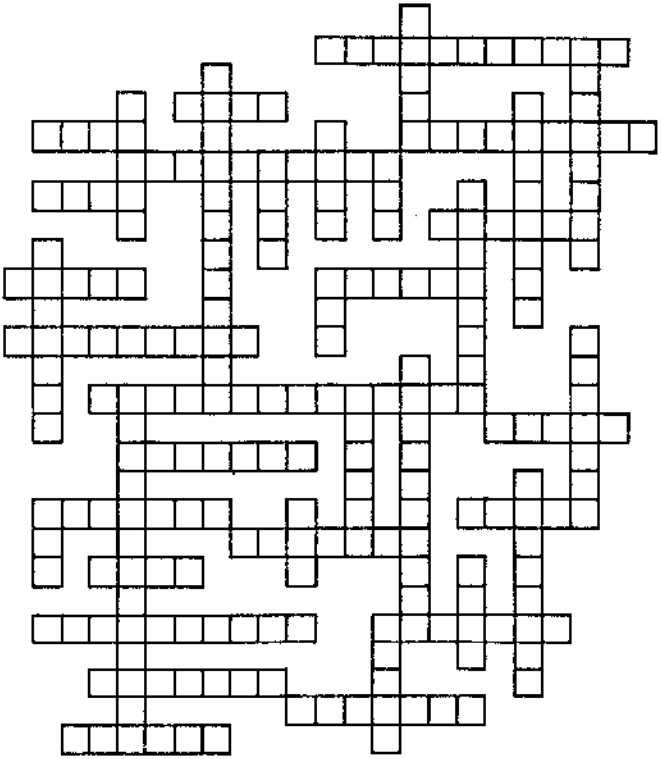
If the church is not important, Christ is a King without a kingdom, a head without a body, a vine without branches, a shepherd without sheep, and a body without blood! Such a thought should send chills down our spine!

Do you need to elevate the importance of the church in your thinking? ✞

Dayton Keesee is the preacher for the Eastside Church of Christ in Midwest City, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

"To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever" (Ephesians 3:21).

The Book of Galatians for adults



The number of letters in each word below will help you fill in the puzzle above.

3	4	5	6	7	8
JOY	AMEN	ANGEL	FATHER	ABRAHAM	BARNABAS
LAW	ENVY	ENEMY	GOSPEL	APOSTLE	CONTRARY
SON	HOPE	GRACE	LEAVEN	FREEDOM	NEIGHBOR
SOW	LIVE	GREEK	SPIRIT	GALATIA	PATIENCE
	LOVE	PEACE		GENTILE	
	PAUL	SINAI		JUSTIFY	
	REAP			PROMISE	
				SERVANT	

9	10	11
ELEMENTAL	CONFIDENCE	INHERITANCE
JERUSALEM	GENTLENESS	
	PERSECUTED	

12	13	14
FAITHFULNESS	RIGHTEOUSNESS	TRANSGRESSIONS

4 Kinds of Worship Mentioned in the New Testament

Ken Tyler

1. Vain Worship

Jesus said in reference to the scribes and Pharisees of His day, *"**But in vain they do worship me**, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9). Notice carefully that Jesus described the worship of these people as being ***"in vain."*** The reason He gave for their worship being in vain was that they were *"teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Today most people say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." If this were true there would be no such thing as the commandments of men. We must realize that if we teach the commandments of men our worship will be in vain just like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day.

2. Ignorant Worship

Listen carefully to these words of Paul as he preached in Athens, Greece, " . . . *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore **ye ignorantly worship**, him declare I unto you"* (Acts 17:22,23). In verse 30 of this chapter Paul called upon the people of Athens to repent of their **ignorant worship**. Today many gods are being worshiped in this world, but I hope we know there is only one God. Jesus told Satan in Matthew 4:10, " . . . *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

3. Will Worship

Paul asked in Colossians 2:20-23, *"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?* ***Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship,*** *and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh."* Paul in this passage is dealing with false teachers who were placing restrictions on these brethren that are not found in the New Testament. He, like Jesus, referred to *"the commandments and doctrines of men."* **Will worship** simply means what I want instead of what God wants. Unfortunately, a lot of people have inserted into various worship services what they want instead of what God commands. Though their error may be unintentional, the result is the same — commandments and doctrines of men.

4. True Worship

Jesus said in John 4:23,24, *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and* ***they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*** Notice carefully that Jesus said our worship must be *"in spirit* (heart) *and in truth"* (according to God's Word, John 17:17). Vain worship, ignorant worship, or will worship will not do. Our worship must be *"in spirit and in truth."* Then, and only then, will we be true worshippers.

True worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, consists of **partaking of the Lord's Supper** (Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42), **preaching** (Acts 20:7), **praying** (1 Thessalonians 5:17), **giving** (1 Corinthians 16:1,2), and **singing** (1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19). We must realize this is the only worship acceptable to God.

It is my prayer that this article will help you better understand acceptable worship. Remember, our worship must be *"in spirit and in truth."* This is what the church of Christ is endeavoring to do. We plead with people to go back to the New Testament and believe and practice only what is written there, only those things which were believed and practiced by Christians of the first century. Why not visit with the local congregation in your community and arrange for a personal Bible study to examine these truths for yourself? ⇧

Ken Tyler has been preaching in Arab, Alabama, U. S. A. for 15 years.

Worship Is Inside Out

Jimmy Jividen

Do religious rituals seem cold? Do sacred ceremonies seem meaningless? Is worship impersonal, merely an exercise in demanded duty? Do worship periods make you feel as if you are an audience watching a professional performance?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, then read on.

The Bible teaches that worship is a spiritual fellowship with God. It is not emotional excitement, magic rituals, or holy words, but submission of our own will to the will of God.

This submission involves the inner man — his mind to reason, his heart to feel, and his spirit to will. If you do not understand the words of worship, if what you say and do in worship is not from your heart, and if your will is only passively involved, then worship cannot take place. The Bible teaches that worship must be "with the spirit" and "with the mind" (1 Corinthians 14:15). Worship must be more than watching a performance.

This submission involves following the will of God revealed in the Bible. There can be no substitutions of human innovations or neglect of what God has revealed. Good intentions do not count. If they did, every man could make his own idol and worship his own way. The true God is worshipped "in truth" (John 4:24).

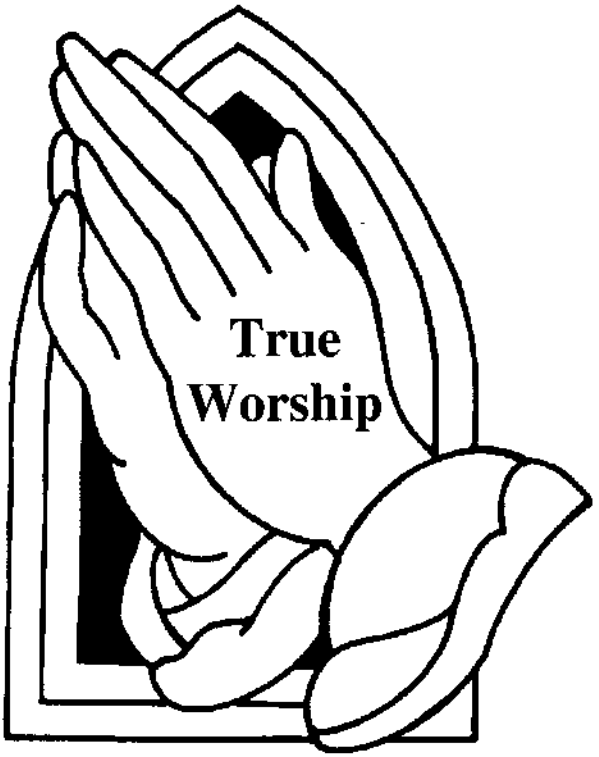
Worship is a deep spiritual expression of a grateful heart.

Worship is a rational understanding of what is thought, said, and done in the worship experience.

Worship is a humble submission to God, approaching Him as He has directed in His Word.

The Bible teaches that true worship comes from the heart and involves both the spirit and the understanding of the worshipper. More is involved than going through traditional rituals and the stimulation of emotional response. ✝

Jimmy Jividen is a gospel preacher and an author from Abilene, Texas, U.S.A.



Charles Curtis

"Oh, come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:6). The primary design for worship is to glorify God. It is an act of reverence paid to our Creator. To worship God acceptably is not always easy. Let me suggest that true worship does several things.

Worship deepens our gratitude to God and makes us sensitive to our needs and weaknesses. There is a denominational church in our city where chimes are played every Sunday morning in an effort to call its members to worship. As Christians we hear a higher calling to worship. When Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, he said, *"Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people*

of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

Our affections are elevated when we worship God in spirit and truth. We have a deeper love for God, the lost, our brethren, and the truth that makes us free. As we worship we remember all that God has done for us. As we partake of the Lord's Supper we are reminded of the past, present, and the future. We are reminded of the cross and His death. We are also reminded of the power of His blood and our own continual need for cleansing.

Worship is a relief from the cares of everyday living. We are strengthened and refreshed after having worshiped. Worship reassures us that the Bible is true when it says, *"Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"* (Romans 8:37). *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Romans 8:1).

Worship affords us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of God. Our faith is strengthened by the faithful preaching of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Our hurts are made glad when we study God's Word with an open and respectful heart. *"And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scripture?"* (Luke 24:32).

Worship draws us into the presence of God. Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20). In worship we are drawn closer to God. In worship there is the reaffirmation of our faith in the promises of God. Who can sing "Standing on the Promises" or "Heaven Holds All to Me" without being closer to God? ✝

Charles Curtis is the preacher for the Broad Street congregation in Scottsboro, Alabama, U. S. A.

A Prayer

Oh Lord, we pray that You
may try
To help us walk along,
To keep our eyes upon the sky
Toward the great white
throne,
Look up when things would go
awry,
Or others do us wrong.
Help us remember Christ is nigh
To guide us safely home.

— Shirl White

Worship and Entertainment

Harvey Porter

Our society is "into" entertainment. We live in a fast and hectic society, and we want relief from our cares and pressures. We can forget problems while we are entertained. We attend movies, sporting events, take more trips, longer vacations, and watch more television. Indeed, we do need some diversion from our problems and worries. It is necessary to maintain a proper balance in the various areas of our life. There needs to be a proper amount of time given to rest, work, study, play, worship, and entertainment.

For the last decade there has been a decline in attendance in most churches. No doubt there are a number of reasons. Some perceive worship as boring. The weekend is the only time they have to rest and relax and have family time together. They take trips, go camping, fish, play golf, and attend sports events. And some want to attend a church where the worship service is entertaining.

To meet this desire some churches are adding orchestras, string ensembles, various choirs and singing groups, hand-clapping, arm-raising, swaying, and other activities to provide excitement.

When David and the people of God returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he wrote a beautiful psalm of thanksgiving. It is found in 1 Chronicles 16. We note particularly verses 28 and 29: *"Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness."*

The emphasis of worship is not what pleases the worshipper, but what pleases the One being worshipped, that is, God. There are many passages that direct us to "bring" something to God. David here used the word "ascribe" three times. It means to tell something great about God and say it to His face. What we receive is not necessarily exciting, but it is warm and

heartfelt because of the joy we receive in expressing our love and adoration to the Father who gives us everything and who loves us. David said, *"Bring an offering and come before him . . . ."* There is a consciousness that we have come out of the worldly, everyday events and are now in God's august presence, and we have in our hands "an offering." That means we are giving Him something.

Is this encounter exciting? Yes! But not as the world counts exciting. It is like two people deeply in love, and one is expressing how much he or she loves the other, while a precious gift is handed over. There is feeling between the two of them. Love is felt and enjoyed and, in the process, is even made stronger. The worshipper concentrates upon God, *not on self.*

There is a splendor about this kind of worship. It is in the mind and heart of each individual worshipper. God alone knows who has worshipped Him in the true *"splendor of holiness."* ✝

Harvey Porter preaches for the Montgomery Boulevard Church of Christ in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U. S. A.

Put Jesus First

The world all about me now has no allur:
Its pleasures bring pain, its wisdom is vain;
I seek a foundation that's steadfast and sure:
I'll put Jesus first in my life.

The Lord Jesus died my salvation to win:
He went in my stead to Calv'ry and bled;
Redemption impels me to give up all sin:
I'll put Jesus first in my life.

— James D. Murch

A Living Faith

Hubert A. White

I've dreamed many dreams that never came true.
I've seen them vanish at dawn,
But I've realized enough of my dreams, thank God,
To make me want to dream on.

I've prayed many prayers when no answer came
Though patient I waited, and long,
But answers have come to enough of my prayers
To make me keep praying on.

I've trusted in many a friend that failed
And left me to weep alone,
But I've found enough of my friends true blue
To make me keep trusting on.

I've sowed many seed that fell by the way
For the birds to feed upon,
But enough golden sheaves I've held in my hands
To make me keep sowing on.

I've drunk disappointment and pain from the cup
And gone many days without song,
But I've sipped enough of the nectar of life
To make me want to live on.

Happiness

Shan Jackson

When Winston Churchill assumed the office of Prime Minister of England on May 10th, 1940, he began his acceptance speech with these words: "I feel I am walking with destiny, and all of my past life has been a preparation for this hour and this trial." There is much truth in that statement for Christians as well. This earth that we call home is not our home at

all. This planet we call earth is not home; it is simply a place of preparation, a temporary residence. As the songwriter says,

> "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through.
> My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
> The angels beckon me from heaven's open door.
> And I can't feel at home in this world anymore."

Or, as Paul said it, *"We are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 5:6).

I want to call your attention to one of the most famous proverbs ever penned by the "wise man." Solomon said, *"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"* (Proverbs 17:22). Happiness is, or should be, a common thing in the life of a Christian. Happiness is a trait that should be an everyday friend to every one of us. "Happiness," Solomon says, "is like medicine." Happiness to our heart is like medicine to our body. Perhaps he learned this truth, not only from God, but also from his physical father. David said, *"Happy is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight* (that which makes him happy) *is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night"* (Psalm 1:1,2). Here the Psalmist is saying that happiness is a knowledge of God and God's will.

And, as much as anything else, happiness depends on attitude. Jesus often spoke about attitude. He said, *"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace"* (John 16:33). Then He added, *"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* For some, happiness is an elusive pot of gold at the end of some unfound rainbow, ever searching, never finding. But for those who understand God's divine purpose, it's as easy as 1, 2, 3. (1) God wants us to be happy. (2) God will help us to be happy. (3) Let's be happy. ✝

Shan Jackson preaches for the church of Christ, lives in Palacios, Texas, U.S.A.

Joy is something that multiplies only when divided.

Honesty In The Business World

Eulene Ramsey

"God first, others second, self last." The Christian businesswoman must constantly keep this slogan in mind, because she definitely has a *responsibility to God, her employer,* her family, and herself. And because the busy pace of her everyday life often buries her under a load of fatigue, it is so easy to find that she is cheating someone. Yet the very core of any Christian character is truth and honesty in every walk of life.

Let's look at some of her responsibilities separately:

(1) Her Responsibility To God. Our Lord and His work *always come first in every true* Christian's life. It is pathetic to see so many businesswomen rob God in time and effort simply because they have spent eight hours in the business world and are so exhausted by the daily tensions and strain that they yield to the temptation of relaxing at home instead of making that visit, lending a helping hand to the needy, or doing any other good work that needs to be done. Some even use their working as an excuse for not attending midweek services of the church. This is simply telling the world that Christ is not **first** in our lives! If we are being really true to our God, something else will give way to the more important things.

(2) Her Responsibility To Her Employer. It is hard to leave *one's personal life at home and* become almost a separate personality from 8:00 to 5:00, but in order to be true to her employer in giving a full day's service, her mind cannot

be cluttered with outside interests. This will necessitate a well-planned schedule for home and family activities. Many fail to recognize that prolonged coffee breaks and long conversations with fellow-employees are actually "stealing" from the employer. Simply failing to give one's best is a form of dishonesty. Her loyalty is of vital importance, since much business should be kept in strict confidence. Can she possibly be true and honest if she betrays this trust?

(3) Her Responsibility To Her Family. A wife has pledged to love and cherish her husband all her life. Can she then be really true to him if her life is so filled with outside interests that she has no time left to share her life with him? Haven't you seen women in your own neighborhood who "didn't have time" to be a true partner and companion to their husbands? All Christian businesswomen who are mothers recognize that their rightful place is in the home, training their children in the ways of the Lord. Yet present-day economic conditions often force them to enter the business world to help meet financial obligations. If this is the true situation, then the Lord will help her meet the demands made of her, but if it isn't absolutely necessary, she should think and pray for long periods of time before making the decision to sacrifice her home life and responsibilities for the business world.

(4) Her Responsibilities To Herself. After looking at all the other responsibilities, it seems almost paradoxical to suggest that she also be true to herself, but not only is this possible, it is necessary. She is an individual, created in the image of her Maker, and is therefore responsible for her every thought and deed. As a Christian she must be an example to her fellow-employees, her employer, her family, and friends. She must find time to keep herself as neat and attractive as possible, for this is part of her Christian example. She must find time for activities that will feed her intellect. To sum it all up, she must not let her responsibilities to others prevent her being true to herself.

No businesswoman can meet all her obligations without help. John said, *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight"* (1 John 3:22). A very near and dear prayer relationship with her Heavenly Father is the most powerful weapon any woman can possess. Let's use it continually! ✝

Eulene Ramsey works with World Evangelism Foundation in Winona, Mississippi, U. S. A.

Three Publicans

Tomijo Brown

Before we discuss the three publicans, we need to remember how the publicans were viewed by the rest of the Jews. They were given the obligation to collect a certain amount of taxes by the government, and also any additional amount they could extract from their fellow countrymen. As a result, the publicans often received exorbitant amounts from the people, and were hated by many.

When Jesus left the man He had healed of palsy, He saw Levi (Matthew) at the receipt of customs. Jesus said, *"Follow me,"* and Matthew left all and followed Jesus (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2: 13-17, Luke 5:27-32).

Levi did not wait to see that everything was perfectly in order in his own business before he followed Jesus, but he left all immediately. He probably was a wealthy man, as most tax collectors were, but left everything and went with Jesus. In contrast, we may hesitate to follow

Jesus because we want to keep all that we have (Luke 18:23). We may give a great deal of thought to our own possessions, income, and many material things which will ultimately be of no value, but which we must be willing to leave, if necessary, in order to follow Christ. Only after we have properly counted the cost should we follow Jesus, but we should always be aware that the cost of not following will be greater than the cost of following, no matter what we must leave.

Matthew was classed with sinners, as all publicans were. When the scribes and Pharisees saw Jesus eating with Matthew and his guests, they asked, *"Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?"* (Matthew 9:11). Jesus answered, *"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."*

The scribes and Pharisees were sinful, but in their self-righteousness they did not know it. They were looking for the mote in other eyes while ignoring the beam in their own eyes (Matthew 7:5). We need to always be aware that we are sinners and that we have faults and failures in our lives. Our lives are never completely perfect. However, we need to be able to help others who need God in their lives.

Jesus saw something special in Matthew, even though he was a publican, that could be used in carrying the Gospel to sinners. Often we can help others, who seem to us as lacking any redeeming values, to be servants of our Heavenly Father.

In the story of the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14 we find several lessons. The Pharisee started his prayer with negative reasons for being proud of himself, calling God's attention to the things he did not do. He said he was not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer, or as this publican. Perhaps he was none of these, but he was guilty of as great a sin, that of hypocrisy (Matthew 6:5).

Instead of looking into his own heart for pride, arrogance, and intolerance, he looked at what he saw in others. Also, instead of measuring himself by what he did, he measured himself by what he did not do.

In contrast, the publican in his prayer judged no other person, but showed his humility, reverence, and awe in the presence of God. So often Christians are intolerant and critical of others, when they should look inward in order to see their own weakness and sin. So often we are proud of the things which we consider to be bad *that we do not do,* instead of rejoicing in the good we *can* do.

When we find someone we can help to be closer to God, instead of being critical of the person, we

should ask God for wisdom in finding the best way to help. After we pray, we should go to the person and do what we can, where we are, with what we have to help him.

Another publican was one who touched Jesus' life and was blessed by Jesus touching his. Zacchaeus was so short that he could not see Jesus because of the crowd (Luke 19:1-10). That did not keep him from his purpose. He did not wait, simply hoping to be able to get closer, but ran and climbed into a sycamore tree. He was rewarded immediately by Jesus, who was willing to abide in his house.

We as Christians often stay far from Jesus because we feel we are so small or have so little to offer. Instead of trying to get closer to God and Christ, we complain of our inabilities, and thus drift farther away. If we would only look into our hearts and then about us, we could find many things to draw us close to God.

Zacchaeus may have already been giving half of his possessions to the poor. He, at least, was willing to do so from this point on. He was willing to repay four times the amount to anyone he had cheated. Probably there are few Christians who give half of their income to the poor or to any other good cause, such as preaching the Gospel, reaching out to others to win them to Christ, helping the lonely, or doing anything else that is sacrificial for Christ. Unlike the man who wanted to build more barns for his treasure, Zacchaeus was willing to give much to follow Jesus (Luke 12:13-21). We should be willing to do this when we see the need.

The three primary lessons from these publicans are: (1) Matthew was ready to leave all in order to follow Jesus. If necessary, we must be willing to leave all. (2) The praying publican showed his humility and reverence for God. We should always be humble and reverent. (3) Zacchaeus' eagerness and resourcefulness in making sure he was near Jesus is worthy of our attention. We should have a strong desire to be near our Savior and serve Him.

These three publicans can serve as examples to us as we strive to live for Christ. Think seriously about this: If we do not demonstrate these traits found in the lives of these three publicans, we are less than Christ would have us be. Christ's wisdom and compassion in reaching out to these men should help us to look beyond mere labels and to understand a person's real worth, and thus to help him come to Christ and serve Him. ✝

Tomijo Brown is the wife of a gospel preacher and lives in Cookeville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

EXHORTING

Tom Kelton

An exhorter can inspire others with renewed courage, spirit, and hope. Such a person uplifts, motivates, and makes you better just by being around you.

An exhorter may encourage and admonish you in different ways that will meet varied needs. But the result will always be to build you up and to make you better.

The effect of exhortation may be expressed in different ways. In Acts 11:22,23 we are told, *"Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."*

Barnabas was encouraging them to keep on keeping on. An exhorter can inspire you to keep on walking with the Lord. He or she knows how to challenge others to do their best and to keep on doing their best for Christ.

In Acts 14:21,22 we are told, *"And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'"*

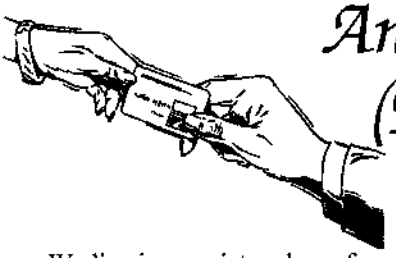
An exhorter is a pillar of strength in difficult times. He knows how to motivate us to get going when the going gets tough. He knows how to throw a life preserver of faith to the Christian drowning in a sea of doubt.

I know of no ministry so neglected in the church today as that of encouragement. It is so easy to find discouragement and so difficult to find encouragement.

I do not know of a ministry more needed than the ministry of encouragement. No matter how well things may be going, no matter how well someone may look on the outside, everyone can use some encouragement. ✝

Tom Kelton is a writer and preacher of the Gospel in Pharr, Texas, U. S. A.

"Owe No Man Anything . . ." (Romans 13:8)



Don L. Norwood

We live in a society where, for a good many years now, monetary credit has been very easy for most citizens to obtain. This has been good in some ways, but there is also the temptation for people to over-spend. When one abuses easy credit he soon finds himself in debt beyond what he is able to pay. This is when the person gets into serious trouble. For the Christian, it not only causes him to disobey the Lord's teaching, which is sin (1 John 3:4), but it causes anxiety, distrust, defamation of the person's character, and usually unhappiness in his home — a high price to pay for a monetary loan.

"Owe no man anything . . ." (Romans 13:8). What does this verse mean? First of all, it is not wrong to make a debt, as long as you pay the money when it is due. If for some reason circumstances cause you not to be able to pay the debt on time, you must go to the lender, explain the problem, and arrange for a new due date. If you owe money and make no effort to pay it, you have sinned against the Lord and against the lender.

This is a serious matter because it could cost a person his immortal soul, as well as bring about defamation of one's name and character. The Bible says, *"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold"* (Proverbs 22:1). And, *"By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life"* (Proverbs 22:4). Truly, then, one is wise to consider these words of God when he thinks of his responsibility in handling money, and especially in the matter of going into debt.

One can readily see that when he owes a debt and does not pay it, he has harmed the lender as well as himself, and if he is a Christian he has brought shame on the holy name he wears. ✝

Don L. Norwood is involved in mission work in India and preaches for the church in Mason, Texas, U. S. A.

Owen Cosgrove

"I had the right-of-way," she sobbed as she beheld her demolished car. "She ran the yield sign," she continued. "I was in the right and she was in the wrong." And, of course, she was right. But she still had a wrecked car and was fortunate that she did not lose her life.

Two automobiles cannot safely occupy the same space at the same time. Even if it takes a moment or two, someone has to yield. And courses in "Defensive Driving" teach us that we need to be prepared to yield, even when we have the right-of-way.

The Lord taught His disciples to give in when they could do it without sacrificing principles of morality or truth. *"Agree with your adversary quickly while you are in the way . . . ." "If one would compel you to go one mile, go two . . . ." "If a person smites you on the right cheek, turn the other . . . ." "If one would sue you at law and ask for your coat, give him your cloak also."*

I first read the Bible through at the urging of a good Bible school teacher when I was about eleven years old. I must confess that when I came to these concepts in the Sermon on the Mount I almost thought they were naive and impractical. But every year that I live convinces me more that we do not accomplish very much by fussing and fighting, and that many times the best thing to do is to yield.

Dale Carnegie told of a time that a friend of his was winning an argument with another about some matter of little importance. Carnegie sided in with the other man, and when they were alone his friend said, "Dale, why did you side in with him? You know I was

right." Carnegie replied, "You were about to lose a friend over something that was very unimportant, and I just could not stand by and see it happen."

YIELD is one of the great spiritual traffic signs of the Bible. Churches split, expensive litigation occurs, marriages fail, friendships break, nations go to war — often because one or more parties will not give in. "But I was right," the person says. "I was right, and the other person was wrong." But the damage still is done. And being right is of little comfort when two speeding vehicles have been reduced to rubble, and mangled and bleeding bodies are scattered under a yield sign on the highway of life. ✝

Owen Cosgrove is the preacher for the Northside Church of Christ in Waxahachie, Texas, U.S.A.

Troublemakers

Those not yielded to Christ
But coveting his clout —
Weave whips of accusation
Then drive themselves out.

— Louise Dominy

A Mother's Prayer

Please let me keep on
going, Lord,
From dawn to setting sun,
Till I'm no longer needed
And all my work is done.

Please let me be around to
see
My little ones grow strong.
And keep my shoulder
handy
For their tears when things
go wrong.

Please let me make our
home a place
They're happy to be in —
And help me by example
To keep them free from sin.

For not until they're all
prepared
To face life's rocky road
Does any mother dare to
drop
Her burden and her load.

It's only then that she can
feel
She's truly earned her rest,
As thankfully she whispers,
"Lord,
I've done my very best!"

— The Fountain

Building According To Plumb

Michael L. King

Have you wondered why it seems that elements of our society are at odds with each other? Why are families characterized by chaos and competition? Individual and personal crises plague many to the devaluation of self-worth, and church members all too often are at a standoff. One could easily be reminded of those in the ancient city of Athens who were *"very religious"* people who were seeking the Lord, but in all the wrong places (Acts 17:22-29).

There was a time when Israel struggled to keep their spiritual perspective. They stooped to base behavior and embraced pagan and heathenistic gods who gave notoriety to most any conduct imaginable! God made His law known, using the great man of God, Amos, to serve as spokesman. Amos declared, *". . . the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand . . . . Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more"* (Amos 7:7,8).

For many years and in many lands the plumbline has been used as a standard or rule in determining perpendicular or "uprightness." A plumbline is suspended from "above," extending from a "higher source" to which everything else is relatively constructed. In Amos 7:16 Amos said, *"Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord . . . ."* Dear friend, the source from which the "plumbline" of righteousness is suspended is God. The line which extends into the midst of man is His Word. When man establishes his life in agreement with the extended Word, his life will be upright and in harmony with all others who are building similarly. When a person's life or teaching contradicts or transgresses (goes against) the standard, his life can be classified as disorderly, standing at odds with God and His people (2 Thessalonians 3:6). The true basis of fellowship with God and those who are His "upright" is compliance to His Word (1 John 1:7-9). Christ was wounded for the transgressions which we have committed (Isaiah 53:5).

The great righteous God spoke His righteous Word to save an unrighteous people. The plumbline of righteousness will sanctify us, allowing us to build a life in compliance with His holy will (John 17:17). We must not be amateur carpenters, but allow the Master Craftsman to align us with uprightness. Guesswork can only condemn our souls and cause our building to be for naught — *"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it . . . ."* (Psalm 127:1). Jesus is *". . . the author of salvation unto all them that* ***obey*** *him"* (Hebrews 5:9). ✞

Michael L. King preaches for the Grant Street congregation in Decatur, Alabama, U. S. A.

Thorns, Nails, Spears, Crowns

His holy fingers made the bough
Which grew the thorns that crowned His brow.
The nails that pierced His hand were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest whence there sprung
The tree on which His body hung.
He died upon a cross of wood
Yet made the hill on which it stood.

The spear which spilled His precious blood
Was tempered in the fires of God.
The grave in which His form was laid
Was hewn in rocks His hand had made.

The throne on which He now appears
Was His from everlasting years.
Not thorns but glory crowns His brow,
And every knee to Him shall bow.

— Selected

Providing for Older Parents

John Gipson

When parents are not what they should be, they raise children who are not what they should be. And it may come back to haunt the parents.

I'm thinking now of the many elderly parents who receive no help or support from their children. As a result of this failure, the government and the church are often called upon to assist.

In reality, the responsibility belongs to the children. Paul urges, *"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety*

at home and repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4).

A few verses later the apostle says, *"If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever"* (1 Timothy 5:8).

Never did the fires of Christ's indignation burn with fiercer heat than when He denounced the heartless quibbling of the Jewish Rabbis who permitted men to escape their obligations to their parents (Mark 7:9-13).

Joseph provided for his father Jacob in his old age. Jesus provided for His mother, and each of us should do the best we can.

It is a disgrace for anyone who calls himself a Christian not to provide for his father or mother. We need to forget about excuses and practice what the Bible teaches. ✝

John Gipson preaches for the 6th and Izard Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, U. S. A.

My Mother's Hands

When I was just a little girl,
They tucked me in at night.
In times of sickness, scrapes, and bumps
They made my wrongs all right.

The cakes and pies, the dirty clothes,
Those endless hours of work;
They mended socks and broken hearts
And never did they shirk.

They blistered from a scorching iron
They chapped from winter's freeze,
They held my hand or pushed the swing
To fly above the trees.

Through good and bad, they gave God praise
And folded in a prayer.
My mother's love, my mother's hands
God's gift beyond compare.

— Janet Rumpf

Only When God Ties the Knot

Glenn Colley

The Bible is the Word of God and is designed by Him to thoroughly furnish us unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). In it He has given us *". . . all things that pertain to life and godliness . . ."* (2 Peter 1:3). The critical subject of marriage is no exception. Pleasing God in this relationship is something with which all Christians are concerned.

Great confusion has swirled around the question of marriage that follows a first marriage. I want to suggest a simple "rule of thumb." In Matthew 19:6 our Master said, *"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Marriage is a melting together of two lives. How does this happen? **God joins** them together. The reality of marriage is not in courthouse records, but more importantly, that God joins this couple in HIS record. That's the record that matters. He joins them!

Various verses in the Holy Scriptures mention marriages that are a sin to enter. For example, Matthew 19:9 says, *". . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."* Now, since God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), He **cannot** join two people to whom He has said it would be adultery to unite. To do so would be blatant inconsistency. It would contradict His true nature. They may marry, in the civil sense, but God doesn't join them. The rule of thumb then, in regard to who can or cannot be scripturally married, is simply this: "Will God join us together?" Of equal weight is the question, "**Did** God join us together?"

This is understandably one of the most emotionally charged subjects we discuss from the Scriptures today. We grieve with those held in the painful grips of sin's consequence. I don't know of any sin which causes more internal struggle than adultery. Nevertheless, may we always make His Word *". . . a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path"* (Psalm 119:105). ✞

Glenn Colley is the editor of *The Words of Truth* and lives in Jasper, Alabama, U.S.A.

What "Honoring Father" Implies

Garell L. Forehand

We are all children. We got here, in part, because of a father and a mother. In this brief study we'd like to look at the implications of obeying the command, *"Honor your father."*

Appreciate His Work. Paul wrote that Christians should render honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). That should at least include our earthly fathers. Children should honor their fathers for their work's sake. It isn't always easy for a father to fulfill his responsibilities to family. There is tremendous pressure that goes along with all the effort in being a father. Paul wrote, *"If any man does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel"* (1 Timothy 5:8). It costs a great deal of money to raise a child to adulthood today. Often it becomes very difficult for fathers to make ends meet in that process. Many fathers do without some important things in order to make sure their children are provided with all they need. When was the last time you told your father "thanks" for all he's done for you?

Accept His Will. That just describes obedience to one's father. This command applies to those children who still live under the supervision and authority of their parents. The Bible says, *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right"* (Ephesians 6:1). Sons and daughters should submit to the will of their father because God designed the father to be the head (or leader) of the home. Not only is this submission right in the sight of God, but it is also in the child's best interest (Proverbs 6:20-23).

Ask His Wisdom. Even after children have grown and begun their own families, the wisdom of their fathers should still be actively sought. Watch the age hint concerning the parents in the following verse. *"Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old"* (Proverbs

23:22). Seek your father's advice on many things. Give him the encouragement (and yourself the benefit) of asking for his experience and understanding. Don't ignore his wisdom. He has been where you can't possibly have yet visited, due to age and experience differences.

Allow His Weaknesses. Let your father be human, too! Hold him in esteem even when you know of mistakes. Don't remove him from your heart's pedestal because of his frailties. We all sin and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Love will cover a multitude of sins.

Attend His Wants. Yes, fathers have needs, too! Be sensitive. Due to the influence of our world, fathers don't often ask for much help — especially from their children. We need to keep our eyes open to the needs. It is wrong to neglect the needs of parents, especially when they are old (Matthew 19:17-20). ✝

Garell L. Forehand preaches for the Granbury Street Church of Christ in Cleburne, Texas, U. S. A.

The Waiting Place

"Please . . . .
I'm lost in this place . . . ."
The voice was feeble,
As feeble as the hand,
Reaching out,
Plucking at my clothes.

"Please . . . .
I'm lost in this place.
My folks are looking for me
But they don't know I'm here.
If you see them
Would you tell them where I am?"

Pleading, haunting eyes,
Searching mine,
Waiting for an answer.

"Yes, I'll tell them . . . .
. . . . if I see them . . . ."

— Betty Burton Choate

Fathers: What Have They Seen In Your House?

Bobby Dockery

King Hezekiah was a good man who made a bad mistake. When the king of Babylon sent messengers to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from a near-death illness, Hezekiah treated them like honored guests. He welcomed them into his house and showed them all the treasures which had been accumulated over the centuries by the kings of Judah. Hearing of this, the prophet Isaiah came to Hezekiah with a searching question: ". . . *What have they seen in your house . . .?*" (2 Kings 20:15). Hezekiah was warned that the day would come when the Babylonians' lust for the treasures they had seen would bring them back. The nation would be overthrown, and all the king's treasures would be carried away to Babylon. Hezekiah's own children and grandchildren would become captives in chains. In pridefully showing off his possessions, Hezekiah had sown the seeds which would bring down his house.

The question, "What have they seen in your house?" is one which many fathers might well ponder

today. Like Hezekiah, many are allowing things to be seen which will lead to tragedy, and the treasures they are in danger of losing are spiritual ones of eternal value! Consider . . .

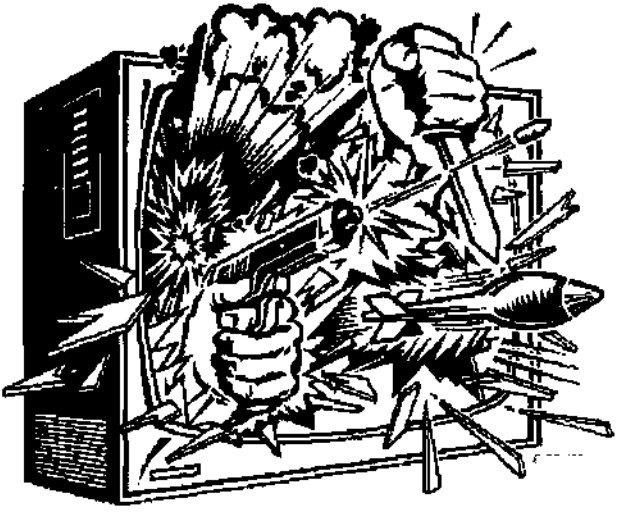
1. Fathers, what have other people seen in your house? Our friends and neighbors take note of what goes on in our homes. It is vital that they see evidence of Christ's influence there! The Bible says, *"Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them glorify God . . . ."* (1 Peter 2:12). Christian principles must be given priority in the home. How tragic that in so many homes today the influence of Christ is not easily seen.

2. Fathers, what have your children seen in your house? Even the smallest children have big eyes. They see much and forget little. The things they witness in the home may mark them for all eternity. What do they see??? **They may see sexual immorality**. The number of couples living together without marriage is a national scandal. Many children see a steady parade of live-in boyfriends or girlfriends which their mothers or fathers bring home. **They may see abuse and violence**. The #1 killer of children under five is child abuse. As many as 15 million women are battered in the home each year. **They may see pornography**. Dirty books, lewd magazines, and sexually-explicit videos have become common fare in many homes. Innocent minds are brutalized and corrupted by the vile things which parents bring into the home. **They may see alcohol and drugs.** Millions of homes are being torn apart by drinking and drug abuse. All too soon, our children will leave home to make their way in the world. They will either go equipped for life or victimized and vulnerable to the temptations which will assail them. It largely depends on what they see at home!

3. Fathers, what does God see in your house? All of life is lived every day in the presence of God (Hebrews 4:12). We may hide what goes on in our house from the eyes of our neighbors and, to some extent, even from our children. But we cannot hide from God! And some day we will be judged in righteousness on the basis of what God has seen in our homes (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

God, others, your children — **"What have they seen in your house?"** The answer will matter for all eternity. ⇧

Bobby Dockery preaches for the Baldwin Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, U. S. A., and is greatly involved in evangelism through the printed page.



The Stranger We Took In

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

As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. In my young mind each member had a special niche. My brother, Bill, five years my senior, was my example. Fran, my younger sister gave me the opportunity to play "big brother" and to develop the art of teasing. My parents were complimentary instructors — Mom taught me to love the Word of God and Dad taught me to obey it.

But, the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversations. He would hold our entire family spellbound for hours each evening.

If I wanted to know all about politics, history, or science, he knew it all. He knew about the past, understood the present, and seemingly could predict the future. The pictures he could draw were so full of life that I would often laugh or cry as I watched.

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

The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind, but sometimes Mom would quietly get up, while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places. Mom would go to her room, read her Bible, and pray. I wonder if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave.

You see, my Dad ruled our household with certain moral conditions and convictions, yet somehow this stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house — not from us, from our friends, or from adults. Our long term visitor, however, used occasional four letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted.

My Dad was a tee-totaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home, but the stranger felt we needed exposure. He didn't actually ever give us any alcohol, but he constantly tried to enlighten us to other ways of life. He covered the gusto side of life with beer and other alcoholic beverages.

He talked freely (probably much too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man-woman relationship were influenced by the stranger.

As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God and what we had been taught in church and Sunday school that kept the stranger from deceiving us. Time after time he opposed the moral values of the Bible. Yet no one said much about it, and no one wanted him to leave.

More than thirty years have passed since the stranger first moved in with our family. To be honest I found a stranger like him and took him into my own home. Now they both sit in the den of my parents home and in my home. He waits patiently for someone to listen to him talk, and you look at him as he talks.

His name? . . . We always called him by his initials: T.V. ✞

— Selected

Personal Evangelism

David Pharr

Someone had enough concern for your soul to talk with you about Christ, the church, and the needs of your soul. Because we love the souls of others and because we want to be personally a part of Christ's work, we will be involved in personal evangelism.

You have probably been thinking of ways to share what you have learned. And you have probably thought of various people that you want to lead to Christ. This desire should stay with you the rest of your life.

Two things may likely frustrate you. First, you will find that some of the people you try to teach will seem uninterested. Actually some people have no interest at all in spiritual matters. They may be so prejudiced that they are not willing to consider what you want to share with them. Second, you may be frustrated because you feel you do not know enough about the Bible to be able to teach others. Remember that it took time for you to be taught and convinced. Do not give up quickly on anyone. Be patient and

try by your good example and kind approach to cause others to be interested in the Gospel. And while you cannot teach what you do not know, you can share with others the truth you have already learned. Do not hesitate because you are afraid you cannot answer all questions. You can tell people you will have to get the answers you do not know. This is one of the best ways to learn to answer the questions.

Every Christian can invite others to attend classes and worship. This is a very effective means of bringing people to Christ. We should all be involved every week in urging people to come.

If you do have someone you want to teach but you do not feel capable, you should arrange for a more mature Christian to go with you.

Read Colossians 4:5,6. The idea of having *"speech always with grace, seasoned with salt"* points to the need for talking to others with kindness and thoughtfulness. We use salt on food to make it taste better. Our speech is to be *"seasoned with salt"* by being gentle and polite. We should not speak rudely, even when correcting error or rebuking sin. We will need to be firm in teaching what is right, but always in a spirit of love.

Now read 1 Peter 3:15. We are to be ready (be prepared) to answer people by knowing the Scriptures. You need to learn Bible answers and to be able to show book, chapter, and verse that teach the truth. Peter also reminds us that we are to answer people with meekness and fear.

Sometimes a Christian will be so zealous for the truth that he is careless with the feelings of others. He may seem judgmental and harsh. We must never compromise with false doctrine, etc., but we should be tactful and kind. Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26. This passage shows us that our mission is not to win arguments, but to win souls. We do not show people the truth to make ourselves look smart. A true soul winner will be patient and kind. There must be but one purpose — that is to uphold the truth and to save a lost soul.

There is no substitute for studying in preparing yourself to teach others. The brothers and sisters who are capable of teaching others had to prepare themselves by diligent study (see 2 Timothy 2:15). It will take time and effort for you to become skilled in the use of the Scriptures. You should already be sharing the things you already know, but you should also continue to learn in order to be a more capable soul winner. ✝

David Pharr is the preacher for the Church of Christ in Clinton, Tennessee, U.S.A.

A SENDING GOD

Cecil May, Jr.

Throughout the Bible God is sending someone specific somewhere definite to say something needed.

"Since the day your fathers came up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, I have sent to you my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them" (Jeremiah 7:25).

He sent Moses to Pharaoh to say, *"Let my people go"* (Exodus 5:1).

He sent Nathan to David to say, *"You are the man"* (1 Samuel 12:5).

He sent Amos to Bethel to say, *"Prepare to meet your God"* (Amos 4:12).

He sent John the Baptist to Judah to say, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:2).

He told Peter to stay in Jerusalem to say, *"This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses"* (Acts 2:32).

He sent Philip to the Ethiopian treasurer to preach, *"Jesus"* (Acts 8:35).

He sends us to every creature to preach the Gospel and to promise, *"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16).

Have you heard?

Are you going?

What are you saying? ✞

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

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.' And He said, 'Go'" (Isaiah 6:8,9).

A Christian Woman's Role in Evangelism

Jane McWhorter

Do we really believe that everyone who does not accept God's plan of salvation will be lost? Do we really care? Does it bother us that during the next twenty-four hours one hundred thousand people will be lost?

Christian women have certain limitations placed upon them by the Bible. They cannot teach nor in any other way exert authority over a man in spiritual matters (1 Timothy 2:12). Because of a misunderstanding of what a woman **can** do, many women are sending their souls to hell by doing nothing. The early Christians went everywhere telling others about Jesus. While a woman cannot preach to a mixed audience nor teach a class that is composed of both men and women, there are countless ways that she can tell the sweet message of salvation to others.

So much of evangelism is incidental. As we enjoy a cup of coffee with a neighbor, it is only natural to mention the church to that woman and gradually tell her about God's plan of salvation. One ordinary, unpretentious woman led two of her neighbors to the Lord by such a simple method.

Our own neighborhoods are our special responsibilities. Walk through the familiar streets and think about those people who live behind those closed doors. Where will they spend eternity? Somewhere there is a Lydia, just waiting to learn the truth. Sometimes the elderly, perhaps because of their loneliness, will be more receptive than younger people in studying. In a door-to-door campaign, one such woman was found by a Christian woman. She showed Bible filmstrips to the lonely one and then extended the study by leaving Bible questions with

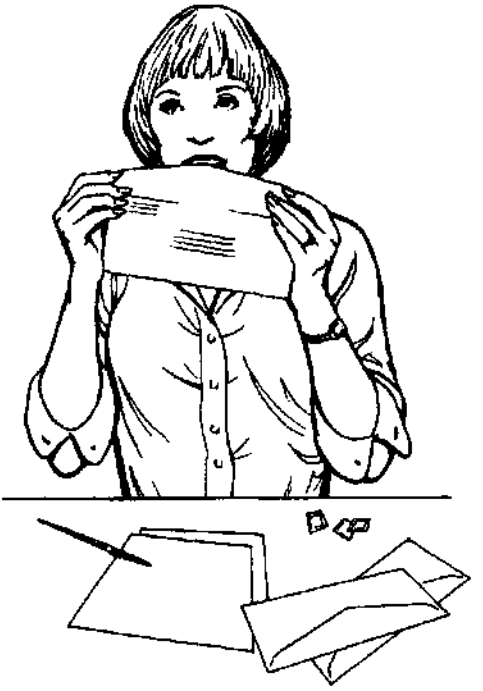
Scriptures to look up during the week between visits. What a joy it was to see that eighty-seven year old woman obey her Lord in baptism!

Teenage girls can also effectively use the same method of evangelism in reaching their young girl friends. I have seen them very effectively invite their classmates into their homes for Bible study periods, using filmstrips or an open Bible study.

One young woman used the open Bible study method in reaching scores of other women. Moving into an area where the church was few in numbers, this Christian woman began inviting her school teacher friends into her home one afternoon each week to study the Bible. They always began with a verse-by-verse study of one of the Gospels. Most of these women had

never even read the Bible. A study of one of the Gospels naturally led to a study of the book of Acts. As the eager students studied the cases of conversion, they also wanted to obey their Lord in baptism.

If a woman is a bit hesitant about studying with another woman, there is another opportunity. Whenever a woman is baptized, simply go to her and ask if you can come into her home once a week and study some fundamental lessons. Show her how to find Scriptures, and keep a notebook with the verses on various subjects written out and at her fingertips in order that she herself may teach others.



Grading correspondence courses is another valuable way that Christian women can teach others. Most congregations are constantly searching for such workers. One woman, who was confined to a nursing home, wanted to be more active in reaching the lost. The elders from the local congregation had a board made to fit on her wheel chair to make the task easier. Soon she recruited other women from the nursing home. During the next year, those women were responsible for teaching hundreds. More baptisms resulted from their work than from the local congregation!

Once a Christian woman has had a part in teaching someone who obeys the Gospel, she will never be the same. Never again will she feel at peace with herself unless she is actively trying to win someone to Christ. It can become an obsession, but what a wonderful obsession! ⇧

Jane McWhorter is a Christian author living in Fayette, Alabama, U. S. A.

People in Jail Need the Gospel, Too

Bill Nicks

For the past two months I have been helping our jail minister teach in the Martin County jail in Stuart, Florida. Each Thursday evening from 7 to 8 o'clock, I have had a class of about 20 men. When I came home from Trinidad, it has been my privilege to assist in this good work. No doubt some who read this magazine will be in some prison or jail, and some will be involved in working with those in prison or jail. It is my hope that this will encourage you wherever or whoever you are.

Those in prisons are in need of the same teaching as others. They are in a position to really study seriously concerning their own souls. Following is a lesson which the men found interesting as I studied these simple Bible questions with them.

1. Why and how was Jesus baptized? He was immersed in the Jordan River by John the Baptist to *"fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:14-17). He was not baptized for the remission of sins, as we are required to do, for He had no sin (1 Peter 3:22). He declared baptism to be a righteous act, therefore we must *"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"* as He requires of us (Acts 2:38), after which we will be added to His church (Acts 2:47; 22:16; Galatians 3:26,27). No one was ever saved by anything **only**, but by the entire plan of salvation: faith, repentance, confession of our faith in Jesus as the Son of God, then baptism which saves (1

Peter 3:21).

2. Why did the Spirit *"like a dove"* descend on Jesus (Matthew 3:16)? This was to show John who Jesus was — the Son of God — and to let John know that Jesus was the one who would baptize certain ones with the Holy Spirit (John 1:31-34). He alone promised to baptize the apostles with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5-8), and He fulfilled that promise on Pentecost after His resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:1-4). There is only one other case of Holy Spirit baptism recorded, and that is the house of Cornelius in Acts 10 and 11. In neither case was this to save them: the apostles were saved before they received it (John 15:3), and the Gentiles were not saved after they received it, for they were to hear the words of Peter which would save (Acts 11:14f), and he commanded them to be baptized in water (Acts 10:44-47). After these two cases, there is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6), and it is in water (Acts 8:36-38), and is to save the soul (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). There is no more Holy Spirit descending *"like a dove,"* as in the case of Jesus, nor speaking in tongues, as in the cases of the apostles and the house of Cornelius. We receive ordinary blessings that come through the Word of the Holy Spirit, as we *"abide in the doctrine of Christ"* (2 John 9-11). The miraculous element was necessary for the establishment of the church and confirmation of the Gospel, but was removed after the revelation, the perfect Word, was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:7-16; James 1:25; 2:12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

3. What was the new name for God's people to wear? The new name was prophesied in Isaiah 62:1,2 to be given by God after the conversion of the Gentiles. This was fulfilled in Acts 11:26 when Paul was sent by God to *". . . bear my name before the Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15). That new name we are to wear is the name **Christian**. This is not a name given in derision by enemies, but given by the *"mouth of the Lord."* As a corporate body, the people of God, who are Christians, are called *"churches of Christ"* (Romans 16:16), because the church was founded by, built by, and bought by Christ, who is its only head (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18).

Men and women in prison can understand these simple truths, and they can turn their lives around when they are convinced that God is merciful to save sinners and add them to His church so that they can have hope of His great love and forgiveness. ✞

Bill Nicks is a missionary on the island of Trinidad.

Who Am I?

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

1. **100** I was of the tribe of Levi (Acts 4:36).
2. **90** My name means "Son of Consolation or Son of Encouragement" (4:36).
3. **80** I was converted in the very early days of Christianity, probably having a background of knowledge of Christ even during His personal ministry on earth, through my family relationships.
4. **70** I became well known for my benevolence (4:37)
5. **60** I championed a man who had persecuted the church (9:27).
6. **50** The church at Jerusalem sent me to Antioch to work (11:19-24)
7. **40** By the authorization of the Holy Spirit, I was sent, along with a companion, on an important and dangerous mission trip (Acts 13:2).
8. **30** John Mark, the writer of the gospel of Mark (Colossians 4:10), was my cousin (Acts 12:25-13:2).
9. **20** People mistakenly called me the god "Jupiter" (14:12).
10. **10** I teamed up with John Mark to evangelize Cyprus (15:36-41).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

Adam, the First Man

Frances Parr

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him . . ." (Genesis 1:27).

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

What would it be like to be "born" as an adult? How must Adam have felt being the only human on earth and in a personal relationship with God? Did he marvel at the beauty and majesty of the rest of creation? Was he overwhelmed when God gave it all to him? One can only imagine how it must have been for the first man.

In Genesis, after his creation, we read of the "man." Genesis 2:19 calls him "Adam," relating to the Hebrew word meaning ground or dust, from which the man was made. Adam is a word synonymous with mankind. In some languages Adam is used to describe a human male. In the genealogy of Genesis 5:1-5 the first man is called Adam, by name.

Picture, if you will, God having created the earth and all therein, placing Adam in the garden, and bringing all the animals for him to name. This must have been a joyful time for both God and man. Imagine Adam, seeing a creature, yellow with brown spots and an enormously long neck, thinking what name would describe it. "Giraffe!" he says, perhaps laughing. Or consider the majestic black bird soaring above a mountain crag. With awe Adam calls it "eagle."

None of the animals were suitable as a companion for Adam. Not a single animal was comparable to the man (Genesis 2:20). This would undoubtedly prove that the ape or monkey, which many believe was the ancestor of humans, was present at that time and was not Adam, nor was it acceptable as a mate for him.

God caused Adam to sleep, and removing a rib, created woman to

be Adam's perfect help-meet. Note the beauty of the man's words when he beheld this marvelous creation: *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man"* (Genesis 2:23).

The words which follow in the next two verses are enchanting to readers today. The idea of one man and one woman who love each other, alone together in a beautiful place, presents a picture of which dreams are made.

Adam and the woman depended completely upon God for everything as children would rely upon a parent. After their temptation and sin, they realized they had disobeyed God.

Their punishment and rejection from the garden must have been terrifying for Adam and Eve. God had clothed them with animal skins, but they were left to care for themselves and learn to work for their food, battling weeds and thorns. It was at this time that Adam named his wife Eve, because she was to become the mother of all living. What must it have been like to be the parents of two boys when they had never even seen a baby or a child?

Even though the Bible does not record it, God was probably still in close touch with Adam and Eve. We learn this when Cain killed his brother Abel. They were offering sacrifices to God. Cain wasn't surprised when God spoke to him about his brother, but was, in fact, rather belligerent. In Genesis 4:13 he says, *"My punishment is greater than I can bear."* He goes on to express his fear at being hidden from God and vulnerable without God's protection.

God demonstrates His mercy and forgiveness in His dealings with Cain, as well as with Adam and Eve. Before the first transgression was committed, God had already devised a plan for man's redemption — His only Son as a sacrifice for sin.

In Genesis 4:23 and 5:3 Adam knew his wife, and she bore Seth and other sons and daughters. These children were *"in his* (Adam's) *own likeness and after his own image."*

Adam, the first man, created by God from the dust, lived nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

The apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:22,23 compares Adam with Christ. Each is a first. With Adam came death, through Christ came life. Because of Adam's sin, all will die, and because of Jesus' death on the cross, all who believe and obey will live eternally. ✝

Frances Parr is a Christian writer and lives in Eldon, Missouri, U. S. A.

THREE LESSONS FROM UZZAH

(Read 1 Samuel 6:1-11; 1 Chronicles 15:1-16)

Ancil Jenkins

This man with a strange name teaches some powerful lessons. Uzzah has only one claim to fame — how he died! The ark of the covenant, the most sacred piece of temple furniture, was being brought to Jerusalem, when it began to topple and fall. Uzzah reached out his hand to steady it, and God struck him dead instantly.

Uzzah shows us **the danger of the sacred becoming commonplace.** After the Philistines returned the ark of the covenant to Israel, it remained with Abinidab and his descendants for over 150 years. Uzzah, the son of a later Abinidab, probably grew up with the ark in his home. It would seem this holy piece of furniture was as common to him as a table or chair. No wonder he carelessly reached out to touch it.

A similar familiarity can breed danger for us. Isn't it possible to come into God's presence so often that we can lose *the sense of awe and wonder?* Sacred words and actions easily become *the butt of jokes.* We come to treat sacred songs as *nonsense.* It takes real effort to become reverent about things we live with constantly. This is illustrated by the use of the word "awesome." It is easy to use it to describe almost anything. Someone wisely reminded me, "Only God is awesome." See Psalm 68:35.

Uzzah also demonstrates **the danger of tradition.** The ark had not been moved for a century and a half. When David decided to move it to Jerusalem someone probably remembered how it had been moved the last time. The Philistines placed it on a cart pulled by cows and sent it back to the children of Israel (1 Samuel 6:7,8). The people in David's day seemed to feel no need to break with tradition. Had they searched the Scriptures, they would have found that God prescribed *how* the ark was to be moved (Exodus

25:12-15; Numbers 4:15). Had the ark not been on a cart, Uzzah would not have been killed by God.

There is a place for tradition. Yet tradition must always be examined in light of God's Word. When God has spoken, tradition has no place.

Uzzah also shows **the danger of disobedience.** God's killing Uzzah was a powerful demonstration of displeasure with his and the people's rebellion. Quite interesting is the basis of this disobedience. David said, *"It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way"* (1 Chronicles 15:13). God did not directly forbid the use of a cart to move the ark. God had, however, told how it was to be moved. *To deviate from this express command was to disobey Him.* ⇧

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Have We Forgotten?

Abraham Lincoln said of Americans:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

During His ministry Jesus traveled from one town and village to another as He performed miracles among the people. The Bible reveals that one of these was casting out seven devils from a woman named Mary, who lived in Magdala. Surely she offered a heartfelt, "Thank You, Lord," but **how** she showed her gratitude is a powerful lesson.

Someone has said, "Gratitude is the heart's memory." Mary wanted to show the Lord her gratitude. She felt there could be no stronger way than to stay by His side throughout His ministry and assist in quiet ways.

Mary, the Grateful Demoniac

Sylvia L. Camp

That would show Him that she hadn't forgotten that she had been demon-possessed and that now she was well.

Wherever they went, Mary and other women healed of evil spirits and diseases accompanied Jesus and the twelve men He chose as His helpers. This close-knit group of women also used their private incomes to support the men's necessities.

Little is known of this woman. Her name, Miriam in Hebrew, is common among Jewish women. Appearing fifty-one times in the New Testament, fourteen of these referred to Mary Magdalene. It heads the list eight times, it appears alone five, and it follows that of Mary, Jesus' mother, only once.

To distinguish her from other Marys, Magdala and Magdalene usually followed her name. It identified her as being from the village of Magdala.

Of the women who ministered to Jesus, Mary seemed to be the one most active and aggressive. Her gratitude for what Jesus did for her manifested itself in her loving, generous personality. With untiring devotion, eager willingness, and undaunted courage, she followed and served her Lord.

Mary the Magdalene loved and believed in Jesus because of what He did for her. She proved the strength of her love by continuing with Him

through death. She proved the depth of her love, because the grave held no terror for her. Last at the cross, first at the tomb, she now became first to see Jesus after His resurrection.

Though she was a modest woman, a beautiful building in Jerusalem carries her name. This cathedral, visible from many vantage points within the city, is white with several onion turrets covered in gold, which glisten like mirrors in the sun. Russian Tsar Alexander III built the Church of Mary Magdalene between the years of 1885-1888, in memory of his mother.

Is it likely Mary returned to Magdala to live out her days in solitude? Or, is it more likely she joined the women who waited with the apostles in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit? Could it be possible she became a leader in the activities of the women in the early days of the church?

Mary, the demoniac from Magdala, excels as an example of gratitude. She never forgot what Jesus did for her. She showed her appreciation by ministering to His needs, but she also possessed other characteristics which made her a role model of woman at her best. ✝

Sylvia L. Camp is a Christian writer and has been married to a gospel preacher over fifty-nine years. She lives in Amarillo, TX, U. S. A.

The Little Things

I may not be able to preach
To sway the minds of men,
But I can bake a pie
To take to a sick shut-in.

I may not be able to sing
In a voice so high and sweet,
But I can give a cheerful smile
To everyone I meet.

I may not be able to teach
My neighbor in the way that's best
But I can weep with her
When her husband is laid to rest.

So let me do each task
And never let me shirk,
Knowing that even the little things
Are a part of God's great work.

— Mary Dell Childress

Demas, the Forsaker

Maxie B. Boren

The apostle Paul, having appealed unto Caesar (Acts 25:11,12), was transported to Rome on a perilous and hazardous voyage (Acts 27:1-28:16). Once there, he was placed under what we might call "house arrest," being permitted to abide in his own "hired dwelling" during the two years he was there (Acts 28:30,31). During that time, which most scholars believe to have been about A.D. 61-62, Paul wrote four letters, which are known to us as the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

In two of these letters, Paul made mention of a Christian man named Demas. One such occasion was in the epistle to the Colossians, chapter 4, in the context of verses 10-14. There Demas is listed, along with a few others, in favorable light. Again, in Paul's writing to Philemon, Demas is named along with Mark, Aristarchus, and Luke, as *"my fellow-workers"* (verse 24).

But some five or six years later (about A.D. 67 or 68), when Paul was taken back to Rome the second time, resulting in his martyrdom, things had changed as far as Demas was concerned. When the great apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17-18; Romans 11:13; 15:15,16; Ephesians 3:1,8; etc.) wrote to Timothy shortly before his demise, he urged him to come to him in Rome as quickly as he could, and then wrote, *"for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica..."* (2 Timothy 4: 9,10).

What did Paul mean in reference to Demas? Did he mean that Demas had become enamored with drinking, dancing, carousing, reveling, and such like, as some have assumed, the sort of thing the Scriptures warn against in such passages as 1 John 2:15-17 and Galatians 5:19-21? No, I do not believe that is what Paul meant by

his expression concerning Demas. Rather, it was that Demas' attachment to the continuation of his existence on this earth was greater than his willingness to forfeit his life for Christ while remaining in company with Paul. Undoubtedly, Demas perceived that if he chose to stay with Paul, the Romans might well kill him along with the apostle. Wherefore, he forsook Paul, and fled to Thessalonica. He was not committed to Christ to the same extent the apostle was, as voiced in Paul's declaration, *"I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die . . . for the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Acts 21:13). Demas had not imbibed in full-measure what Jesus later wrote through John to the church in Smyrna: *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10b). Notice that Jesus said "**unto**" death . . . not "**until**" death. Certainly "unto" would include "until," but the idea is that a Christian should be willing to actually give his life in order to be faithful to the Lord. This measure of devotion was absent in Demas.

Demas failed "to endure to the end" (Matthew 24:13). Life on earth was more important to him than eternal life in heaven, the promise of which is only to those who "overcome" (read Revelation 2:7,11,17,26ff; 3:5; 12:21). Friends, in view of all this, let us resolve to be faithful come what may, and NEVER, NO NEVER, FORSAKE OUR LORD! ✝

Maxie B. Boren preaches for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas.

Keep Plodding On

When things seem difficult, and life uphill,
Don't look too far ahead, keep plodding on.
And inch by inch, the road will shorten, till
The roughest patches will be past and gone.
And you'll look back surprised and cheered to find
That you have left so many miles behind.
And very soon the tedious climb will stop.
And you will stand triumphant at the top.

— Anonymous

The "One" Baptism of Eph. 4:5

What is the "ONE BAPTISM"?

1. Not Baptism of John — Acts 19:4
2. Not Holy Ghost Baptism — Acts 1:1-8
3. Not Baptism of Fire — Mt. 3:10-12

Baptism of Matt. 28:18-20

WHO Should Be Baptized?

1. Infants?
2. Saved Folk?
3. Penitent Believers ! — Mark 16:16

What is the "MODE" of Baptism?

REQUIRES:	Immersion?	Sprinkling?
1. Water (Acts 8:36)	YES	YES
2. Much Water (Jno. 3:23)	YES	NO!
3. Into - Out of (Acts 8:38)	YES	NO!
4. Burial (Rom. 6:3-4)	YES	NO!
5. New Birth (Jno. 3:5)	YES	NO!
6. A Planting (Rom. 6:5)	YES	NO!

"He that Believeth and is Baptized Shall be Saved"

Baptism						Salvation
INTO	CHRIST (Gal. 3:27)	REACH	BLESSINGS (Eph. 1:3)	BRINGS	2 Tim. 2:10	
INTO	NAME (Matt. 28:19-20)	REACH	REMISSION (Acts 10:43)	BRINGS	Acts 4:12	
INTO	BODY (1 Cor. 12:13)	REACH	CHURCH (Eph. 1:22-23)	BRINGS	Eph. 5:23	
INTO	DEATH (Rom. 6:3-4)	REACH	BLOOD (Rom. 5:8-11)	BRINGS	Eph. 1:7	

Dillard Thurman

The Second Coming of Christ

(1 Thessalonians 4:13ff)

W. A. Bradfield

Introduction:
Christ is coming again (Matthew 16:27; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11).

Discussion:

I. How is He coming?

A. He is coming personally (Acts 1:11).
B. He is coming audibly (John 5:28).
C. He is coming visibly (Revelation 1:7).
D. He is coming without warning (1 Thessalonians 5:2).
E. He is coming in flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

II. When is He coming?

A. He is coming as a thief — when He is unexpected (2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 24:42-44).
B. No man, no angel, nor Christ knows when He will come (Mark 13:32).
C. Only God knows when Christ will come again.

III. Why is He coming?

A. Not to teach, invite, or offer self as a sacrifice.
B. Not to set up a kingdom (Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13).
C. To destroy the world and to deliver up the kingdom (2 Peter 3:10; 1 Corinthians 15:24).
D. To raise the dead (John 5:28).
E. To judge the world (Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Conclusion:

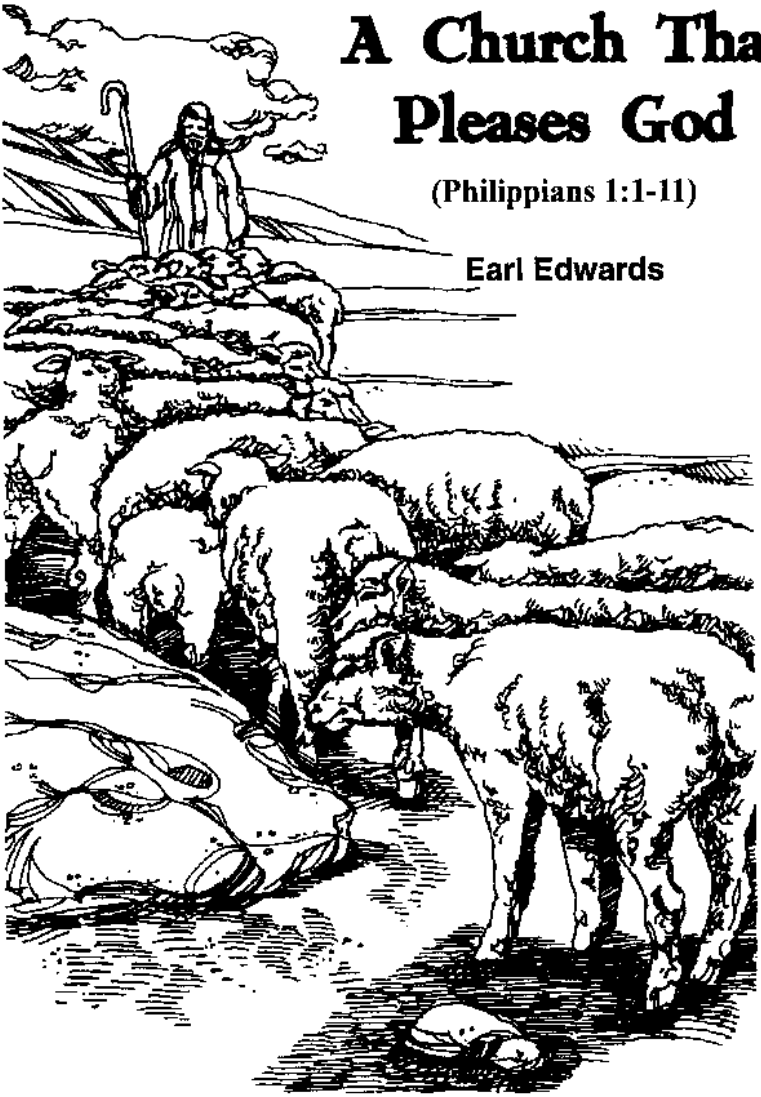
A. We shall be judged according to our works (Revelation 20:12,15; Matthew 16:27).
B. Now is the time to get ready. ✝

Before his death, W. A. Bradfield was a well-known Bible teacher and gospel preacher.

A Church That Pleases God

(Philippians 1:1-11)

Earl Edwards



Introduction:

Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, was obviously well pleased with the Philippian church, which implies that God was also. We need, therefore, to

emulate that church in order to please God.

I. Its composition/organization (verses 1,2).

A. The Philippian church:

1. Saints
2. Overseers (elders)
3. Deacons

B. Today's church organizations — 4:9.

II. Causes its leaders to "rejoice" at the thought of them (verses 3,4,5,9).

A. Paul "always" thanked God for them (verse 3).

B. Their positive characteristics:

1. "Love" — verse 9.
2. "Partnership" in the Gospel — verse 5 (see also 4:16-18).
3. Observations about them and us.

III. Has leaders with warm feelings for congregation (verses 1,7,8).

A. Those leaders, especially Paul:

1. Had them in his heart (verse 7).
2. Longed for them "with affection" (verse 8).

B. Our feelings as leaders today?

IV. Has leaders who pray for the congregation (verses 6,9-11).

A. Paul prayed for them:

1. For more "love" — verse 9.
2. For more "knowledge" — verse 9.
3. That they may "discern" — verse 9.
4. That they may "approve" what is "excellent" — verse 10.
5. That they may be "blameless" at judgment — verse 10.
6. That they may be "filled" with the "fruit of righteousness" — verse 11.

B. Do we as leaders today pray thus?

Conclusion:

A. There is much that is **praiseworthy** in this congregation.

B. We need to emulate this church in order to be pleasing to God. ✝

Earl Edwards is Director of Graduate Studies in Bible at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, U. S. A.

At What Point Is One Saved?

(Mark 16:16; Romans 8:1; John 3:16)

J. C. Choate

Introduction:

1. There are many verses that talk about salvation.
2. One might seem to indicate that one is saved at one point and another verse would indicate still another point.
3. At what point is one saved?
4. Can we know when one is saved?
5. Let us see if we can pinpoint it.

Discussion:

I. On the one hand the Scriptures teach the importance of faith or belief to salvation.

A. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
B. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:7,8).
C. We are justified by faith (Romans 5:1).
D. God sent His Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).
E. If you believe not, you shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

II. On the other hand, after one has been saved, the Scriptures teach that he must be faithful.

A. The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:16,17).
B. We are to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).
C. We are to be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

III. The Bible next teaches that one must repent.

A. We must repent or perish (Luke 13:3).
B. God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30).
C. Repentance comes prior to salvation (Acts 2:38).

IV. As Christians we are to worship and serve God.

A. We are to continue in the Apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42).

B. We are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11).
C. We are to abound in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).

V. We must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

A. We are to confess with the mouth (Romans 10:10).
B. If we will confess Him, He will confess us (Matthew 10:32,33).
C. Note the example of the eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

VI. The saved are in Christ and the church.

A. The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).
B. The saved are children of God in Christ (Galatians 3:26,27).
C. The saved are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

VII. At what point then is one saved?

A. At the point of baptism (1 Peter 3:21).
B. When one believes enough to obey the Lord in baptism (Mark 16:16).
C. When one wants to be saved and is willing to obey the Lord's command (Acts 2:38).
D. In scriptural baptism:
   1. One washes away his sins (Acts 22:16).
   2. One enters Christ (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:26,27).
   3. One enters the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:47).
   4. One becomes a new creature (John 3:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Conclusion:

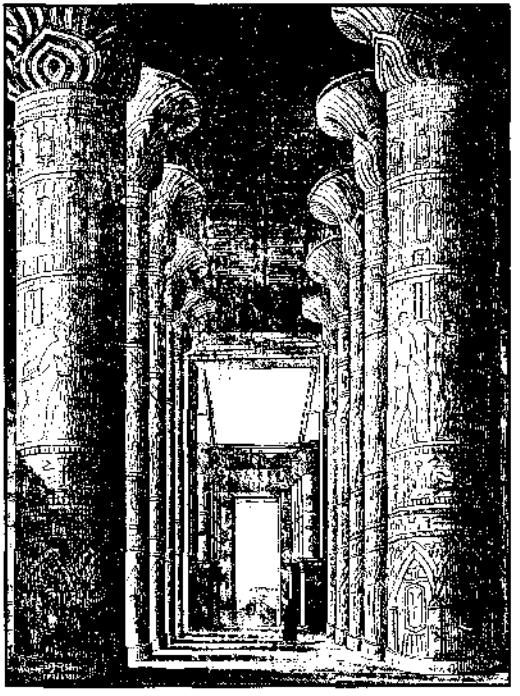
1. Are you saved?
2. How do you know you are?
3. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him (Hebrews 5:8,9). ✝

J. C. Choate is the editor-in-chief of *The Voice of Truth International.*

That temper is a useful thing
Depends on how we use it;
In fact, it is so good a thing,
That we should never lose it.
— John H. Erwin

Egypt

The world knows more today about the Middle East than at any other time in recent history. The names Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Saddam Hussein are well known. I believe, with all my heart, that "God gives the kingdoms of the world to whom He pleases." Question: *Is God preparing to open the door of this anti-Christian, Islamic stronghold to the Gospel of Christ?*



In Kuwait, Iran, and Saudi Arabia all other religions are prohibited. These are Islamic states. Expatriate Christians are forbidden to meet, and it is against the law to teach a Muslim. There are no churches, no missionaries. No Christian is allowed to set foot in Mecca, Islam's holiest city.

Now, let us look at Egypt! This is an important country in the Middle East. Egypt is also largely Islamic. However, the situation is somewhat different. It is against the law to

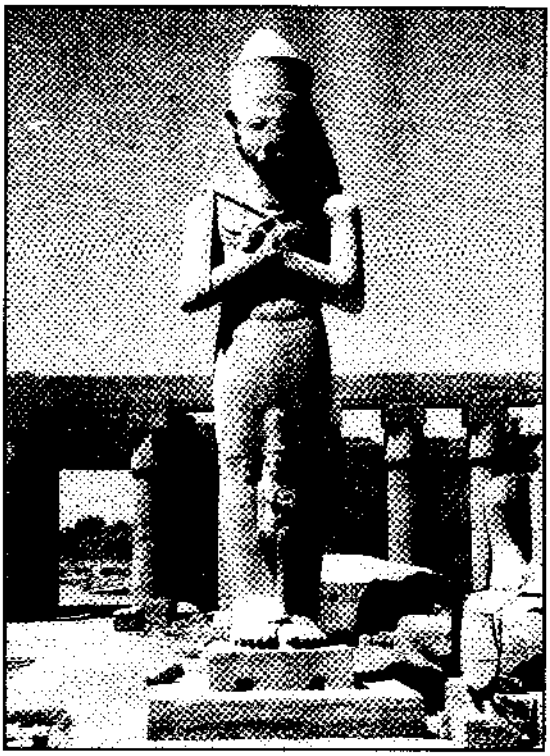
What Is God Doing in the Middle East?

L.E. Cranford

law to teach a Muslim in Egypt, however, it is being done, and conversions are reported. There are several sectarian churches in Egypt and they worship openly and teach that Jesus is the Christ, but they are not allowed to build new buildings or to add to their present buildings. Egypt is very friendly to the United States, and we do have missionaries there, but they are not recognized officially. Cairo is the largest city in the Middle East, and is the key city of the whole region. Egypt is mentioned over 600 times in the Bible.

Now, note this: **1.** When God wanted to save a remnant of His people, He sent Joseph to *Egypt.* **2.** When God needed a safe place for the Baby Jesus, He sent Joseph and Mary to *Egypt.*

Presently, we have Christians living and worshiping in Egypt. There is room for any church that is interested in helping the poor and preaching the Gospel to have as large a part as they choose to have. It would be presumptuous to think any one congregation could oversee all the work needed to be done in all the Middle East. The challenge is for us to take advantage of the open doors that now exist. It is going to take far

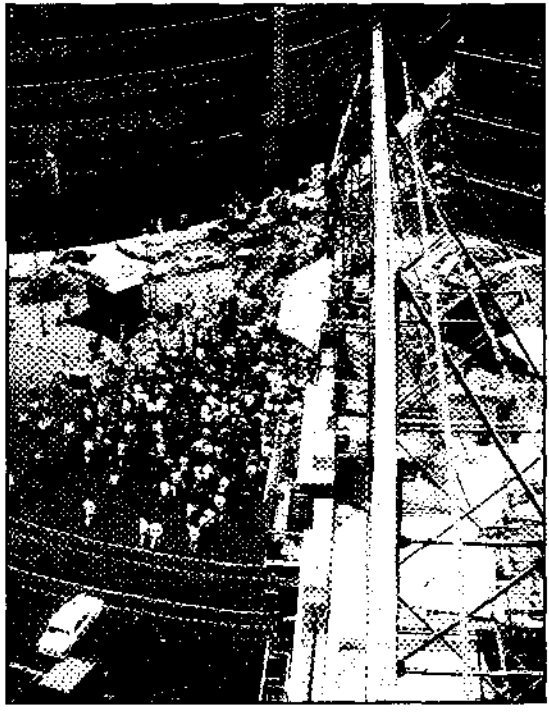


A colossal statue of one of the Pharaohs. Monuments such as this are found in the Valley of the Kings at Karnak and Luxor, as well as in Memphis, where there are two statues of Ramses II, probably the pharaoh of the Exodus of the Israelites.

more work than is presently being done.

There are 15,000 Americans now living and working in Egypt. Some qualified American Christian could do a good work by being sent to Cairo to counsel and teach the Egyptian people. A three-week trip every six months would be a great work, and he could coordinate the efforts of those presently preaching and teaching in Egypt.

Our plan has been to establish "house churches" all over the area. This is being done, and we presently have a fine native preacher who is teaching and baptizing Muslims. However, he is under pressure, and must be very careful.



A street scene in Cairo, Egypt.

Another work is to encourage an American congregation to "Adopt a Village." Send a man to investigate the possibilities and then support any work they see that needs to be done in that village. One village I know about and visited in June, 1991, is Melggaa (about 15 minutes out of Assiut). The population is about 20,000. Two years ago 8 people were gotten together. Now there are more than 200 who meet in the most humble circumstances. Teachers and doctors are sent out from Assiut. This work is assisted by the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, N.C. This church also sent a native Egyptian preacher to the Sunset School of Preaching for two years. He finished in December 1994, and is now back in Cairo.

People who have, and are taking Bible correspondence courses need to be contacted. Several have indicated they want to be baptized. As the Ethiopian eunuch said when

asked if he understood what he was reading, *"How can I except someone guide me?"* (Acts 8:31)

We have given away hundreds of Bibles in the Arabic language in Egypt. Hundreds of Bible correspondence course lessons have been sent out and continue to be mailed. There should be someone sent to *"guide"* them.

Vast sums of money are being used to propagate the Islamic faith throughout the world. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, but faith in Jesus is so much greater, and besides, Jesus said, *"No man cometh to the Father but by me"* (John 14:6).

The Lord has commanded us to *"go into all the world and preach the Gospel."* This command certainly includes the Middle East. If it were not possible, then God would not have commanded us to do it. Among the last words Jesus spoke on earth, He said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16).

I urge you to be a part of taking the Gospel to this important section of the world. The opportunities are many! The responsibilities are tremendous! If God be for us, who can be against us? We should pray that God will send workers into this field because it is *"white unto harvest"* (John 4:35, Luke 10:2). I realize that not every one of you can personally go to Egypt. However, someone must go and others must send. All can have a part.

"How can they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14,15).

L. E. Cranford, Northeast Church of Christ, P.O. Box 150241, Nashville, TN 37215-0241.

L.E. Cranford in Cairo.

THE LORD'S ARMY

L. E. Cranford

Many of us have heard the children in Bible classes, and in Vacation Bible School sing, "I'm in the Lord's Army."

I have an idea that most of them, if not all, did not know the meaning of the song. It also seems true to me that many of the adults and young people who became Christians (enlist in the Lord's Army) do not comprehend the meaning of being in the Lord's Army.

The following Scriptures give us some proof that the Lord has an army:

The author of the Roman letter writes: *"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on* ***the armor of light"*** (Romans 13:12, ASV).

"Wherefore take up ***the whole armor of God*** *that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand"* (Ephesians 6:13, ASV).

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: *"Suffer hardship with me,* ***as a good soldier of Christ Jesus"*** (2 Timothy 2:3, ASV).

"No ***soldier*** *on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier."* (2 Timothy 2:4, ASV)

As a soldier of Christ here is the armor of the Christian:

"Stand therefore, having girded your loins with ***truth,*** *and having put on* ***the breastplate of righteousness,*** *and having shod your feet with the* ***preparation of the gospel of peace,*** *withall taking up the* ***shield of faith,*** *wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take* ***the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit,*** *which is the Word of God"* (Ephesians 6:14-17).

Other helps are given: prayer and supplication, watching, and perseverance.

Acknowledging that the Lord has an army, it can be profitable to notice some qualities of a regular army:

I served in the Army Air Force during World War II. After I enlisted it was not up to me to do as I pleased. No one congratulated me, nor told me they were glad to have me.

The Army leaders assigned me to a certain unit. I was given assignments for training with certain army people over me. I was required to be present for certain formations, and it was absolutely necessary for me to be in place, and on time. No excuse

was acceptable for being absent. No one dared say, "I had something else to do," or "I just did not feel like getting up."

When our training was completed, again we were assigned to certain units, and given a definite mission.

Before a mission, those who were to participate were "briefed". Everyone knew his place and his responsibility. Those returning from the mission were "de-briefed".

This is the Army way.

It seems to me, since the church is the Lord's army, it could be profitable to examine some of the parallels one could draw from these two organizations.

Some congregations are better organized than others. This is no news to any of us. However, I do not personally know of any congregation that gives *every* new enlistee certain weeks of training; or knows where every member is at all times, or *requires* all personnel to be present at every meeting.

I know of a few congregations whose leaders of the Sunday morning services meet briefly for prayer before services. (Briefing). If there are "de-briefings" I have not experienced it or know about any.

As in a regular army, where every soldier is assigned to a unit, and everyone knows his job, it seems to me that every soldier in the Lord's army should have an assigned job.

When members of the church (The Lord's Army) drift into the assembly late, or miss the assembly on the Lord's Day with no consequences there is something wrong.

I have known members to miss worship several Sundays, and when they did return, they were greeted with, "We missed you, and we are glad you are back." Such behavior would not be tolerated in a regular army, and sadly some day we may find out (too late) the Lord will not accept our excuses either.

Last Sunday I heard an elder greet a young lady at the door with, "We missed you last Sunday". She responded by saying, "I had to work." He said, "I just wanted you to know I missed you.'

The young lady may have been conscientious enough to meet with other Christians to comply with the Lord's commandment, "Do this in remembrance of me." Some do, and some do not!

In the regular army, not showing up for an assembly would absolutely not be accepted!

There is no one I know who believes we can ever have a perfect situation, but at the same time, no one would say we cannot improve the situation. I feel strongly that we must, because souls are in danger, and because we *can* do a better job in the Lord's work. ✝

Answers to Puzzles

Verse Search – 9 (from page 36)

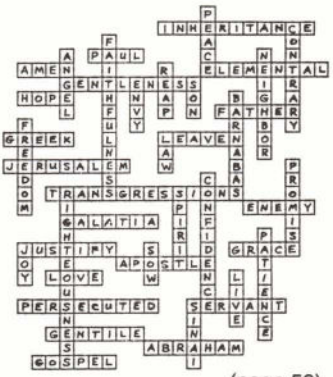
1. A man blind from his birth.
2. He spat on the ground, made spittle of the clay and anointed his eyes.
3. They debated if he was the one who had begged.
4. The Sabbath.
5. That He was not from God because He didn't keep the Sabbath.
6. "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?"
7. "He is a prophet."
8. They feared being excommunicated from the temple, unable to worship God.
9. "Whether He is a sinner or not, I don't know. I do know that I was born blind and now I see."
10. We are Moses' disciples.
11. "God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will . . ."
12. . . .were not from God, He could do nothing.
13. He found him.
14. "Do you believe in the Son of God?"
15. "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."
16. "Lord, I believe!" and he worshiped Him.
17. For judgment, that the blind might see.
18. Because they claimed to be able to see, yet were willfully blind.

Who Am I?

(from page 92)

Barnabas

The Book of Galatians



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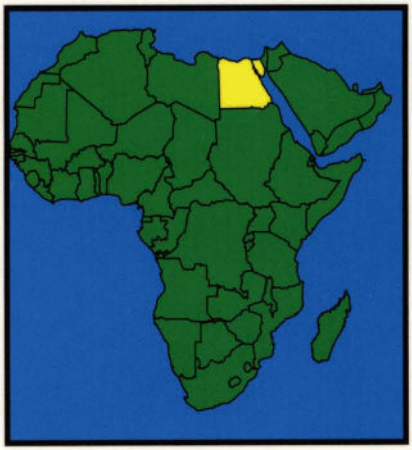

Arab Republic of Egypt

Government: REPUBLIC
President: HOSNI MUBARAK
Premier: DR. ATEF SEDKY

Secular Facts:

Location: Extreme northeast corner of the continent of Africa, on the Mediterranean Sea.

Land Mass: 386,900 square miles; one and one-half times the size of Texas.

Population: 60,000,000.

Major Cities:
Cairo, Alexandria, Giza, Shubra el Khema, El Mahalla el Kubra.

Language:
Arabic.

Literacy:
50.2%

Religion:
Islam (94%); "Christian", primarily Coptic (6%).

Economy:
Imports total $12 billion while exports bring in only $5.5 billion.
Arable land: 3%. Agricultural products include cotton, wheat, rice.
Natural resources include crude oil, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates.
Egypt is the transit point for heroin and opium moving to Europe and U.S.

Monetary Unit:
Egyptian pound.

The Church:

Congregations: There are Christians meeting in "house churches" in Egypt. At this time it is illegal for the church to own or build a meeting house.

Modern History: During the 1960's an American Christian baptized about 30 people in Egypt, only one of whom could be located by another visiting missionary in 1976. This Egyptian brother, along with several others, are working hard to evangelize Egypt.

Egypt is an Islamic country and it is against the law to teach a Muslim about the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, there are Christians in Egypt who worship every Lord's Day according to the New Testament pattern. Since some have recently obeyed the Gospel, they could use encouragement.

Bible correspondence courses and the distribution of Arabic Bibles have proved effective in reaching souls. Several hundred are enrolled in the correspondence courses. The Crieve Hall and Harpeth Hills churches of Christ in Nashville supply literature and funds for this work.

The Middle-East is a part of "all the world" and God expects us to take the Gospel to them. There are untold millions who are yet to hear the Gospel of Christ.

Front Cover: **The Great (Khufu) Pyramid,** located at Giza, built approximately 2600 B. C.