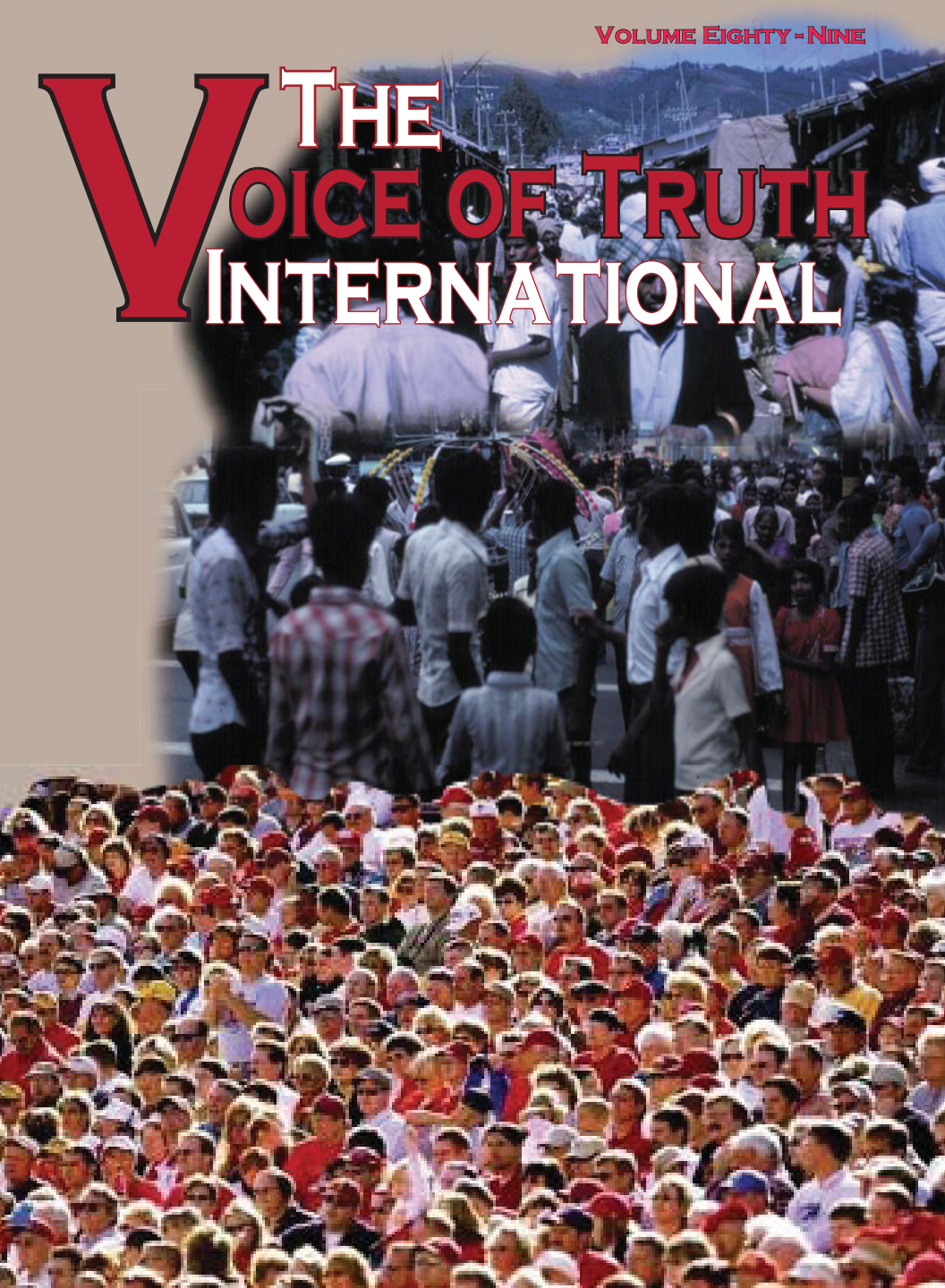
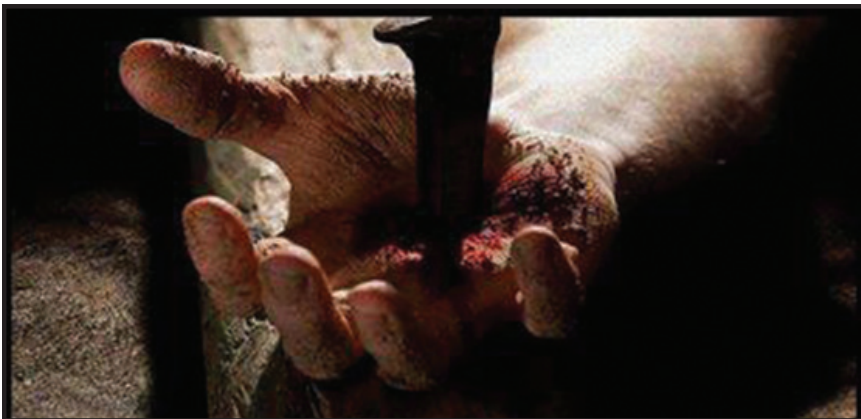


VOLUME EIGHTY - NINE

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My Sins Drove the Nails

Walt Chaney

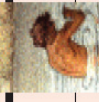
(Verse 1) The morning broke on Calvary's hill
Much like all the rest,
The angels watched from Heaven's gates
As Jesus reached the crest
To be crucified on a rugged cross
As the mob mocked and railed,
And though I never touched the hammer
My sins drove the nails.

(Verse 2) It was bitter gall they served Him
As He cried out for a drink,
With a spear the soldier pierced His side
As two sons began to sink;
That picture framed in guilt
In my memory fits me well,
'Cause though I never touched the hammer,
My sins drove the nails.

(Chorus) My sins drove the nails
As His blood ran crimson red;
My pride wove the crown of thorns
They placed on His head,
Yet He reached out from the blood stained cross
And opened mercy's door,
And though my sins drove the nails,
I'm not guilty any more.

(Tag) Though my sins drove the nails,
I'm guilty, I'm guilty no more.

A Snake, a Captain, A blind Man, & Baptism

	A Snake Numbers 21:4-9 	A Captain 2 Kings 5:1-14 	A Blind Man John 9:1-7 	Baptism Mark 16:16 
CONDITION	Snake Bite	Leprosy	Blindness	Sin
STATE	Hopeless	Hopeless	Hopeless	Hopeless
MESSENGER	Moses	Elisha	Jesus	Jesus Christ
PROVISION	Brass Serpent Placed on a Pole	Jordan River for Dipping	Pool of Siloam for Washing	Means for Remission of Sins
INSTRUCTIONS	Look at Brass Serpent on Pole	Dip seven times in Jordan River	Wash clay from eyes in Pool of Siloam	Be Baptized for Remission of Sins
OBEDIENCE	They Looked	He Dipped 7 times	He Washed	Baptized
RESULTS	They Lived	Was Cleansed	Obtained Sight	Cleansed of Sin
POWER	Not Snake, but GOD	Not River, but GOD	Not Pool, but GOD	Not Water, but GOD
FORMULA	Belief + Obedience = Healing	Belief + Obedience = Healing	Belief + Obedience = Healing	Belief + Obedience = Healing

"From Heaven or From Men?"

"The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

• Matthew 21:25



In Matthew 21:25, Jesus identified the **ONLY TWO SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY**:

1. That which comes from **HEAVEN** ... and **IS ACCEPTABLE** to God.
2. That which comes from **MEN** ... and is **NOT ACCEPTABLE** to God.

HOW MEN ENTER

- ➡ "Faith Only"
- ➡ "Pray Through"
- ➡ "Just Raise Hands"
- ➡ "Voted Into the Church"
- ➡ "Join the Church of Your Choice"

BAPTISM

Acts 2:38 • Galatians 3:27

REPENTANCE

Luke 13:3, 5 • Acts 3:19

FAITH

John 8:24 • Hebrews 11:6

Established by Men

Built on Whims and Vanity
of Capricious Men

No Blood Shed for Them

Headed by Pope, Councils,
or Conferences

Members Voted in by Men

Exalt Traditions & Dogmas

Preach Catechism, Manual,
or Other Creeds

"Shall Be Rooted Up"

Matthew 15:13

Built By Jesus Christ

Matthew 16:18

Christ Gave Himself for It

Ephesians 5:25

Purchased By Christ's Blood

Acts 20:28

Jesus Christ is it's Head

Ephesians 1:22-23

Lord Adds the Saved to It

Acts 2:47

Gospel Preached & Exalted

Acts 8:5, 12 • 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Pillar and Ground of Truth

1 Timothy 3:15

Jesus Christ is It's Savior

Ephesians 5:23

ALWAYS ASK . . . ALWAYS KNOW . . . WHETHER A MATTER IS FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN

Barnet Bible Charts

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



Whitewash versus the Truth

Byron Nichols

The famous American writer Mark Twain wrote a fictional book about a boy named Tom Sawyer. Twain included in the story how Tom tricked his friends into whitewashing a fence by making them think he was doing them a real favor by allowing them the opportunity of

doing that instead of him selfishly doing it all by himself.

It may come as a surprise that this word “whitewash,” in one form or another, is also found in the Bible. Whitewash is a solution of lime (or other whitening substance) and water, and it is applied to surfaces such as walls and fences to cover up blemishes and to make the surface look better.

The literal word “whitewash” is also often used in a figurative way. To “whitewash” can be an attempt to cover up or hide something, whether an object, a behavior or an action. It is an effort to deceive or to conceal. This word is mostly used today in a very negative way.

The Use of “Whitewash” in the Bible

As with many English words, the use of this word or forms of it varies depending on which translations or versions of the Bible that one reads. In Ezekiel 13, God spoke through His prophet Ezekiel and said that His prophets were being dishonest with His people. They were deceiving the people into thinking that their wall of protection against their enemies was strong and able to withstand the efforts of the enemy to invade their city, when in

reality, it was not at all what it had been made to appear to be.

N o t i c e verse 10 from the ESV. *“Precisely because they have misled My people, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash, say to those who smear it with whitewash that it shall fall!”*

The construction of the wall was dangerously defective, but the prophets saw to it that whitewash



was applied to the weak areas of the wall to cover up the flaws and the gaps in it. Whitewash made the wall look like something that it really wasn't!

This cover-up was done at the hands of the religious leaders! Sometimes even today religious leaders are guilty of whitewashing by hiding the truth of the Scriptures from their own people!

Building inspectors are used to better insure the safety and soundness of buildings, including houses. It is primarily the responsibility of elders

to serve in this capacity in the church as “*they watch out for our souls*” by “*holding fast the faithful word as they have been taught, that they may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict*” (Hebrews 13:17; Titus 1:9).

Jesus spoke of whitewashing as He dealt with the dishonest scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. They could appear to be so pious and righteous while they were actually just impersonators of righteousness!

Notice His reprimands in verses 25 and 26. “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.*”

Now notice His even more severe words in verse 27. “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.*”

In Acts 23, we find Paul employing this term as he responded to the unlawful action taken against him by the high priest Ananias. In verse 1, Paul testified before the high priest, “*...Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*” Because of this, the high priest ordered that Paul be struck on the mouth (verse 2). But Paul wasn’t through yet! In verse 3 he told the high priest, “*God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?*” Paul’s message to them was, “*You are not genuine – you are a fake!*”

We have seen very clearly from the lives of some false prophets, some scribes and Pharisees, and from a high priest that it is quite possible to apply spiritual whitewash to oneself in an attempt to appear to be much more than what one actually is!

Is there a lesson anywhere in this for us today? Surely there is. We learn from Proverbs 23:7 that “*as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*” This tells us that if our thoughts are unrighteous, we are unrighteous; we are just like those scribes and Pharisees, like dead men’s bones – rotten and smelly, regardless of how well we fool others on the outside! 



There Is Work That We All Can Do

Jerry Bates

Most of us are very familiar with many of the old songs that speak of the work that a Christian should do. We love to sing those old songs such as, “Work for the Night is Coming.” Those songs teach the scriptural truth that we as Christians should be busy working for the Lord. This life is a time of labor; the next life in the hereafter is the time of rest. There are many verses that teach this truth. I like to think about the commendation Paul gave to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 when he remembered without ceasing their work of faith and labor of love. This indicates that our faith and love for God will naturally be exhibited by laboring in His kingdom. This labor can consist of several things. Probably the two main areas would be aid rendered to help others in whatever need they may have, and the second area is evangelism. Jesus said He came to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). As His disciples, His mission becomes our mission; thus, we are to be engaged in the great activity of saving the lost. Jesus called His disciples to be fishers of men (Luke 5:10).

One of the common maladies of man is that we grow old, and we lose much of our strength and vigor of youth. Often, people who once were very active in the work of the church become much less so in their older years. Some virtually quit altogether. The familiar reason (excuse) given is that they are older and sick, and they are not able to help. People often say that they have done their part, and now it is time for the younger ones

to step up and do the work. While certainly the older may not be able to do as much as they once did, I want to challenge the thinking that the older or the weaker individuals can or should do little or nothing in the work of the Lord. Indeed, there is work that we all can do.

As we look at the Bible, we find no indication that there is a time of retirement on this earth for God's servants. Notice Psalm 71:18. *"Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come."* This gray-haired individual was going to spend his time declaring God's goodness to all who came near. My wife and I met an older woman who had a similar attitude in the Philippines on our last trip. She had only become a New Testament Christian in her later years, but she stated that she wanted to die empty; in other words, she wanted to tell all she knew about God to anyone with whom she had an opportunity to visit. She passed on to her reward shortly after we met her. In Luke 2:37 we read about Anna, an eighty-four year old widow, *"who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."* She is like the ideal widow mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:5 who is to be cared for by the church, yet who is to trust in God and continue in supplications and prayers night and day.

I am always amazed at the attitude of Caleb in ancient Israel. When Moses sent the spies into the land of Canaan, ten of the twelve spies reported that there were giants and great walled cities in the land; therefore, they could not take the land. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, said that with God's help they could take the land; nevertheless, the people listened to the majority. For punishment, God decreed that no adult leaving Egypt would enter Canaan, except for Joshua and Caleb. Caleb faithfully served God through all of those years of wandering in the wilderness, and he fought to conquer the land that belonged to the wicked Canaanites. When it came time to distribute the land to the various tribes, Caleb came to Joshua. They were the two oldest men in the entire nation, and if anyone deserved a time of rest and leisure, it would certainly be Caleb. Yet, instead of wanting to take it easy, Caleb asked to inherit the mountains where the giants lived. He reasoned that his strength had not abated and with God's help he would drive them out. There was still something he could do, and he was going to do it.

There was an older lady, Lois Holmes, in Plano, Texas who disproved

the idea that there is nothing an older and a weak individual can do. Recently, she passed away, but she never stopped working for the Lord. At the end of her life, she was confined to her bed in a nursing home most of the day. She was only up a few hours each day, and she had to be literally picked up by the nursing staff and placed in her wheelchair;



however, she did not moan about her misfortune. Rather, she read the *Voice of Truth*, marked articles and made notes, which her local congregation copied for her. She then spent her few hours in her chair each day going up and down the halls of the nursing home, passing out tracts and articles from the *Voice of Truth* and discussing spiritual truths, mainly with the staff of the nursing home. At least two of the workers were converted due to her activity. She did not use the excuse that there was nothing more she could do in the service of God. Yes, she was very limited, but there was still something that she could do, and she was going to do it.

This is a great example for us all. How many times have we used the excuse that we can do very little or nothing in God's service? It is so easy to think that our time of service and usefulness has passed us by, and we are only waiting for our reward. Yes, we should be looking forward to heaven; however, in the meantime, there is still something we can do. We may have to change or modify our activities, forego some things or ask others to help us, but we can do something. Let us always look for ways that we can serve God, and may we always be busy doing what we can as long as we have life in our bodies. 



The New Reality!

Louis Rushmore

Inevitably there will come in one's life what we might call a showstopper, an event that is so overpowering that it can neither be ignored nor set aside. Life as one knows it comes to the proverbial screeching halt. Nothing else can happen or interfere until the showstopper is acknowledged and appropriately addressed. We are talking about a crisis in a person's life that eclipses every other untoward situation previously experienced. If it hasn't happened yet in your life, it will.

In those prolonged, slow-motion moments, maybe encompassing days, weeks, months or even years, every familiar thing in one's life is subjected to analysis and to evaluation. This is the time when a person reluctantly facing personal tragedy begins to involuntarily sort out in his or her mind the things in this life that really do not matter from what really matters. Some things are so temporal and fickle that honestly, they never really mattered. On the other hand, it becomes increasingly clear that some things have always mattered, they do matter, they will matter tomorrow, they will matter a hundred years from now, and they will matter eternally.

Of course, what has always mattered and what will always matter are things spiritual and eternal in nature in contrast to everything in this physical universe (Matthew 16:26). Especially as one contemplates Judgment (Hebrews 9:27) and the eternal disposition of his or her soul, it becomes obvious that only spiritual things really matter (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-15).

Spiritual awareness and recognition of the frailty of the human existence (James 4:13-16) is the new reality. Actually, though, irrespective of whether previously realized, reality has always been the same, but we may have been desensitized to it amidst worldly pleasures, human philosophies and other earthly distractions. The true reason for human habitation on this world is the opportunity to make preparation to meet God (Amos 4:12).



During the time intervening between the present and when we may pass away or the Lord returns again, each of us needs *“to seek first the kingdom God and His righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33). Spiritual treasures banked in heaven need to characterize our pursuits. *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV). Christian service, complemented by faithful Christian living, must become the thrust of our lives as Christians. *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time...”* (Ephesians 5:15-16). 

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Verse Search



1. What were the Corinthians doing, which to Paul was shameful? (6:1, 5)
2. Who did Paul say would rule the world? (6:2)
3. Who did Paul say would judge the angels? (6:3)
4. Paul said that the church was appointing those who were _____ to judge (6:4)
5. Who should be judging matters between Christians? (6:5)
6. What should Christians be willing to do rather than going to law with one another? (6:7)
7. What were these Christians actually doing to one another? (6:8)
8. Name some groups that Paul said would not inherit the kingdom of God. (6:9,10)
9. Paul exhorted his readers to not be _____ concerning the fate of the unrighteous. (6:9)
10. What kind of people were the Corinthians before they became Christians? (6:11)
11. Name the three things that had happened to the Corinthians. (6:11)
12. Who does those three things to the Christian? (6:11)

(See the back cover for answers.)

VERSE SEARCH

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

NOTE: In these verses Paul was exhorting the Corinthians to stop their practice of taking one another to Roman courts in order to solve their disputes. This was bringing shame upon the church and each other. Paul pointed out that the wise among the church should be able to judge one another, since Christians were going to judge the world one day. Rather than taking other Christians to court and being judged by non-Christians, they should have been willing to suffer wrong and even be cheated. However, rather than being cheated, they were actually cheating one another, likely by bringing up frivolous and even false charges in order to win.

Paul also warned Christians against another common mistake. Christians commonly deceive themselves into thinking that God does not actually require His people to live righteously. However, Paul emphasized that there are several kinds of people who will not inherit the kingdom, and the Corinthians were guilty of all of those sins, but that was their former life. They had been washed; they had been sanctified (set apart as God's people); and they had been justified, which means to be declared righteous by God. They had been guilty of great sins, but now, by the power of God, they were great servants. We can be the same. Regardless of how sinful a past we might have, we can become cleansed servants of God.

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE IN GOD?

Kevin Moore

All who genuinely search for God can easily find Him (Acts 17:27), and to confirm the reality of God one could appeal

to any number of philosophical arguments and logical syllogisms. But the Bible itself provides the simplest and most powerful argument of all: *“For every house is built by someone ...”* (Hebrews 3:4a). How simple, yet how profound! I exist, you exist, and this universe exists — so where did it all come from? The only alternative to a divine Creator is the untenable assertion that everything came from nothing through the accidental process of chance! It is much more reasonable (and believable) to accept this simple truth: *“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all thing is God”* (Hebrews 3:4).



Why Should I Believe in Jesus Christ?

Secular history verifies the historical person of Jesus Christ, but the writers of the New Testament provide the most comprehensive description of His life, character, and words. By honestly considering the testimonies of those who personally knew and observed Jesus, and by carefully examining His teachings, there is only one legitimate conclusion to reach: Jesus was exactly who He (and numerous others) said He was — the

GOD

very Son of God (2 Peter 1:16-21). Moreover, Jesus launched a religious movement nearly 2,000 years ago that has not only survived and prospered in the face of the most extreme prejudice and persecution imaginable, but it has significantly impacted and transformed both human history and countless individual lives.

John 20:30,31 reads, “*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*”

Why Should I Believe in the Holy Spirit?

Just about everything, from warm feelings and vague intuitions to selfish delusions and elaborate hoaxes have been attributed to God’s Spirit. But to attempt to speak on behalf of God without His authorization or to ascribe something to the Holy Spirit for which He is not responsible is blasphemous (Matthew 12:36). Something much more substantial than subjective emotion or personal experience confirms the reality of the divine Spirit.

Ephesians 6:16 records, “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*” The Holy Spirit, who guided the writers of the Bible to produce the most remarkable document ever written (2 Peter 1:21), **reveals truth** (1 Corinthians 2:10), **sanctifies** (2 Thessalonians 2:13), **comforts** (Acts 9:31), **empowers** (Romans 15:13), **strengthens** (Ephesians 3:16), **leads** (Galatians 5:18), and **saves** (Titus 3:5). And all this is accomplished through the medium of God’s Word, which **reveals truth** (2 Timothy 3:15-17), **sanctifies** (John 17:17), **comforts** (Romans 15:4), **empowers** (Romans 1:16), **strengthens** (Psalm 119:28), **leads** (Psalm 43:3; 119:105), and **saves** (James 1:21). The Bible is obviously no ordinary book, because the Holy Spirit has given it life and power (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23). Whatever claims might be made with respect to the divine Spirit, there is no question that His activity is inextricably linked to the divinely inspired Word of God. 

Kevin L. Moore, former missionary to New Zealand, teaches Bible and Missions at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee USA.

Jesus Is Not a Teacher of Love Without Judgment

David R. Kenney

Have you ever heard anyone say Jesus taught love but not judgment? Maybe you have heard some say that He will not condemn people to hell since He loves us. Some misuse the following passage: *“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world”* (John 12:47, NKJV).

Jesus did not teach about love only. He also warned of judgment. He stated, *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”* (John 5:22). This does not mean that neither the Father nor the Son will judge. We will all be judged by Jesus: *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Some do not like to hear about judgment, stating it is “negative”; however, Jesus spoke of it often. For example, *“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here”* (Matthew 12:41,42).

We must put biblical faith into action so that we will avoid hearing the following from Christ on the day of judgment: *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* (Matthew 7:21-23). ✝

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Can We Prove Jesus Was a Real Person?

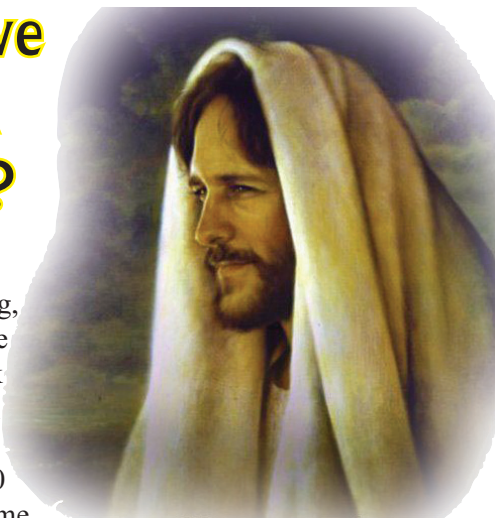
Eric Lyons

You may find this surprising, but there are many people in the world today who actually think that Jesus is nothing more than a fantasy figure that various secret societies created 2,000 years ago. Allegedly, His name

belongs in the same fictional writings that contain such fairy-tale characters as Peter Pan, Hercules, and Snow White and the seven dwarfs. Gerald Massey, in his book, *Gnostic and Historic Christianity*, has “informed” us that “[w]hether considered as the God made human, or as man made divine, this character [Jesus — EL] never existed as a person” (1985, 22). Skeptics like Massey, Acharya (1999), and others believe that Christians have been deceived into thinking that there really was a man named Jesus, when, in fact, He never lived.

How do those of us who believe in the historicity of Jesus Christ respond to such allegations? Can we really know that there was a sinless, miracle-working, death-defying man named Jesus who lived upon the earth approximately 2,000 years ago, or have we accepted His existence blindly?

Even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D. 94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus’ name twice in his book, *Antiquities of the Jews*. In section 18 of that work, Josephus wrote: “And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, *if indeed we should call him a man*; for **he**



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was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure” (emp. added). Then, in section 20, Josephus documented how a man named Ananus brought before the Sanhedrin “a man named James, **the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ**, and certain others” (emp. added).

About 20 years later, Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote a book surveying the history of Rome. In it he described how Nero (the Roman emperor) “punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called).” He went on to write that “their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus” (Annals 15:44). Even though Tacitus, Josephus, and other historians from the first and second centuries A.D. were not followers of Christ, they did have something to say about Him — and they even verified that Jesus was a real person Who was so famous that He even attracted the attention of the Roman emperor himself!

Another obvious reason to believe that Jesus was a real person is because our entire dating method is based upon His existence. The letters “B.C.” stand for “before Christ,” and the letters “A.D.” (standing for Anno Domini) mean “in the year of the Lord”. So when a history teacher speaks of Alexander the Great ruling much of the world in 330 B.C., he or she is admitting that Alexander lived about 330 years before Jesus was born.

Even though this is only a sampling of the evidence relating to the man known as Jesus, it is enough to prove that He was a real person, and not just some imaginary character. We do not accept His existence blindly — it is a historical fact! 

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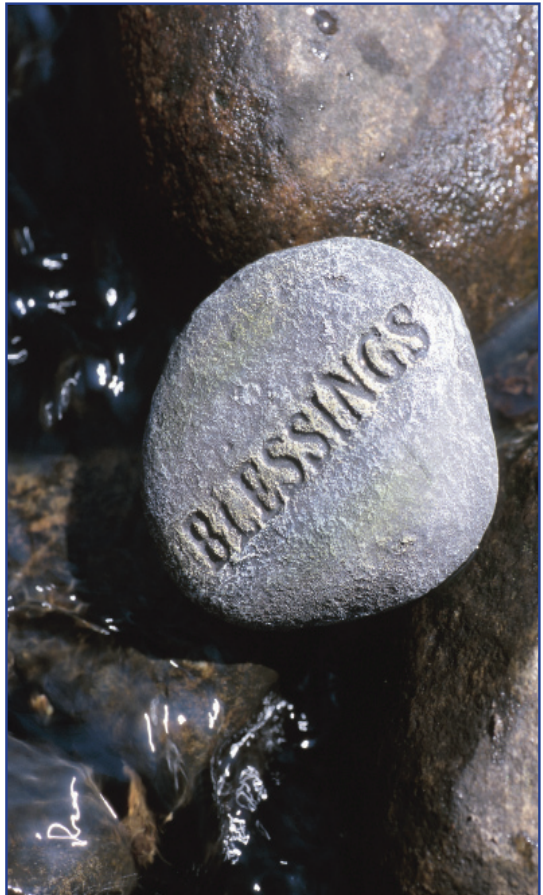
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GOD

God Helps Us Be Faithful

David Tarbet

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians we read, "*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come*" (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). This is a remarkable statement. It affirms the role of God in producing spiritual stability. This is not intended to take anything away from our own responsibility to produce faithfulness by making the proper choices in life. But the passage teaches that in the final analysis, the "bottom line" is that spiritual firmness is the result of God at work in our hearts and lives. This was true for the writ-



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er of the epistle (Paul), it was true for all the apostles (note the text says “us”), and it was true for all the readers of the epistle (note the use of “and you”). It is true for Christians today as well. Ultimately, the power to live the Christian life is provided by God Himself.

Paul uses the present tense of the verb “*makes us and you stand firm*,” showing that the power of God is active each and every day to meet the challenges, the trials, and the temptations of life. Sometimes, God works to provide a way of escape when we are confronted by temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). Sometimes, He leads us in paths where temptation is avoided altogether. But whatever may come, we are assured that God will not abandon us to the pressures of the world or to the power of Satan. He will enable us to stand firm! When we have come through the trial successfully, we have only God to thank.

He also uses the aorist tense (which indicates past tense, a one-time, decisive event) to describe what God has done. **(1) He anointed us.** This is a reference to baptism, when we were anointed to become priests in the service of God. **(2) He set His seal of ownership upon us.** This is a reference to the day we became the people of God, when we were bought with a price, as the blood of Jesus washed away our sins – when the water washed over our bodies. **(3) He put His Spirit in our hearts.** This is a reference to receiving the Spirit to strengthen us with power in the inner man (which came when we were baptized, Acts 2:38).

Let us be thankful for what God has done, for without His past and present work in our lives, we would never be able to stand firm in our faith, to overcome the evil one, or to enter the kingdom of heaven. ✝

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**God has a role in one's spiritual stability.
Yet, that fact does not lessen a person's
responsibility to participate in developing
faithfulness by making the proper choices in life.**

Our Immune System

**O Lord, You have searched me and known me...
For You formed my inward parts;
 You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
 Marvelous are Your works,
 And that my soul knows very well.
My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
 And in Your book they all were written,
 The days fashioned for me,
 When as yet there were none of them.
How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
 (Psalm 139:1,13-17).**

David Everson

For many of us, thought of the flu season that has just passed is not one that leaves fond memories. The fever, body aches, and general malaise of the common influenza that made it around to about 1 in 10 of us were nothing to remember with pleasure. For probably each one of us, there were days this past winter when we were fevered, had a cough, a runny nose, and a sore throat as we suffered through a cold. And if we escaped basically untouched by the “bugs” that made their rounds through the population, we should be thankful because most did not escape.

And yet, in the very process of catching and recovering from a cold or the flu, we can see the marvelousness of the body that God has created for us. Indeed the flu or that cold could have easily have killed each one of us were it not for the defense system God put into place. Let's take a look

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at how we “fight off” the pathogens (the bugs that make us sick) that are waiting all around us for a weakness in our defenses so they can invade our bodies.

Our immune system is very complex, and the volumes that would be necessary to explain just what we know about it now would be vast. We are protected from the very day of our birth against many different organisms that can get into the body and do harm. This protection comes from a combination of very specialized **cells** and **a group of organs** called the **Lymphatic system**. These, together, are able to find a way to attack and destroy just about anything that gets into our bodies, from viruses and bacteria to even the very cells of our body that are damaged and defective. This system works quietly without thought on our part and only asks for the necessary raw materials to be able to make the defenses needed in its job.

This system takes advantage of a very good barrier system called **our skin**, which keeps out just about everything, unless it is damaged. The body openings are another type of problem, though, as we must put things into our body, like food and air. This provides ways for foreign organisms to get in and to cause problems. At these openings, we have cells producing **mucous** that helps to trap many things we take in. The **acids in our stomachs** and **hair-covered cells of our wind pipe** help to remove other unwanted materials that might make their way in the body through these openings.

We also have the organs of the lymphatic systems with the lymph nodes and ducts that help to **drain the cells of the body and carry invading organisms into the areas where defensive cells can attack them**. This is why we get enlarged lymph nodes when we have an infection. These nodes are clustered in several areas around our bodies. In addition, the lymphatic system also includes several isolated organs like the **tonsils** and **appendix**, which have a great deal of lymph tissue, but these are very boring compared to **the cells** that protect us.

The cells of the immune system have some very exotic names and are lumped into two general groups called **“lymphocytes”** and **“eater cells”**. The eater cells make up the general defenses and include **macrophages**,

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granulocytes and **monocytes**, which come directly from the bone marrow along with all other blood cells, as these are part of what we call our “**white blood cells**”. These are involved in attacking very general types of invaders and substances getting into our body, and then also dealing with all old dead and used-up materials in our body.

The next type of cell, **the lymphocytes**, also comes from the bone marrow, but then goes to the organ called the “thymus” for **special modifications and training**. **Here they are changed into B-lymphocytes, T-lymphocytes, killer cells, helper cells, plasma cells, and suppressor cells!** These make up the special defense system and are part of what is called our “memory” of diseases. These cells are designed to produce customized “bullets” called “antibodies” that can then kill the invader. Once we have made these special “bullets”, they are with us for life. This is what keeps us from getting the same disease twice, generally. We have immunity against that bug because we are ready for it when it invades again.

Some of our defenses we get from our mothers when developing in the womb or by breast milk. Other immunity we must get by actually having the disease and making a defense against it. This is what happens when we get sick with a cold or the flu. The organism gets in, causing us to get sick while we make the antibodies to get rid of it. We then are ready the second time that bug gets in.

So, why do we get the flu or a cold several times during the winter? Well, as we have heard so many times on the news reports of the flu epidemic, there are many different things that can cause these illnesses.

So, we can see in just a very general survey of our immune system that we are amazingly complex in how our bodies operate. Each of these parts must be in place and working properly in order for us to survive in the world. In fact, if we were born as some people are, without an immune system, then a kiss from our mother could be deadly to us. Indeed, we are “fearfully and wonderfully made”, and the more we know, the more that is obvious. 

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Zephaniah

Paul Holland

The world seems to be falling apart. There is war, killing, and being killed. We are not even safe in our own country. Religion has fallen on hard times. It seems that even those who, at one time, sought to follow the paths of God have turned their backs on that pattern and are worshiping just like everyone else in the country. The number of people who truly want to serve God and follow His pattern seems to be shrinking more and more by the day.

This description I have given you might describe our own times. But it could also describe the times of mankind and God's people for the last three thousand years (or more). This is exactly what was going on during the days of the so-called *minor* prophet Zephaniah.

Zephaniah is one of the shortest, one of the most "minor" of the minor prophets, having only 53 verses. You might say it is a summary, a shorter version, of any one of the major prophets.

Observe God's anger and what He says He will do to Jerusalem and Judah. God is so angry with His people; notice His words:

"I will completely remove" (1:2) and *"I will remove"* (twice in verse 3). The same verb is also found in 3:11. Observe how comprehensive this removal is: *"all things from the face of the earth"* (vs. 2), *"man and beast, birds, fish"* (vs. 3). These two verses call to mind the destruction of the world through the flood of Noah. It's almost as if God is predicting another worldwide global catastrophe.

He further says, *"I will cut off"* (vs 3), and *"I will stretch out My hand"* (vs. 4). We see here in verse 4 that the target of God's wrath is primarily His own people – *"Judah"* and *"inhabitants of Jerusalem"*.

Why? Because:

1. The Jews have diluted the Word of God. They have not kept it pure and have mixed it in with worship from other religions (1:4,5).

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2. This syncretism is also evident in what they were wearing (1:8) and what they were practicing (1:9).
3. From a moral perspective, they were guilty of fraud and violence (1:9).
4. We see in 3:3-4 that this perversion of God's worship reaches all the way to the leadership: prophets, priests, and judges.
5. The Jews would reply, "Well, that's not a 'salvation issue'. That is, God is not really concerned about these sorts of things" (1:12). The matter they were overlooking, and that so many people overlook today, is that if God *specifies*, He expects *obedience*. This is an attitude of gambling on God's indifference.
6. The Jews refused to change their behavior, ignoring the preaching of other prophets as well as Zephaniah (3:2,7).

The Expectations of Man (Chapter 2)

We see in 1:7 the first command God gives Israel: Be silent. Be respectful. Be filled with awe. Until we humbly acknowledge the nature of the God of heaven, we will not look at sin and the world from the right perspective.

Here in Chapter 2, Zephaniah calls on all the nations to gather together and understand that God's decree or law of coming wrath and judgment is going to take place. The day of God's anger *will* come – twice Zephaniah warns.

So (2:3), Seek the Lord. Be humble. Carry out His ordinances, His commandments. Seek righteousness that comes through God's commandments. Seek humility. In that way, when the dark day of God's anger comes, you will be hidden in the safety of God's grace.

Zephaniah is still a relevant message for us today because man has not changed. He still wants to do his own thing, and he still thinks that God could not care less about what he does. Yet, God has not changed either. He is still holy, and He still demands righteousness on the part of man. We still need to seek the Lord. Be humble. Keep His commandments. Seek righteousness. 

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A Working Knowledge of the Word of God

Shan Jackson

To live the Christian life, we need the teaching of Christ and to constantly examine ourselves to see if we are walking in the steps of our Lord Jesus. Christ not only revealed the truth to us, but He also showed us through His own life how truth is to be applied. A student may memorize the rules of mathematics, yet he may not know how to solve a problem. However, when the teacher shows how the rules are to be applied, the student will be able to solve similar problems.

Jesus demonstrated obedience when He was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus never sinned. He did not need to be baptized for the remission of sins, yet He declared that it was becoming of Him to fulfill all righteousness. In so doing, He taught us obedience. Christ demonstrated His knowledge of the Scriptures when He was tempted by Satan. Each temptation that was offered was countered by the use of God's Word (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

One classic example of Christ and His living the truth is found at His crucifixion. From the cross He prayed for those who had so cruelly handled Him, saying, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Christ has set us an example of living in what He taught. So, we too, must live what we teach, and in order to do so we must *"Study to show ourself approved unto God"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

This emphasizes the importance of a working knowledge of the Word of God, and this can be gained only by applying ourselves to learn the truth. **The Word of God is not studied just to gain information but for translating it into our lives.** In our living and teaching, Christ is the example we should follow. *"He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as*

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He walked” (1 John 2:6).

Jesus said, “*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:13-16). Since our Lord not only taught, but lived what He taught, if we are to abide in Him, then we must also live what we teach.

Preaching and ***teaching*** are essential to the edification of the saints, but ***doing*** is equally essential. Good teaching is excellent, but ***good teaching and living are supreme.*** 



Shan Jackson preaches for the church of Christ in Port Lavaca, Texas, USA.

To live the Christian life, we need the teaching of Christ and to constantly examine ourselves to see if we are walking in the steps of our Lord Jesus.

THE WORD OF GOD

Speak Where the Bible Speaks; Be Silent Where the Bible is Silent

Wes McAdams

My entire life I have heard this saying, “Speak where the Bible speaks; be silent where the Bible is silent,” or phrases very similar. I have heard this phrase lauded, I have heard it ridiculed, and I have heard it misused. Recently, a reader asked me to address this phrase and what it really means. I would love to do just that.

Where Did the Saying Originate?

First of all, this isn’t a quotation from Scripture, but a quotation from a preacher named Thomas Campbell. In 1809, Campbell spoke to a large crowd of people who were described as being “Sick of the animosities and controversies between rival sects, and disgusted with the petty differences which occasioned alienation and strife...” They sought some way to be united and to use Scripture alone as their guide in all matters of faith.

Thomas Campbell’s speech that day was described in this way: Having opened the meeting in the usual manner, and, in earnest prayer, specially invoked the Divine guidance, proceeded to rehearse the matter from the beginning, and to dwell with unusual force upon the manifold evils resulting from the divisions in religious society – divisions which, he urged, were as unnecessary as they were injurious, since God had provided, in His Sacred Word, an infallible standard, which was all-sufficient and alone-sufficient, as a basis of union and Christian cooperation. He showed, however, that men had not been satisfied with its teachings, but had gone outside of the Bible to frame for themselves religious theories, opinions, and speculations, which were the real occasions of the unhappy controversies and strife which had so long desolated the religious world. He, therefore, insisted with great earnestness upon a return to the simple

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teachings of the Scriptures, and upon the entire abandonment of everything in religion for which there could not be produced a Divine warrant.

Near the conclusion of his address, he spoke these now famous words, **“Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”** A profound silence was said to have fallen over the crowd as the weight of that thought sank into their minds.

What Did It Mean?

Many debate and try to twist the meaning of these words today, but make no mistake, the meaning of those words was clear on that day. The first man to speak up said, “Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism.” To which Campbell replied, “If infant baptism be not found in Scripture, we can have nothing to do with it.”

There it is, the plain and simple meaning of the phrase. The church should do what Scripture authorizes us to do and **not** do what Scripture says nothing about. Fill in the blank with any religious practice, “If _____ be not found in Scripture, we can have nothing to do with it.”

Campbell’s statement was summed up this way. “There should be no contention, henceforth, in regard to the opinions of men, however wise or learned. Whatever private opinions might be entertained upon matters not clearly revealed must be retained in silence, and no effort must be made to impose them upon others.” Thus the silence of the Bible was to be respected equally with its revelations, which were by Divine authority declared to be able to *“make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”*

There may indeed be many matters about which Scripture is silent and men may draw any number of conclusions and opinions about those matters. However, those opinions and conclusions should not be brought into the faith and worship of the church. They should be “retained in silence”. Incidentally, this seems to be the precise teaching of Romans 14 as well.

What It Does NOT Mean?

1. It does not mean that what God has not authorized is necessarily sinful. We have often taken this to the next level and said we can know for

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certain that practices about which God is silent must indeed be sinful. That was not the intention of the phrase. Campbell believed “that all matters not distinctly revealed in the Bible should be held as matters of opinion and of mutual forbearance.” Yet, just because something is not sinful, or may not be sinful, does not mean you or I have the authority to introduce it into the faith or worship of the Lord’s church without express authority from God.

2. It does not mean that when the Bible is silent about something, we can do whatever we want. Many have begun to twist this phrase and insist that it means the exact opposite of what Campbell meant. They now insist it means, “Where the Bible is silent, do whatever you want, just don’t make any laws about it.” Campbell knew there would continue to be chaos and disunity if men continued doing that. It was obvious to the crowd the day this phrase was first spoken that *if we make this the basis of our unity, then there are many things which we must STOP doing.*



3. It does not mean that we are not allowed to use church buildings.

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When this phrase is quoted, many say something like, “Then why do you have a church building? The Bible is silent on that.” Actually, Scripture is NOT silent on a meeting place. In fact, the commands to assemble *necessitate* a meeting place. In a follow-up writing, Campbell said about matters like this: “That if any circumstantial necessities are necessary to the observance of Divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only, as are absolutely necessary for this purpose should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense to a more sacred origin, so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might produce no contention nor division in the Church.”

The church is authorized to adopt certain “human expedients” that are **necessary** for doing what God has expressly commanded us to do. Consider this example: If someone commissioned you to bake a cake, you’d be authorized to use an oven and purchase flour, as these things are **necessary** for doing what you’ve been told to do.

Bottom Line

I am not a follower of Thomas Campbell; I’m a follower of Jesus Christ. However, I happen to believe Campbell was right. I believe we would be better off if we adopt – and stick to – this mentality, “**Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.**”

I believe Scripture is not only inspired, I believe it is all-sufficient. I believe it is “*Profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*” (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

It is presumptuous, divisive, and spiritually dangerous to introduce things into the faith and worship of the church that are not expressly authorized in Scripture. Let us walk circumspectly, dear church. 

Wes McAdams is the preacher for the Baker Heights Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, USA.



Bible Find

Louis Rushmore

BIBLE CITIES

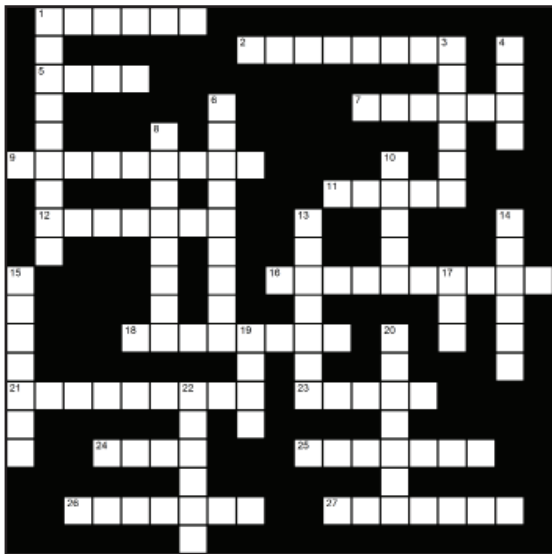
Across

- 1 12 miles north of Jerusalem
- 2 City on Sea of Galilee shore
- 5 Phoenician coastal city
- 7 Caleb made this his home
- 9 Capital of Israel
- 11 Paul received the Macedonia call there
- 12 Paul spoke to the elders from this city
- 16 Jewish city in Egypt
- 18 Jesus' boyhood hometown
- 21 Adult home of Jesus & of his apostles
- 23 Phoenician coastal city
- 24 Philistine city
- 25 Paul began his mission trips there
- 26 Two New Testament books are named after this city
- 27 Capital of the northern kingdom of Israel

Down

- 1 Birthplace of Jesus
- 3 A city in Asia Minor
- 4 Jesus' first miracle was there
- 6 Southern most city of Canaan

- 8 Roman capital of Palestine
- 10 Dorcas lived there
- 13 Paul delivered a farewell address to the Ephesian elders there
- 14 Religious center for Israel before the period of the kings
- 15 First city conquered by Israel upon entering Canaan
- 17 Northern most city of Canaan
- 19 Capital of the Roman Empire
- 20 City in Asia Minor
- 22 Grecian city



THE BEST IS YET TO BE

Charles Cash

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also along with Him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31,32)

Robert Browning, the noted poet, wrote:

*“Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be,
the last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hand, who saith, ‘A whole I planned,
youth show but half; Trust God: See all, nor be afraid.’”*



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It is doubtful that Browning meant this from a purely physical perspective, but also from a more important spiritual perspective. It is hard to believe that the best is always yet to be from a standpoint of physical health, financial conditions, or better circumstances. When I was a young man, I preached that old age was neither a disease nor a disaster. Now, at my age, sometimes I feel it is some of both. So, the thrust of this article is concerned with the spiritual. Certainly, God is concerned with our physical well-being, but it is plain to see that He is more concerned with our spiritual condition and future. We believe Horace Bushnell was right on the money when he said, “Every man’s life is a plan of God.” The whole is planned by God!

How great and how good God is! *“His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”* (Lamentations 3:22,23). God is, as the song says, “the foundation whence ten thousand blessings flow”. James, the Lord’s half-brother, tells us that *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows”* (James 1:17). The Christian does not have to look in his bankbook or his investment portfolio to see how wealthy he is.

Writing to the believers in Ephesus, Paul spoke of *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (Ephesians 3:8). Our spiritual wealth is so vast that it cannot be measured. The word “unsearchable” literally means “that which cannot be tracked”. But that is not all; the best is yet to be. One can never exhaust these riches Christ bestows.

Think for a moment of all that God offers. There are no tricks, there is no false language! The blessings come with a full guarantee. He knows what we need. He offers what we could never find anywhere else: forgiveness, peace, purpose, comfort, strength, His abiding presence, and the means by which to grow and to develop into mature and better persons.

The apostle Peter, after giving a list of needed virtues to be added to our faith, such as “goodness”, “knowledge”, “self-control”, “perseverance”, “godliness”, “brotherly kindness”, and “love”, then wrote these words: *“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure they will keep*

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you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). The expression, "*For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure,*" sets forth the absolute necessity of growing in these Christian virtues. In so doing, we are continually becoming better persons. One of the beautiful things about Christianity is that one does not have to be today what he was yesterday. **You can be better!** The best is yet to be! Can't you really believe that? But this begs the question: Are you growing spiritually? Do you feel that you are the best person you will ever be? Can you always face the future with confidence and optimism? The future is as bright as the promises of God!

We, today, like the worthies of old, "*look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" Heaven! Paul said that this is "*better by far*" than life on earth. It means the completion of God's planning of the whole. Can we not, without any hesitation, doubt, or qualification, be confident that the best is yet to be? Basking in the sunlight of God's love and enjoying daily the "*unsearchable riches of Christ,*" the Christian should be a perpetual optimist. Phillips Brooks once wrote, "Life is full of ends, but every end is a new beginning." That's the view of the optimist! The Christian will come to ends, but to no dead end! "One never knows the beauty round the bend."

*"The best is never over – the best is never gone;
There's always something lovely to keep you struggling on.
There's a compensation for every cross you bear;
A secret consolation is hidden somewhere.
Ends are new beginnings as one day you will see;
The best is not over -
The best is yet to be."*✝

Charles Cash works with the Lord's church in Bella Vista, Arkansas, USA.

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).

SALVATION

Why Are You Waiting?

Dalton Key

Though the subject of baptism is treated frequently within the New Testament and always with candor and clarity, strange ideas — baptismal myths — continue to be advanced by many souls attempting to justify their aversion to the baptism of New Testament Scripture.

Consider the following examples:

“You were baptized in your way; I was baptized in my way. What difference does it make? After all, one baptism is just as good as another.” Those re-baptized in Acts 19:1-5 would beg to disagree, as would the inspired Paul, who pointedly wrote, **“There is one baptism”** (Ephesians 4:5).

“Baptism is a symbolic act, merely confirming the fact that I have already been saved by faith alone.” The Bible teaches something vastly different. After speaking of the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood of that day, Peter continues, **“The like figure whereunto even baptism does now save us”** (1 Peter 3:21).

“I don’t understand how water can wash anyone’s sins away.” Indeed, water — any water, even the water of baptism — has no intrinsic power to save. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has this power (Revelation 1:5). Yet, we come into contact with this sin-cleansing blood in the **obedience of baptism**. At the time of his conversion, Paul (who at this time was known as Saul) was commanded to **“be baptized and wash away your sins”** (Acts 22:16).

“Baptism may be necessary, and I’ll probably be baptized someday, but there’s no need to do anything right now.” **“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (2 Corinthians 6:2). With salvation from sin hanging in the balance, with everything to gain and nothing to lose, with heaven calling and friends praying, **why wait?**

Or again, as Paul was encouraged with respect to his need for baptism, *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). 

Dalton Key is the Editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the 10th and Rockford congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

SALVATION

Death and Dying Versus Life and Living

Selected



Over the past few years, a number of colleges and universities have taught credit classes and conducted seminars and workshops on *Death and Dying*. Different kinds of approaches have been followed as most are from a secular viewpoint. They are designed to help people have the so-called “positive attitude” toward death and to assist members of the family for the time when a loved one passes on.

THE WORLDLY VIEW

For the world, this is a procedure in futility. It makes no difference how much you try to get ready for death, the ugly shock is always there. Funeral

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parlors and cemeteries are places of sorrow and tears. The subsequent feeling of hopelessness pervades the living. I even helped at one funeral where as I stood by the casket, a person passed by and remarked, “What a beautiful tie; he looks so nice.” Death is not nice, and no human effort can make it different from what it really is — the end of a man.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

The Christian has an entirely different outlook. He is the only one who can view death properly. Why is that so? Because of all the founders of religions in the world, only one — Jesus Christ — has conquered death. All others are in their tombs, some of which can still be found. Millions have flocked to Mecca over the centuries to the tomb of Mohammed. But only the tomb of Jesus is empty.

Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about Himself. He first referred to His coming death and resurrection in John 2:19-22. Throughout His ministry, He kept telling His disciples He would die and rise the third day (Matthew 12:40,41; 16:21; 17:23; 20:18,19).

In about 1000 B.C., David wrote about overcoming death in Psalm 16:9,10. Peter and the eleven referred to it on Pentecost (Acts 2:27-34). David’s tomb was still in Jerusalem. The prophecy could only apply to Jesus.

The Bible has a lot to say about death and dying. Death came into the world through sin; sin and death spread to all men because all men sinned (Romans 5:12). The Bible clearly teaches that since all men have sinned, all men must die and after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Death is the wage paid by sin to every human being (Romans 6:23). The Bible also speaks about the *second* death, which happens to all who die physically and are not in Christ (Revelation 20:14). I doubt if the second death is ever mentioned in these classes or seminars. Why? Because the world does not focus on the spiritual life or death of the soul. Physical death, to most, is the end. Reincarnation fantasies and “nirvana” dreams are without any evidence whatsoever.

LIFE AND LIVING

Jesus suffered death but triumphed over it gloriously. Forty days

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after His resurrection, He ascended to the right hand of God where He is our High Priest and has been for nearly 2,000 years. Paul said it well to Timothy, *“Our Saviour Jesus Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”* (2 Timothy 1:10). His triumphant revelation to John on the Isle of Patmos still encourages every saint: *“Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last and the living one; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades”* (Revelation 1:17,18).

Because of this fact and reality, the sinner who becomes a saint by his obedience to the Gospel goes from a spiritual state of death to one of LIFE in Christ and is born spiritually to LIVE in the NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:1-5). He begins in this physical life a SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE which daily changes him into the likeness of His Saviour (2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul understood this in a marvelous way. In writing to the Philippian saints, he stated, *“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Philippians 1:21). Death no longer held that horrible chain around his neck; he was free from the sin which brings death and he knew that in Christ he would be the recipient by His grace of eternal life, God’s free gift (Romans 6:23). Thus, the truth of Ecclesiastes 7:1 became real in his life: *“The day of a man’s death is better than the day of his birth; it is better to go to the house of mourning than to a house of feasting.”* Why? Because the Christian does not go to a funeral, but to a victory service. The saint has gone on to be with his Lord, and his death is gain in Christ.

Death is a momentary sting, as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 15:56, but the joy and bliss beyond death are eternal. The apostle looked forward to that crown of righteousness which the Lord Jesus would award him on that day. But it was not to Paul only. It is to all who love his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8), who look expectantly for it, who live the new life, who walk by the Spirit.

Let us as Christians LIVE in the freshness, the newness, the joy of LIFE IN OUR LORD in a world that is dying and full of people dead in sin. Let us hold out the hope of Jesus amid hopelessness, the happiness of Christ amid sorrow. Let us be like our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen! ✝

THE CHURCH



What Makes the Church of Christ Different?

Submitted by **Eric Obeng Asante**

Question:

"You say the Church of Christ is not a Protestant denomination, but I know you protest the Catholic religion for I have read a lot of your writings, so what makes you different from the other churches. You look like one of many churches to me."

Answer:

Yes, we have said that the church of Christ is not a protestant denomination, and we have said that for very good reason. Christ established His church in the First Century A.D., beginning in the city of Jerusalem (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). "*The church ... is his body*" (Ephesians 1:22,23), and "*there is one body*" (Ephesians 4:4), therefore, Christ built but one church.

After the passing of the apostles there was an apostasy — a falling away from the faith (Acts 20:29,30; 1 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:1-4), which ultimately came to be known as the Catholic Church, with doctrines and practices not authorized by Christ and his apostles. In 606 A.D. Boniface III, Bishop of Rome, became the first "universal Bishop", later known as the Pope. In the Eleventh Century the Catholic Church divided

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into two groups, Roman and Greek, with the Roman Catholic becoming the greater of the two.

Many were unhappy with the Catholic Church and began to lift up their voices against it. The “sale of indulgence” (selling the right to sin without having to make confession to the priest) was just too much, and open protesting was strong. In 1517 Martin Luther, a Catholic Priest, wrote his famous thesis pointing out 95 things he thought to be wrong with the church. He was excommunicated by the Pope and would have been put to death, as so many others had been, but he had friends in high places who helped him. Many shared the views of Luther and within a few years there were many who had joined with him, thus the first Protestant Church was born — the Lutheran Church (although Luther pleaded with them “call not yourselves Lutheran ... but Christians”). Nonetheless, the name stuck. In the 1530’s John Calvin left the Catholic Church, starting the Presbyterian Church and in the same decade King Henry the Eighth broke away, starting the Church of England. These were the first three Protestant Churches.

That was the Sixteenth Century! The church of Christ was established in the First Century A.D., 1500 years before there was a “Protestant Church”, therefore I think I am justified in saying that the church of Christ is not a “Protestant Church”. Yes, the church does protest against Catholicism, but it is not a “Protestant Church”. It is the body of Christ to which saved people are added by the Lord day by day (Acts 2:47).

“But What Makes You Different From Others?”

The church of Christ is different from the Protestant denominations in several points:

We have no organization larger than the local church. This, in itself, sets us apart from most Protestant Churches, who have district, state, national and international organizations. In the New Testament there was no organization larger than the local church, with bishops, deacons, and saints in those local churches (Philippians 1:1).

We have no creed but Christ and His word — the New Testament. There is no manual, discipline, catechism, etc. as is found in Protestant Churches. The early disciples were taught not to add to or take from the

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inspired Scriptures (Revelation 22:18,19), or to teach any other Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). We still follow this charge and have no other creed.

The name that we wear makes us different. Look at the Protestant Churches and see what they call themselves. They wear names that give honor to the man who started them, or to some particular practice. By what name were the early disciples called? They were called Christians (Acts 11:26) and were not to be ashamed to suffer as a Christian (1 Peter 4: 16). That is the name we use today. As a collectivity, the early disciples were called the “church” (group of people), “church of God” (group of people that belongs to God), “churches of Christ” (groups that belong to Christ). There was no “specific” name for the local churches. Today, we refer to the church in the same manner, but we do not wear some name that gives honor to men or to practices.

The worship we render to God is different. We eat the Lord’s Supper “upon the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7), which necessarily infers a weekly observance. Most Protestant churches do not have the Lord’s Supper each week. Our music in worship is a cappella, just as it was in the New Testament (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). Most Protestant Churches use instrumental music in worship.

We teach the plan of salvation just as the apostles taught it: believe in Christ as the Son of God, repent of sins, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36,37; Mark 16:16). Most Protestant Churches teach that one is saved “by faith only”, before and without being baptized.

The concept we have of the church makes us different, for we believe that the church consists of those who have been saved (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22,23). The Protestant Churches teach that the church consists of all the Protestant Churches, that each is a part (denomination) of the “body of Christ”.

These are some of the things that make us different from Protestant Churches. The differences have to do with faith and practice. We plead for “speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent.” The church of Christ of the New Testament was not a Protestant Denomination. You do have a choice. **You can be just a Christian, a member of Christ’s church.** 

THE CHURCH

What Is the True New Testament Church of Christ?

Charles R. Rose

We read in Matthew 16:18 the Christ's promise, "...I will build My church". He fulfilled that promise through the instrumentality of the apostles whom He chose and trained for that work. On the first Jewish Pentecost following the Lord's ascension, His church was established (Acts 2:1-47). Congregations of the church that Christ built were then established throughout the known world within a thirty-year span (Colossians 1:23). The apostle Paul, writing to the congregation in Rome, gave this salutation: "*The churches of Christ salute you*" (Romans 16:16). Thus, the New Testament church in a given location was the "church of Christ". Concerning the function of Christ's church there are other designations given for it in Scripture.



THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S KINGDOM. Jesus also promised His listeners that they would live to see His kingdom in existence (Mark 9:1). He

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is “...*the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Timothy 6:15). As such, Christ has been given “*all authority [power] both in heaven and on earth*” (Matthew 28:18). And, “*He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet*” (1 Corinthians 15:25). When one obeys the Gospel of Christ the King, he leaves the world of sin and becomes a citizen of His kingdom. At the moment one is “*baptized into Christ*” (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:27), he is “*delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son*” (Colossians 1:13).

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST. God the Father “*raised Him from the dead... And gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*” (Ephesians 1:20,22,23). Christ has only “*one body*” (Ephesians 4:4). Spiritually, as members of His church, we are members of His body. Just as a physical body has many parts, Christ’s spiritual body, the church, is comprised of many members, with each member having his own function in the body (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:20). It is this body of faithful believers whom Jesus saves (Ephesians 5:23).

THE CHURCH IS THE HOUSE OF GOD. Isaiah prophesied of the establishment of the Lord’s house in the last days (Isaiah 2:2-4). Paul’s first letter to Timothy was written as instructions as to how one should conduct himself “*in the house of God, which is the church*” (1 Timothy 3:15).

THE CHURCH IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD, not just a house built of stone, but a spiritual house built of living stones. “*You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 2:5). This spiritual house of sacrifice is the true church, a temple of worship in which God dwells (Ephesians 2:22). As this spiritual house, “*you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). And the dire warning is given, “*if anyone defiles the temple of God [which is the church] him God will destroy*” (1 Corinthians 3:17). 

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5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

Answered Prayers ~ Paula Bates

1. Depart from me, all you _____ of iniquity; for the Lord has heard the voice of my _____. The Lord has heard my _____; the Lord will receive my prayer. Psalm 6:8,9
2. In my _____ I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He _____ my voice from his temple, and my cry came before Him, even to his _____. Psalm 18:6
3. I waited _____ for the Lord; and he inclined to me, and _____ my _____. Psalm 40:1
4. Then Jonah prayed to the _____ his _____ from the fish's belly. And he said: I cried out to the Lord because of my _____ and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. Jonah 2:1,2
5. And when they had _____, the place where they were assembled together was _____; And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with _____. Acts 4:31
6. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed _____ that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for _____ years and _____ months. And he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. James 5:17,18
7. Then they took the stone from the place where the dead man (Lazarus) was lying. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "_____, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I _____ that you always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may _____ that you sent Me." John 11:41,42



- Answers:**
1. Workers, weeping, supplication
 2. Distress, heard, ears
 3. Patiently, heard, cry
 4. Lord, God, affliction
 5. Prayed, shaken, boldness
 6. Earnestly, rain, three, six
 7. Father, know, believe

Moving the Comma

David A. Sargent

Alexander III was Tsar of Russia from 1881-1894. His rule was marked by repression, and in particular by persecution of Jews. His wife, Maria Fedorovna, provided a stark contrast, being known for her generosity to those in need. On one occasion her husband had signed an order consigning a prisoner to life in exile. It read simply, "Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia." Maria changed that prisoner's life by moving the comma in her husband's order. She altered it to "Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia."*

*"All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
"And the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).*

Jesus taught that each person is traveling one of two roads: *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13,14).*

Because of our sin, we are traveling down the road to destruction, to Hell. Our situation was hopeless until, but through Christ, "the comma was moved".

Because of His great love for us, God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins (John 3:16). Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we might have forgiveness and receive the gift of eternal life (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 6:23).

God has promised to save those who will place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30,31), turn from their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30,31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9,10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). He will continue to cleanse those who continue to walk in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1,2,4).

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

In Christ, God has changed the comma that stood against us. From “Pardon impossible, send to Hell” comes the good news of salvation: “Pardon, impossible to send to Hell.”

Won't YOU allow God to “move the comma” in YOUR life by accepting His offer of forgiveness and life? 

*Sources: biography.com and Today in the Word, July 14, 1993; viewed in storiesforpreaching.com

David A. Sargent, minister of the Church of Christ at Creekwood in Mobile, Alabama, USA.

Why So Many Wars?

In our world, wars are found on every corner. In James 4:1-4, the writer is dealing with personal difficulties. He asks, *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that **the friendship of the world is enmity with God?** whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

Now project this to the ethic, social, and national levels. Aren't wars the result of the same spiritual failures that cause problems between individuals? Lust for possessions and power, a selfish view of life that ignores the rights and the needs of others, a lack of relationship with God — isn't this how wars start? When a war begins, some person or group has sinned to start it. In much of history, both parties have contributed to the problem, but in no case can both parties be guiltless. God holds somebody responsible. As James explains, God could work the problems out, but human depravity won't even consider inviting Him into the picture except on its own terms. And God doesn't accept human terms. They wouldn't solve anything anyway. The problem is in human hearts, so that's where correction has to be made. Wars should never happen, but there's always somebody around sinful enough to cause one.

— Ardron Hinton

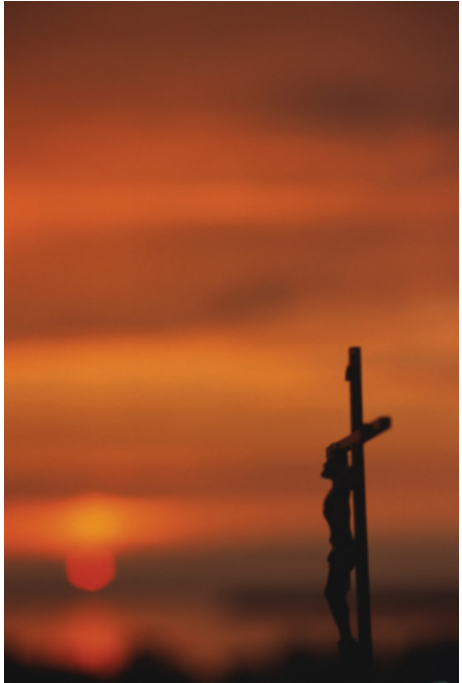
DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Denominationalism Is the Fleshly Plan

Richard Mansel

God's plan for mankind is ridiculous to a sinful world (Isaiah 55:8,9; Romans 6:1-6), so we must have an undeniable faith in His Truth (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22,23; Hebrews 11:6).

- *Godliness is our new world as Christians and God's Word teach us what we need to know (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Doing what is natural to the flesh is guaranteed to violate God's will (Matthew 5:27-48).*
- *Men rejected Christ because they interpreted His spiritual messages through fleshly filters (John 6:41-71). Nothing has changed since. In the religious world, we see this fleshly-versus-spiritual conflict very clearly.*
- *When we reject God's message, Satan fills the void (1 Peter 5:8; Job 1; John 8:44). Fleshly thinking morphs into humanism when Satan offers an alternative to God's truth (Genesis 3:1-5).*
- *Jesus' one church (Matthew 16:18), one way (John 14:6), and one truth (John 12:48) is narrow-minded and arrogant to those who are following the flesh. The reasoning is, "Why require one path when people are so different? Why not allow everyone to find his own way?"*



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

- *Denominationalism or universalism is inevitable when feelings and self-esteem transcend everything else. Again, the reasoning is, "Diversity must triumph since we're all unique. Turning someone away damages his self-esteem."*
- *Some try to mix the spiritual with the fleshly by mixing the appearance of Christianity with a large dose of humanism. Brethren should know better than to fall into Satan's trap.*
- *God's wisdom is superior to human hearts and feelings and He exemplifies righteousness (Deuteronomy 32:4). Be humble and trust Him to carry out His plan since He knows more than we do (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:7-12).*
- *The singularity of the church makes perfect sense spiritually because it focuses on God rather than on humans. Christ is the supreme Lord (John 1:1-5) and we must obey Him to be saved (John 12:48; 14:15). The Messiah came to save men's souls, not to salve their wounded egos.*
- *Jesus will never chase after men by compromising His truth (John 6:60-71). Even if everyone rejected God, He would persevere in truth without us (Matthew 3:9; Acts 17:25).*
- *Providing false hope to the lost isn't loving; it is hatred in its purest form. Political correctness loves smugness more than souls. Satan hates while God loves (1 John 4:8).*

Do we fear the acrimony of men more than the Word of God (Jeremiah 1:8)? If so, we will find hell more comfortable than the courage and faith required to make it to heaven. 

Richard Mansel lives in Florence, Alabama. He is the author of *The Most Important Question*, and he is working on more books.

**God's plan for mankind is
ridiculous to a sinful world.**

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

A New Creation

J. Lee Roberts



“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

THE NEW BIRTH is the beginning of a process of spiritual growth in which we seek to weed out of our minds and hearts any worldly in-

fluences that would separate us from the Lord. Our aim is to be transformed into His image and take on those godly attributes that equip us to someday live with God forever. We seek to follow Christ’s teachings and example – to grow in Christ-likeness (1 Peter 2: 22,23).

THIS SPIRITUAL CONVERSION requires a drastic change from fleshly desires to holy aspirations, from the love of the earthly to a love of godly righteousness, from having this world’s mind-set to being filled with holy desires – to having the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11). We must learn to love *what* God loves and to love *as* He loves (1 John 4:7-21). Our Father desires our sanctification. He has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3,7).

HIS IS “HEART EDUCATION” or spiritual circumcision where we root out of our system all that keeps us separated from a Holy God (Colossians 2:9-13; 3:1-10). Trained in the knowledge of Christ, we can

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

then partake of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:2-11). This is not achieved by human effort but by the Lord's Spirit working in us as we pray and obey His will. Certainly recognition of our lost condition must demand repentance and immersion in our change of heart (Acts 2: 38). *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

God's message for us today is in the New Covenant of our Lord Jesus and His apostles. His Great Commission was the only baptism given after His resurrection. It was taught on the day of Pentecost and thereafter, and it is the one mentioned in Ephesians 4 as the "one baptism" (Hebrews 9: 15ff; Acts 2:37-43; Romans 6:1-17). Any other baptism practiced after Pentecost in **NOT** acceptable today before God. Read Acts 18:24-19: 5). Our faith working in love in Christ, our Sin-Bearer, gives us **ACCESS** to the Savior and His grace. Only what was taught after the New Covenant came into effect gives us access to the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. Faith working in love and keeping the teaching of the New Covenant gives us access to the promise of Acts 2:38 and 5:32). Read also Galatians 5:6; Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; 3:12.

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:2-11; 2 Peter 3:18).

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

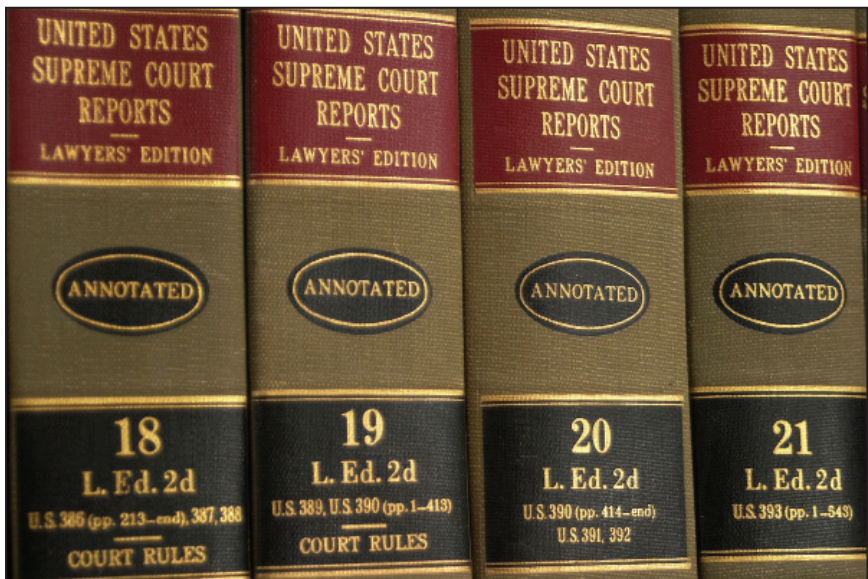


DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

The Founders on Homosexuality

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Of those living today in America who were alive 50 years ago, few could have imagined, let alone predicted, that homosexuality would encroach on our culture as it has. In fact, it would have been unthinkable. The rapidity with which homosexual activists continue successfully to bully the nation to normalize what once was universally considered abnormal is astonishing. And toleration has not satisfied them. Allowing their views to be taught in public schools has not appeased them. No, they insist that societal endorsement extend to redefining marriage to include same-sex couples.



A pernicious plague of sexual insanity is creeping insidiously through American civilization. Far more deadly than the external threat of terrorism, or even the inevitable dilution of traditional American values caused by the infiltration of illegal immigrants and the influx of those who do not

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

share the Christian worldview, this domino effect will ultimately end in the moral implosion of America. Indeed, America is already being held captive by moral terrorists. The social engineers of “political correctness” have been working overtime for decades to restructure public morality.

The Founding Fathers of these United States would be incredulous, incensed, and outraged. They understood that acceptance of homosexuality would undermine and erode the moral foundations of civilization. Sodomy, the longtime historical term for same-sex relations, was a capital crime under British common law. Sir William Blackstone, British attorney, jurist, law professor, and political philosopher, authored his monumental *Commentaries on the Laws of England* from 1765-1769. These commentaries became the premiere legal source admired and used by America’s Founding Fathers. In *Book the Fourth*, Chapter the Fifteenth, “Of Offences Against the Persons of Individuals,” Blackstone stated:

IV. WHAT has been here observed..., which ought to be the more clear in proportion as the crime is the more detestable, may be applied to another offence, of a still deeper malignity; the infamous crime against nature, committed either with man or beast... But it is an offence of so dark a nature...that the accusation should be clearly made out...

I WILL not act so disagreeable part, to my readers as well as myself, as to dwell any longer upon a subject, the very mention of which is a disgrace to human nature. It will be more eligible to imitate in this respect the delicacy of our English law, which treats it, in its very indictments, as a crime not fit to be named; peccatum illud horribile, inter christianos non nominandum [“that horrible sin not to be named among Christians” - DM]. A taciturnity observed likewise by the edict of Constantius and Constans: ubi scelus est id, quod non proficit scire, jubemus incurrere leges, armari jura gladio ultore, ut exquisitis poenis subdantur infames, qui sunt, vel qui futuri sunt, rei [“When that crime is found, which is not profitable to know, we order the law to bring forth, to pro-

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vide justice by force of arms with an avenging sword, that the infamous men be subjected to the due punishment, those who are found, or those who in future will be found, in the deed” - DM]. Which leads me to add a word concerning its punishment.



THIS the voice of nature and of reason, and the express law of God, determine to be capital. Of which we have a signal instance, long before the Jewish dispensation, by the destruction of two cities by fire from heaven: so that this is an universal, not merely a provincial, precept. And our ancient law in some degree imitated this punishment, by commanding such miscreants to be burnt to death; though Fleta says they should be buried alive: either of which punishments was indifferently used for this crime among the ancient Goths.

But now the general punishment of all felonies is the fame, namely, by hanging: and this offence (being in the times of popery only subject to ecclesiastical censures) was made single felony by the statute 25 Hen. VIII. c. 6. and felony without benefit of clergy by statute 5 Eliz. c. 17. And the rule of law herein is, that, if both are arrived at years of discretion, agentes et confentientes pari poena plectantur [“advocates and conspirators should be punished with like punishment” - DM]

Here was the law of England — common law — under which Americans lived prior to achieving independence. That law did not change after gaining independence. To say the least, such thinking is hardly “politically correct” by today’s standards. 

Dave Miller works with Apologetics Press and resides in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

Writing, Saying and Doing

Dean Fugett

Sometimes we are called upon to state our “position” with regard to some issue that is confronting the church. We are even called upon to put on paper our position with regard to issues that confront or threaten a previously accepted doctrine. The apostle Peter told us to *“be ready always to give answer to any man that asks you, a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* (1 Peter 3:15). Every Christian should not only be ready to do this, but should yearn for the opportunity to speak out for his or her faith. It was because of this desire to impart the experience of joy that made it possible for Christianity to have the success it did in the early centuries. I am confident that if we today had the same conviction and joy of purpose that early Christians had, Christianity would experience similar growth in our day.

There is a great need today for Christians not only to be able to vocalize their beliefs, but also to translate those beliefs into actions. Anyone can say that he loves the Lord with all of his being, that he loves his neighbor, that he is a Christian and that he believes in following the Bible. It is a different matter for one to truly live by those stated beliefs. Our need today is for Christians to truly love God with all of their hearts, souls, minds and strength; to love their neighbors as themselves and to practice the Golden Rule of *“doing unto others as we would have them do unto us”* (Matthew 7:12); to love Christ, keeping His commandments (John 14:15); and to truly live by the principles laid down by the Christ in His *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5-7).

People just may be more inclined to listen better to our statements of beliefs and read our positions if they can see from our lives that we truly believe them and are willing to live and die for them. When the

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contradictory actions of Christians stop making so much noise, then folks might be able to hear the message we are trying to deliver – a message that they desperately need to hear. Let us silence the voice of the enemies of Christ by so living that they will have no justifiable grounds for their hateful charges. **Practicing** Christianity speaks much louder than **professing** Christianity! 

Dean Fugett is the preacher for the church of Christ in Cave City, Arkansas, USA.

Doing the Will of the Father

Thomas Baxley

The entirety of Christendom loves the idea of having Christ as Savior and going to heaven. However, the vast majority of this group has very little use for what Jesus actually said. These people claim to love God and worship Him, but in reality, they have made a god in their own image, one who does things the way they want. This majority that believes it has accepted Jesus as Savior have actually rejected Him because they do not do the will of the Father.

It is spelled out in no uncertain terms in Matthew 7:21-23 that to enter the kingdom of heaven, one must do the will of the Father. This is what the parable of the wise man (24-27) is all about. If we hear and act upon the words of Jesus, then we build our houses on the rock; however, if we hear and do not act upon the words of Jesus, we build houses on sand. There is no question or ambiguity here; if we wish for Jesus to be Savior, we must accept Him as Lord and submit ourselves to doing His will. 

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What Do You See and Hear?

Albert Gardner

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them (Luke 10:23-24).

One does not have to know *everything* before becoming a Christian, but he must know *some* things. After one obeys the Gospel, the rest of one's spiritual life is a matter of growth, including increasing in knowledge of the Bible.

Philip asked the Ethiopian, "*Do you understand what you read?*" (Acts 8:30). The eunuch desired and received instructions as Philip began at the same Scripture and preached Jesus to him. The great need of our day is for the world to hear the preaching of Jesus. Without it, they cannot come to Christ. "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. ... And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me*" (John 6:44-45).

What we know, others have taught us. We are all at different stages in our knowledge of the Bible, but if we know enough to become children of God, we know some great and wonderful truths. We know some things about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church and what we are to do to experience the new birth, all of which are revealed in the Bible.

What you see and hear, others need to know. They cannot know it if you or someone like you does not take the time and go to the effort to teach them. Jesus rebuked the lawyers in Luke 11:52, saying, "*Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*" A similar verse is Matthew 23:13, which reads, "*But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,*

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hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

We can take away the key of knowledge and shut up the kingdom by neglect or failure to teach the Gospel. Some take away the key of knowledge by putting false doctrine in the place of the Truth. Like Elymas the sorcerer, some turn people away from the faith (Acts 13:8).

With the knowledge of the Bible, we are in debt to those who taught us. The only way to pay that debt is to teach someone else what we know. Paul recognized his debt and how to repay it. *"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also"* (Romans 1:14-15). *"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see"* (Luke 10:23). †

Albert Gardner (1928-2012) was a preacher of the Gospel for many years in the USA, and he also involved himself in many foreign missionary efforts.

Double Yoking

Robert Rawson

Our Lord taught, *"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me..."* (Matthew 11:28-30). Are we making the time to learn of Him? By learning of His way, we put the kingdom of God in first place (Matthew 6:33). We forgive our fellowman till seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22-35) and find God's willingness to forgive us our trespasses against Him.

Do we allow the double yoking? Everyone knows the seemingly added strength of having another person pick up the other side of a load. It's a blessing that gives rest even while having more than doubled the work output. Jesus advised us of the utter impossibility of bearing any fruit unless we abide in the vine. In serving the Lord this way, we find *"much fruit"* (John 15:1-8). Many times we are seeking to be loners. Much harm has come to society due to the deeds of many described as loners. However, the Lord desires for us to do all the good we can while here below and He offers a way to provide strength and rest in the process. Will you try to live life the Lord's way? †

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The Plentiful Harvest

Loy Mitchell

What Was the Work of Jesus?

Matthew 9:35 tells us, “*Jesus visited all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and malady among the people.*” He spent His time teaching, preaching and healing. He taught in the synagogues. Why did He teach there? Here were people who believed in God and in His Word. This would be good soil for the seed. He also preached the Gospel of the kingdom. Here was good news about God’s rule. Jesus would be the Lord of lords and King of kings. This was good news, that men could be rescued from Satan’s power and transferred into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He also healed every disease and malady. He knew their needs, spiritually and physically. He was able to meet every need.

Should we also be like Jesus? We have a great opportunity to teach and to preach. Start with people who believe in God and in His Word. Let us tell people the good news, the Gospel. Men can be freed from the power of Satan and can be placed in the safe arms of Jesus Christ. We do not have the power to heal people miraculously, but we can pray to the Great Physician and ask Him to heal.

Where Did Jesus Work?

The passage above tells us that He “*visited all the cities and villages*”. I hear some saying that we must go only to the big cities. Jesus went to all cities and villages. Why? He knew that people needed salvation, whether in a village or a city. This world has over 7 billion people. People are lost in sin! They do not know God or His Son. Teaching and preaching needs to start right at home. Are my neighbors saved? Have my workmates been converted to Jesus Christ? Yes, some may not listen. Some may understand, but will not be willing to obey the Gospel, but *our* job is to *teach* and to *preach*. Where? Jesus said, “*Make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19). “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15).

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What Did Jesus See?

“He saw the crowds, and His heart went out to them, because they were in distress and helpless, as sheep with no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Our Lord was not blind. He saw crowds, multitudes. He saw men, women and children made in the image of God. His heart was touched. He had compassion on them. Why? They were in distress. They were helpless. They were like sheep with no shepherd. He had a heart that was moved by their plight. In fact, that is why He left heaven to come to earth. He saw sinners who were in distress and helpless. His heart was full of mercy; thus, He came to die for us all.

I would to God that we today had the heart and the eyesight that Jesus had that day. Do we actually see people who are helpless and burdened by sin? **Why do we do so little to bring the lost to salvation?** Our hearts are not moved by the compassion that moved our Lord. Our eyes fail to see the billions of lost people as we live from day to day. They are all around us. They are like sheep with no shepherd.

What Was the Solution?

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is indeed abundant, but the workers are few. Pray that the Lord will send reapers into His harvest’” (Matthew 9:37,38). Jesus saw an abundant harvest. There were souls ready that day to be reaped. He knew their hearts. He knew they were ready to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. Do we see the abundant harvest here and over the entire world? Thousands daily are being converted to Christ in Africa and in Asia. How God is working through His reapers there!

Jesus also saw a problem. The workers are few. Yes, He trained workers. These He sent forth with the message. So few workers and so many lost! Today we talk about membership in the church. How many *members* are *workers*? How many are *reapers*? How many are sowing and watering the seed, the Word of God? Too few!

The solution is to pray to the Lord of the harvest. Ask Him to send reapers into His harvest. Does the Lord hear prayers? Do we plead with Him to send forth reapers? We seem too busy caring for our physical pleasures. We have convinced ourselves that no one will listen. Is that

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true? Or, are we blind to the abundant harvest here and over the whole world?

By the way, if I pray for reapers, shouldn't I be the first to volunteer? Pray for boldness (Acts 4:23-31). Pray for open doors (Colossians 4:3). Godd does answer prayer (Matthew 7:7-12). 

Loy Mitchell (1932-2015) spent many years as a missionary in Zimbabwe.

What's the Difference?

Arlis D. Richardson

What difference is there between a Christian who attends services only occasionally and a person who won't become a Christian? Very little! Both are in rebellion to the Word of God. Turning to Hebrews 10:23-27 we read:

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

How many Christians can read or listen to these verses and still take the attitude that some do is beyond my understanding. I must conclude that they really don't realize how terrible hell really is – or else they have the attitude that the Scriptures are lying!

By the way, these Scriptures are not speaking only of the Lord's Day assembly. Historical research reveals that persecution came to Hebrew Christians as even this was being written. Some had begun forsaking the regular, sometimes daily, assemblies. The writer is saying don't be like those. Continuing to assemble they would gain strength and could indeed provoke each other to love and to good works. *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28).

Not only is a Christian not to forsake the Lord's Day assembly, but neither is he to forsake any other assemblies designated by his overseeing elders for the assembly of the congregation. Hebrews 13:17 states, *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”* 

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Go into All the World

Jerry A. Jenkins

Several years ago (1985), a celebration took place at a municipal pool in New Orleans. The party around the pool was held to celebrate the first summer in memory without a drowning at the New Orleans City pool. In honor of the occasion, 200 people gathered, including 100 certified lifeguards. As the party was breaking up and the four lifeguards on duty began to clear the pool, they found a fully dressed body in the deep end. They tried to revive Jerome Moody, 31, but it was too late. He had drowned, surrounded by lifeguards celebrating their successful season.

It is extremely easy for the church to forget her mission, her reason for existing. Jesus said to his apostles, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:19-20). Amen.

The message we must share is to tell our friends, relatives and others about the love of God and His dear Son who made redemption possible for everyone. We must help them to see that Jesus is the only way to God. The Master, Himself affirmed, *“I am the way...”* (John 14:6). The Bible is the only guide to lead men to the Savior. According to the Bama Research Group, nearly half of those that were surveyed believe that “the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths.”

Not only is God’s Word the only safe guide, the people of God are responsible for telling others the message of salvation. So often we forget the mission God has given to each of us. The old cliché, “You could knock me over with a ten-foot pole,” applies to many Christians in relationship to their encouraging others to become Christians.

Norman Cates shared the humorous story of a guy who prayed this prayer every morning: “Lord, if you want me to share the message of

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salvation with someone today, please give me a sign to show me who it is.” One day he found himself on a bus when a big, burly man sat next to him. The bus was nearly empty, but this guy sat next to our praying friend. The timid Christian anxiously waited for his stop so he could exit the bus. However, before he could get very nervous about the man next to him, the big guy burst into tears and began to weep. He then cried out with a loud voice, “I need to be saved. I’m a lost sinner and I need the Lord. Won’t somebody tell me how to be saved?” He turned to the Christian and pleaded, “Can you show me how to be saved?” The believer immediately bowed his head and prayed, “Lord, is this a sign?” 

You Can Do It!

T. Pierce Brown

There are thousands of small churches and millions of Christians throughout the land who are doing very little to spread the good news of the Gospel, not necessarily because they do not care, but partly because no one has helped them to see *how*, and then helped them to do it.

I do not know of any method of winning souls that has more potential for advancing the cause of Christ than correspondence Bible course work. Any person who can be encouraged to get involved will profit in the following ways: **1.** He will feel a sense of self-worth and commitment to the greatest task on earth. Do not underestimate the value and power of that. **2.** He will be reinvigorated in his spiritual life by studying all the questions on the Bible courses he is grading. **3.** He will do more in-depth study than he ever did before as he seeks to find answers to the related questions his students will raise. **4.** He can develop more periods of spiritual fellowship as he works with others in a concerted fashion. It will not be merely “eating and talking fellowship,” but one that has real depth and power as there is a joint-participation with each other and with God in this all-important task. **5.** The greater knowledge, spirituality, confidence and maturity that will be created by this kind of preparation and work will help each person be a more effective personal evangelist in all sorts of situations outside the area of correspondence course work. **6.** It will do more to eliminate bickering, tale-bearing, indifference, drop-outs, low contributions and all other church problems than almost any amount of preaching will do. **7.** It will help to provide “prospects” – the best kind one can have – for personal evangelism follow-up. 

How Do You Measure Up?

A good name is better than precious ointment,

And the day of death than the day of one's birth;

Better to go to the house of mourning

Than to go to the house of feasting,

For that is the end of all men;

And the living will take it to heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter,

For by a sad countenance the
heart is made better.

The heart of the wise is in the
house of mourning,

But the heart of fools is in the
house of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of
the wise

Than for a man to hear the
song of fools.

For like the crackling of thorns
under a pot,

So is the laughter of the fool.

This also is vanity....

The end of a thing is better than
its beginning;

The patient in spirit is better than
the proud in spirit.

Psalm 100



In memory of Him

Bo Surrell

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”**

And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.” The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.”

WORSHIP

Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, **“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”** Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, **“Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’”** Having said this, He **breathed His last** (Luke 23:33-46).

As the disciples looked upon this dark scene on this, seemingly the darkest day in the history and the future of mankind, what do you think they saw? Scripture reveals to us, through their subsequent actions, that they saw doom and defeat. They saw blood dripping from the Lord’s hands where the nails had been driven. They saw blood dripping from His feet where the nails had been driven.

These men had followed Jesus of Nazareth for the better part of three years of their lives, and now it comes to this. Their leader, the one they had hoped would restore the glory of Israel, was dying on a Roman cross. They had forgotten the faith they were to have in Him, no matter the consequences.

What about us? As we partake of this bread which represents the body through which the nails were driven, and this wine which represents the blood that dripped from His hands and feet, what do we see? 

Bo Surrell is an elder in the Lord’s church in Winona, MS, USA.

Recipe for Communion Bread

1 cup of plain flour

4 tablespoons of olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

about 3 tablespoons of water (a few drops more may be needed to make a pliable dough).

Roll the ball of dough in flour and then press it into a 9X11 baking pan. Score it into 8 rectangular pieces. Bake at 450 degrees 10-12 minutes until beginning to lightly brown.

[Leviticus 2 gives ingredients for bread, including **oil** and **salt**, such as would have been used for the Passover bread.]

WORSHIP

Do the Scriptures Authorize Multiple Cups?

Wayne Jackson

“Why do so many churches use a plurality of ‘cups’ in administering the Lord’s Supper, when the Scriptures appear to authorize just one, ‘a cup’?”

There are some Christians who firmly believe that the use of more than one container in the observing of the communion supper is a violation of divine law. Sincere though these folks are, their approach to the Scriptures in this regard is flawed.

When the New Testament speaks of the “cup” in the observing of the communion, it is not the literal container that is under consideration; rather, it is the contents, i.e., the fruit of the vine, that is in view. This is evident from the following factors.

When we meet in sweet communion where the feast divine is spread
Hearts are brought in closer union while partaking of the bread.
Precious feast all else surpassing, wondrous love for you and me.
While we feast, Christ gently whispers:
“Do this in My memory.”



WORSHIP

(1) There is a common figure of speech in the Bible called metonymy. The term means “a change in name”. This figure is employed when one thing stands for another. One form of metonymy is where the container is put for its contents. This means that even though the container is mentioned, only the contents are actually under consideration.

For example, the Scriptures affirm that Noah prepared an ark “*to the saving of his **house***” (Hebrews 11:7). Here “*house*”, a container, stands for the “**family**” that dwelt therein. In another well-known passage, Jesus affirmed that God “*so loved the world*” that he gave his Son for it (John 3:16). It is not this “**world**”, material globe, that is in view; rather, the “**people**” of the earth are the object of divine love.

This is metonymy. There is clear evidence that this is the sort of usage that is employed with reference to the communion “cup”.

Note the synonymous terms set forth in the following passage:

“And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:27-29).

It is quite obvious that the “*fruit of the vine*” is the “*this*”, which is the “*it*”, which, in fact, is the “*cup*”. Underline these various terms and the connection between them will be quite apparent.

(2) That the “*cup*” is not the container is even more vividly depicted in Luke’s record. He states that Jesus “*received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves...*” (Luke 22:17). The Greek word for “*divide*” is *diamerizo*, which means to “divide up” or to “separate into parts” (cf. Matthew 27:35).

Were the disciples to divide a container? Of course not. They were to divide the fruit of the vine, which, incidentally, most likely was facilitated by multiple containers. Frederic Godet noted, “The distribution (*diamerisate*) may have taken place in two ways, either by each drinking from the common cup, or by their all emptying the wine of that cup into their own. The Greek term would suit better this second view” (*A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1879, Vol. II, p. 289).

WORSHIP

(3) That the term “*cup*” is not to be pressed as a container is evident from Paul’s use of the term in one of his epistles. During the apostle’s three and one-half year residence in Ephesus (Acts 19:1ff), he penned a letter to the saints in Corinth, across the Aegean Sea some 250 miles to the west. Therein he said, “***The cup*** [singular] ***of blessing which we*** [plural] ***bless...***” (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Note the terms “*cup*” and “*we*”. It is obvious that “*cup*” cannot refer to a container, as evidenced by the fact that Paul in Ephesus, and his brethren at Corinth, were sharing (note the “*we*”) the same “*cup*”, i.e., a common substance (fruit of the vine), which reflects a spiritual idea, namely the blood of Christ, not a common container.

(4) Moreover, in the context just cited, just as Paul uses “*cup*” figuratively, so also does he employ the term “*table*” symbolically (1 Corinthians 10:21). It is no more logical to press the idea that “*cup*”, i.e., container, has some mystical meaning, than it is to insist that “*table*” has a spiritual significance.

In conclusion, a reasonable interpretation of the scriptural data relative to the Lord’s Supper would indicate that the use of multiple containers in the distribution of the fruit of the vine is an optional expediency which may be employed at the discretion of the worshippers. It accommodates the larger crowds of today’s church. It certainly facilitates disease control (the dangers of which were unknown in earlier times).

To create division within the body of Christ over the issue of how many containers are used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine is, therefore, an error of serious import. 

Wayne Jackson is Editor of *Christian Courier*, a monthly magazine, and author of numerous books. The website is www.christiancourier.com

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

BBC

PROVERBS 17:22



Some thoughtful planning resulted in this announcement in a church bulletin: “There will be a church picnic Saturday afternoon. If it rains in the afternoon, the picnic will be held in the morning.”



While I was visiting my daughter last night I asked her if I could borrow a newspaper. Her response was, “Dad, this is the 21st century! Don’t waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad.”

Well, I can tell you this; that fly never knew what hit him!



Proud bachelor: “I could have married anybody I pleased.”

Doubting friend: “Then why are you still single?”

Bachelor: “I never pleased anybody.”



After the family’s return from worship one Sunday morning, a small boy said, “You know what?” I’m going to be a preacher when I grow up.”

“That’s fine,” commented his mother, “but what made you decide that?”

“Well,” said the boy thoughtfully, “I’ll have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I think it would be more fun to stand up and yell than to sit still and listen.”



A politician awoke in a hospital bed after a complicated operation and found that the curtains were drawn around him. He asked, “Why are the curtains closed? Is it night?”

A nurse replied, “No, it is just that there is a fire across the street, and we didn’t want you waking up and thinking that the operation was unsuccessful.”



A recently married man was walking with his father one day and said, “My new wife’s cooking is so bad that we pray AFTER we eat!”

PROVERBS 17:22

You know you're in trouble when:

- The bird singing outside your window is a vulture.
- The bride's family throws rocks instead of rice.
- Your children's school calls to surrender.
- Your doctor tells you that you're allergic to chocolate.
- You have to hitchhike to the bank to make your car payment.
- The pest exterminator crawls under your house and never comes out.



A woman went to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. She said to the clerk, "I need to buy 50 Christmas stamps."

The clerk asked, "What denomination?"

The woman said, "Oh my! Has it come to this? Well, give me 6 Presbyterians, 12 Baptists, 12 Lutherans, and 20 Methodists."



Father to son after exam: "Let me see your report card."

Son: "My friend just borrowed it. He wants to scare his parents."

A gushy reporter told Jack Nicklaus, "You are spectacular! Your name is synonymous with the game of golf. You really know your way around the course. What's your secret?"

Nicklaus replied, "The holes are numbered!"



The sheriff of a small town was also the town's veterinarian. One night the phone rang and his wife answered. An agitated voice inquired, "Is your husband there?"

"Do you require his services as a sheriff or as a vet?" the wife asked.

"Both!" was the reply. "We can't get our dog's mouth open, and there's a burglar in it."



While making the rounds with a group of medical students, Dr. Smith pointed to an X-ray and said, "As you can see, the patient limps because his left fibula and tibia are radically arched. Robert Davis, what would you do in a case like this?"

Davis pondered for a second and then answered, "I guess I'd limp, too."

The Great Frustration

J. Randal Matheny

Every time I see that alcohol commercial about the world's most interesting man, I don't know whether to puke or to laugh. Underneath, you can almost sense the irony of those who know the truth about alcohol. The appeal is so straightforward: "Come, all you dullards and dummies, drink up and find the secret to being cool." Yeah, right.

In that great Book of Despair, the wise man writes about his wide and varied experiences, none of which really brought him satisfaction. He wrote about wine and women, wealth and winning, worldliness and wisdom. ***"For with great wisdom comes great frustration; whoever increases his knowledge merely increases his heartache"*** (Ecclesiastes 1.18 NET).

Whatever you can get your hands on under the sun that is far from the God who reigns in heaven, it's just going to frustrate you in the end. This life, without God, is one big headache.

No wonder so many people commit suicide. No wonder millions live on painkillers and tranquilizers. No wonder so many immerse themselves in work or games or baubles just to forget. Because life, minus the Lord, lacks the one essential element to give it meaning, joy, peace, and fulfillment.

If you're frustrated with wisdom or any of the world's other offerings, the solution is oh-so-simple: Only God can satisfy. Only a relationship with the Creator can ease the pain of the heart and lighten the burden of the soul. He is the one treasure worth more than all the rest. He is the pearl of great price. He is the only Possession who possesses us from the depths of our being.

You can work your fingers down to the bone, but work will not saturate the spirit with joy. You can study until the eyes no longer focus, but knowledge will never make your existence clear. You can party until dawn, but you'll be blind to the true morning star.

Only God can satisfy. So admit it, give up the frustration of wisdom and the world, and find yourself in Him. 

J. Randal Matheny is a missionary in Brazil.



Reasons to Marry a Christian

Dan Jenkins

When it comes to whom you should marry, the Bible is filled with advice. The reason God gave as to why Jews should never allow their children to marry unbelievers was, **“They will turn your sons away from following me”** (Deuteronomy 7:4). He did not say *perhaps* it might happen, but it *will* happen. I marvel that Christian young people (and their parents) think they know more about this than God! Statistics show that 8 out of 10 who marry outside the body of Christ do fall away!

Paul limited the possibility of any potential mate he might wed by saying she had to be a sister in Christ. He also said this was the practice of other apostles (1 Corinthians 9:5). He also restricted widows by saying they could only marry those who were in Christ (1 Corinthians 7:39).

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Paul does show that marriages between believers and unbelievers *are* marriages and are recognized by God. The prohibition, “**Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers**” (2 Corinthians 6:14), literally says, “**Stop becoming unequally yoked,**” and thus describes the action *before* the yoke is made. The Bible tells us what to do, and then what to do if we ignore the first instruction. (A parallel of this concept is found in 1 Corinthians 7:10,11, which forbids a woman leaving her husband, but then tells her what to do if she does leave.)

Common sense shows the folly of marrying someone who is not a Christian. Think about the following reasons.

1. Rearing children. Do you really think that non-Christians share your values regarding profanity, modesty, and materialism? How will their values impact children?

2. Sundays and Wednesdays. There will be a crisis every week if the Christian faithfully attends church services. Think of the difference when you share worship and the Lord’s Supper with your Christian mate, while your children watch this.

3. Money. Have we never considered the resentment the non-Christian mate will have toward your sacrificial giving, especially when money is short? It is a crisis waiting to happen.

4. Problem solving and divorce. There is an absolute standard of right and wrong the Christian has about solving problems, and the unbeliever does not share this standard (otherwise they would be a Christian). Why would an unbeliever have your view of the sin of divorce?

5. Moral values. Again, the absolute standard that governs family life is had only by Christians. Think!

A closing admonition and word of extreme caution: Why would you seriously **date** someone you would not marry? 

Dan Jenkins is a preacher of the Gospel working with the Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ.

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WHAT IS THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP?

Lance Mosher

Those considering discipleship today can learn from warnings in the Scripture:

Luke 14:27-30: Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower; does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

Jesus says that those who want to come after Him should consider how much it will cost first. What will discipleship cost you? Though people will pay different costs, there are some universal costs to discipleship.

James 1:2-4: Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Notice James does not use the word *if*. He says we should consider it joy *when* we are tried. Discipleship of Jesus Christ will cost you trials. There will be times in each disciple's life that require patience and endurance. You will question God, His timing, and His planning. Unbelievers do not have this in their lives, since they have not invested their trust in their Creator. The promise is that if we endure these trials, God will have His work in us, and we will lack nothing, including the crown of life!

James 1:12-15: Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 

Lance Mosher is a missionary in the Lord's church in Porirua, New Zealand.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

You Could Have Been Rich

Bob Plunket

Someone has said, “Every man or woman alive could have been rich had they been able to sell their experience for what it cost them to get it.” Experience is one of the most valuable, yet the most costly, of any of the items of life. So many things are learned in the school of hard knocks.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, lost their paradise with God, and suffering and hardships followed. They might well say to their children, “I have learned that God means what He says.” And what would this experience be worth in the market place of life (Genesis 3)?

To Lot, who awoke to learn of his incestuous relationship with his own daughters, “I have learned that strong drink can kill one’s inhibitions and lead him to do unspeakable acts.” How many tragedies might this have averted (Genesis 19:30)?

Moses, who missed the Promised Land, might well say to us, “I have learned not to let people provoke me into doing rash acts.” What would this piece of advice be worth to us (Numbers 20:12)?

Miriam became a leprous outcast, and what piece of advice might she tell us? “I have learned never to criticize God’s servants who are doing the best they can.” And how many churches might this have saved (Numbers 12:2-9)?

Now to Samson, who lost his vision when the Philistines “*put out*” his eyes and degraded him to doing the work of a beast. What did he learn from experience? That people can use your love and trust for their own selfish greed. How many virtuous women and men might this have saved (Judges 16)?

Then there was David, who lost his newborn son because of an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. What did he learn from that bitter experience? Never to look upon a woman to lust after her. And what would that be worth in our world today (2 Samuel 11)?

It is true that we would all be well off if we could sell our experience for what it cost us. Jesus is the only One who ever walked this earth who learned nothing by experience. He didn’t have to. He was God, manifest in the flesh.✝

Bob Plunket preaches for the Colbert Heights congregation in Tuscombua, Alabama, USA.

A Family that Honors God

Charles Box

A good family is one of God's greatest blessings. In order to find true happiness in our family we must submit ourselves completely to Him and to His purposes for our life. These words, inspired by God, certainly find application in our family life. ***"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous"*** (1 Peter 3:8). Our greatest concern should be focused on pleasing God in our family and helping our members prepare for eternity. Lift up your family in every possible way, but especially spiritually. We must choose to live according to God's design.

The Psalmist described a family that would be an honor to God. He wrote, ***"Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD. The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel"*** (Psalm 128:1-6).

A family that honors God must be a family where people learn to love one another. God's love gives, while man's love constantly takes without regard for others. Husbands and wives must have a deep love for each other; they must love their children, and they must love God first and foremost. A person who does not have God in his life is missing the most important thing. Family love will lead to proper actions one toward another. This is the same kind of love that must exist in the church. Paul described this love in 1 Corinthians 13. He wrote, ***"Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror,***

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dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). Love will cause you to guard, protect, and keep your family members from all kinds of evil.

A family that honors God must be one in which each member does little things daily to strengthen the family. Godly families must respectfully communicate with one another (Colossians 4:6). Members of a family that honors God will make each member feel loved, important, and appreciated. Let your family know how important they are to you. *“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD”* (Proverbs 18:22). Try to understand the feelings of your family members, even when you might disagree about something. Have a genuine interest in them; do your best to take an interest in things that are important to them; be a friend to your family. *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* (Proverbs 18:24). Stick with your family; they are a blessing sent from God.

A family that honors God must also honor and respect each other. Respect and honor must first be given to God and then to each member of our family (Psalm 71:8). When you respect them, you will not be nearly so angry, hostile, or harsh in dealing with them. When each member has, as his or her goal, the idea of honoring family, he will never intentionally do anything physically or emotionally to bring a person harm. Husbands and wives must be loving and considerate of each other. It is also important that parents love and encourage their children. They must deal with their children in an encouraging, respectful, and honorable way. When we honor our family members, we will love them unconditionally. *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins”* (1 Peter 4:8). The godly way of life begins in our attitude toward others. In every area of life we should treat others with kindness, love, and respect. *“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that of outward adorning of plaiting the hair,*

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and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:1-7).

A family that honors God must do everything within its power to go to heaven. Give each other unconditional love. Share the pain of your family members. *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”* (Romans 12:15). Share the common salvation with your family. *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 1:3). Guide your family in obeying God’s Word. *“He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live”* (Proverbs 4:4). Use your faithfulness to help your family grow into spiritual maturity. *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen”* (2 Peter 3:18).

Have convictions and act the right way before your family. Convictions are the set of deeply held values which lead you to do whatever you do. These convictions give direction to your life. To become a Christian you must hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Mark 16:16), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). After baptism, you must remain faithful to God (Revelation 2:10). There are great blessings that come when we are faithful to God in our family! A Christian family gives us a little foretaste of heaven. 

Charles Box, Walnut Street Church of Christ, 306 Walnut Street, Greenville, Alabama 36037 USA

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Our Family

Dan R. Owen

Family is a gift from God. When God created all things, He made man in His own image, *“male and female he created them”* (Genesis 1:27). He said of the man, *“I will make him a helper suitable for him”* (2:18). He created one woman to be the exact counterpart of the man, a helper and companion for life. This is God’s design for the core of a family – a man and a woman committed to one another for life, raising children together under the rule of God.

A family begins with two. The marriage is the center of the family. When a man and a woman cling to one another and become one, binding themselves together with common values, goals, activities, and commitments, such a family will be strong.



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All families have problems. The first family was no exception. There was sin, strife, and even murder. But through perseverance and unshakable commitment to God and one another, families work through problems and keep going. Families are forever. Spouses hold hands and never let go. Parents hold the hands of their children and never let go. Adult children hold the hands of aged parents and never let go. Families are forever!

A deep commitment to God is the glue that holds good families together.

A determination to do God's will on the part of both husband and wife provides the necessary strength in the difficult times. The same commitment binds children to parents and parents to children. Families as designed and defined by God have God as the center.

All of us, regardless of the state of our earthly families, can find a place in the family of God. The church is the body of Christ, the haven of souls who are reconciled to God. It is a family, a spiritual support system designed to encourage every member to walk closely with the Father as well as with all of His children. In Christ, our family is the church, a loving group that upholds all things good and right.

Thank God today for your family. Realize that it is a gift from God. Take your responsibilities to your family seriously. Work at family relationships and make God the center of your family. Above all, rejoice in our spiritual family, the family of God! 



Dan R. Owen preaches for the Broadway congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, USA.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

The Prescription for Godly Homes

Ferman Carpenter

Four generations after Abraham, the nations of Canaan had turned from God and had become so vile that God was ready to destroy them for their wickedness. According to Leviticus 18, the people had begun to engage in incestuous, adulterous, and bestial practices, even after God warned them about these sins. He said He would vomit out of the land those who committed such evils (Leviticus 18:24). So to carry out His promise, Moses prepared Israel to



destroy them and then he instructed them how to keep their own families

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from falling into the same pit. Moses said:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-8).

This is God’s prescription for a godly home in an immoral land.

All parents who love their children should follow the directions carefully. Loving God supremely is still our most important command. Jesus certified its importance when He spoke to the lawyer in Mark 12. Any home built on a lesser foundation will not survive the storms that will inevitably descend upon it.

The type of love that God expects His people to have for Him cannot be a silent love. It must be expressed in our daily lives. It must be taught diligently to our children. This implies prayer, care, and earnestness day by day. Consistency in parents is perhaps the strongest ingredient in a Christian home. When parents love God supremely, it is not hard to talk about Him, or for Him to be seen in the way they live. God’s love should be the centerpiece at the table, the subject matter of our devotional moments, and the arbiter of all controversies.

To build a Christian home, there must be a godly husband and a faithful wife who will instill into their children the Word of God by their constant teaching and their daily living. Where such fidelity to the Lord is found, all Satan’s efforts to devour the family are destroyed. Children that are raised with daily doses of this prescription will be happy, solid, stable, and saved. 

Ferman Carpenter is the preacher for the Westside Church of Christ in Round Rock, Texas, USA.



Scavenger Hunt

through Hebrews

Rebecca Rushmore

(Answers inside back cover)

1. How many times does “faith” appear in the book of Hebrews (NKJV)?
2. How many times does “better” appear in the book of Hebrews (NKJV)?
3. Why were those who did not obey not allowed to enter the Promised Land?
4. To what weapon is the Word of God compared?
5. Who was tempted, but did not sin?
6. To which Old Testament, non-Israelite priest is Jesus compared?
7. Our hope is compared to which nautical device?
8. What three items were in the Ark of the Covenant?
9. Who, because of his faith, did not see death?
10. From which country were the readers of this letter greeted?

Simeon, the Man Who Waited to See the Lord

Vance Hutton

There are many Simeons in Scripture. Only Luke, though, records the account of Simeon, the aged saint of God at Jerusalem who waited



at the Temple to see the baby Jesus. Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord and offer sacrifice (Luke 2:21-24). Simeon was there waiting patiently in faith to see with his own eyes the one born to be the Savior of the world. Please notice

three things about Simeon relating to deity, dedication, and death. These three things were paramount in his heart and life at that time.

I. Deity in His Life: In these few verses (Luke 2:25-35), you see reference to all the heavenly trio. He is there to see the Lord Jesus and is privileged to do so. He anxiously looked forward to this being a reality. He held Him in his arms and thanked God for Him. He referred to Him as heaven's salvation and as the light of the world. Simeon would recognize the great power and authority of the Son of God. Simeon also was clinging to the promises of God the Father of ages past. Notice his prayer to God and expression of thanks to God. Further, note that the Holy Spirit is said to be upon him and that a message and promise were revealed to him by the Holy Spirit about the Lord's Christ. Here was a faithful saint walking with God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all in his life. What about our lives? Are we walking with the Lord? Is the

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Lord first (Matthew 6:33)? Do you know God? Are you living each day in obedience to the Lord? Here was a man who had God as a primary part of his life.

II. Dedication of His Life: Simeon is referred to as being righteous and devout. His time on earth was being used to prepare for eternity. He was a worshipper of God and seeking faithfully to obey the Lord's will. He was patiently enduring; this is not always easy. He was instructed concerning the will of God for his life and he was seeking to fulfill it. Simeon seemed to have been faithful into old age. He lived his life in faith and in hope. His trust was that God was able and faithful concerning His promises. Simeon's life would be lived according to the Spirit's message. He realized the value of the Lord for himself and for the entire world. He viewed the Lord as salvation, light, glory, and available to all people. Note his grateful heart for God, for Christ, for the Lord's parents, and for the rich blessings through the Lord. No one could question Simeon's dedication.

III. Death after this Life: Simeon was promised that he would not die until he had seen the Lord. For ever how long this period of time was to be, he was guaranteed not to die. We have no such promise concerning death (James 4:13-15). Notice his statement after he had seen the Christ. He said to let him depart in peace according to the Lord's Word. Simeon was ready to die. There is a departure in peace only for the children of God. Simeon was as Paul in that he could say he had fought a good fight, had kept the faith, and had finished the race. Death to Him was a departure to a better place. He knew that for God's people death is a gain (Philippians 1:21). This death was precious in God's sight. We have a better and enduring substance there (Hebrews 10:34,35). There is rest for our souls. We have a place with foundations whose builder and maker is God. Simeon knew death was coming, and he was prepared. Let us all take lessons from the life of this righteous man. There is a storehouse of blessings for saints like Simeon. 

Vance Hutton is the preacher for the church of Christ in Double Springs, Alabama, USA.

What About Lent?

Travis L. Quertermous

For many religious folks, “Lent” began with “Ash Wednesday” on February 28. The so-called holy season of Lent is a 40-day period of penitence and self-denial that ends at “Easter”. “What did you give up for Lent?” was a question I often used to hear from my Catholic and even from some of my Protestant friends. My answer was always, “Nothing,” since we in churches of Christ did not observe Lent. You may wonder why that is? The reason is simple: **The New Testament knows nothing of a 40-day period of prayer, penitence, and self-denial called Lent!**

It is true that Jesus fasted for 40 days prior to being tempted by the devil. But nowhere does the New Testament require a 40-day period of prayer and self-denial for the church called “Lent”. Instead, prayer and self-denial are spiritual disciplines Christians are to practice every day of the year.

The doctrine of Lent goes back to the late 3rd century A.D., but that’s 200 years too late to be an apostolic doctrine. Ash Wednesday began around 960 A.D. The truth is that it’s a man-made tradition and that’s why the time, length, and rituals practiced during Lent have varied widely over the years.

And that’s exactly the problem. In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus said, **“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”** Friends, worshiping God according to the unauthorized traditions of men makes our worship vain and empty. The plea of churches of Christ is that we restore the practice of New Testament Christianity worldwide with teaching and worship that are strictly according to the Bible. The original church still exists! Why not join us in this great work of spreading the news to everyone? 

Travis L. Quertermous is a gospel preacher working with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

Why Be Baptized?

Dwight Fuqua

Why be baptized? We cannot appeal to opinion or preference in answering this question. “I think” is not inspired. Preference tends to cloud the issue. We must turn to inspired men for the answer to this important question. We must ask, “What does the Bible say?”

- **Why be baptized?** Jesus said, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16).
- **Why be baptized?** Peter said, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).
- **Why be baptized?** Paul said, *“For as many of you as were baptized unto Christ have put on Christ”* (Galatians 3:27).
- **Why be baptized?** Peter wrote, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 3:21).



BIBLE QUESTIONS

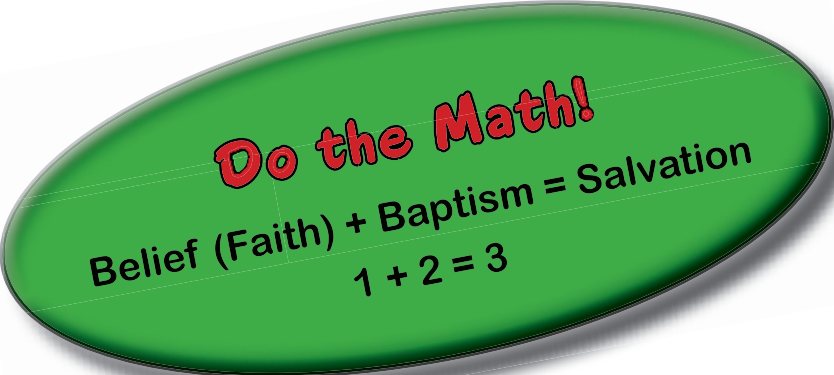
- **Why be baptized?** Ananias asked, “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16).

Why be baptized? While this is a controversial issue in religious circles, the Bible clearly reveals the answer. Let’s review. We are baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16). We are baptized “*for*” the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We are baptized “*into*” Christ (Galatians 3:27). Baptism saves us (1 Peter 3:21). Our sins are washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16).

Why be baptized? Does the Bible not answer this question? Is there any room for controversy? Can the plain teaching of God’s Word be denied? Some *do* deny it! Some reject Mark 16:16 and teach that salvation *precedes* baptism. Some teach that “*for*” in Acts 2:38 means “because of.” It does not! Some, disregarding Galatians 3:27, teach that one can be “in” Christ (where all spiritual blessings reside, Ephesians 1:3) without being baptized. Some, overlooking 1 Peter 3:21, teach that “there is not one verse in the Bible that teaches that baptism saves us.” Some even deny Acts 22:16 – that our sins are washed away when we are baptized.

Why be baptized? It is **not** a matter of opinion. It is **not** a matter of preference. It is a matter of **what the Bible teaches**. His Word is Truth, and we will be judged by it (John 17:17; 12:48). 

Dwight Fuqua preaches for the Findlay congregation in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.



Do the Math!
Belief (Faith) + Baptism = Salvation
 $1 + 2 = 3$

BIBLE QUESTIONS

What about Unanswered Prayers?

Tim Shoemaker

It should be understood that by the expression “unanswered prayers” the writer means a prayer where the one who was praying did not get that for which he prayed. Strictly speaking, all prayers by God’s people are answered. It has been suggested that there are three answers that God may give to our prayers. He may answer “Yes” and give us that for which we asked; He may answer “No” and not grant our request, or He may say, “Wait awhile”. A number of great men of God have prayed to God but have not received that for which they asked.

Moses was a great man of God. He was a type of Christ, a man who knew God “face to face”, yet there was a time when he prayed to God and God refused to grant his request. Moses prayed:

O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? “I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.” But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: “Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan” (Deuteronomy 3:24-27 NKJV).

Moses wanted to go over into the Promised Land, and he prayed earnestly for it, but God said, “No.”

David also was a great man of God. God Himself referred to David as “a man after mine own heart.” There was a time when David prayed to God, but God would not grant his request. “David therefore inquired

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of God for the child and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground” (2 Samuel 12:16). However, God did not grant his request, and the child died. David explained his reason for praying as he did by saying, “...While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live’” (2 Samuel 12:22). That child, conceived by adultery, died, even though David had prayed all night to God that the child might live.

Paul was probably the greatest worker for God in the New Testament. He was a “chosen vessel” to bear God’s name before kings. There was a time, however, when Paul prayed for help, but God did not do as Paul desired. We read in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9:

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

If God did not “answer” Paul’s prayer, one should not be surprised if his own prayer is not answered (2 Timothy 4:20).

Even the Christ, God’s own Son, prayed in the Garden and did not “have His prayer answered”, as some people think. In reality, Jesus’ prayer **was** answered, for Jesus had prayed, “*If it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt*” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus did not want to have to suffer the physical and the spiritual torture of being crucified for the sins of the world. That part of His request was not granted. However, Jesus also prayed that God’s will would be done, even if it meant that Jesus’ request would be denied. Many prayers are not answered because, as brother George Bailey said, the prayers go beyond the “bounds” that have been set, either by God or by man. 

Tim Shoemaker works with the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama, USA.

FROM THE HEART OF



Around the World in 100 Days!

Betty Burton Choate

This is your special invitation to come along with me re-living a three-month mission trip, teaching 81 ladies' classes in 27 locations! What an exciting thing it was to be with so many Christians in so many places!

Scripture: These promises are always my spiritual strength, *walking forward by faith, looking back on the past by sight:*

"...angels... Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). "...and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

The trip began on February 9th with a short visit with my granddaughter, Erin, daughter of Steve and Melinda, who is working in Florence, Italy with the Avanti Italia program of the College Church in Searcy, AR, teaching English using the Bible. Part of each day for Erin was taken up with training classes and part with her students, but we enjoyed the evening hours together. This is her first time to be away from home and family, and I am very proud of her for the decision to work in a mission program in a foreign country for the next two years.

Half of February and most of March were spent in India; then I flew to Sri

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Lanka, to Yangon, Myanmar (Burma), on to New Zealand and finally to Tasmania in Australia. The stay in most places in India was four days — two days of classes with a travel day before and after, so it was a whirlwind — but what a joy to be again in each place with spiritual family with whom we have been working, via radio, TV, literature, and meetings since 1967! Of course, some of those original co-workers have passed on to Paradise, along with J.C., but we have continued the connection with second generation Christians and even with third generations in some cases.

I was so encouraged to see the numerical and spiritual growth of the church in each place. When we came to the subcontinent in 1967, there was no church in Colombo or in New Delhi, and churches in other parts of India were no more than three or four years old. To see courses in leadership training resulting in elders and deacons being appointed, and to see the work of graduates of the Bible training schools, confirms the fact that we have passed beyond the infancy of the Lord's body in that part of the world! That is a thrilling thing for these old eyes to have lived to see!

In contrast, in talking with various ones with whom I have stayed — some local people particularly in the “western” cultures and some Americans who are missionaries — I have been saddened to know of family members who are not part of the church and are living disastrous lives, or of family members who were once Christians but who have left the faith and are now living worldly, broken lives of sin, divorce, and grief. We know that much of the population of the world — though having access to God's Word, if they want it — have had no direct contact with a Christian who could teach them personally, and that is sad. It is even more sad when brothers and sisters or sons and daughters of Christians had the continual opportunity to learn the Truth but never accepted that better way of life. Most tragic of all are the cases where souls have been among the tiny percentage of the world's population to know God as Father, and yet have run away from Home as prodigal sons and daughters. I don't understand how such a thing can happen. My heart bleeds for them and for their loved ones who continually cry inside from the pain of the tragedy but can do nothing about it.

Looking around at what is happening too often to children and family members of Christians, I feel the urgency to say, **“Parents, make it the primary focus of your days to lovingly and firmly ground your children in the truths of God's Word, giving them a strong foundation on which to build their lives and their marriages. Too many of the young adults of today evidently were not sufficiently taught, and so they married outside the church and left the faith, or**

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they drifted into unfaithfulness when they left home. The time to make sure they have a strong relationship with God, knowing *who we are* and *why we are left in this broken world* to be the light of Christ, is quickly flying away. Don't be one of those parents who realize too late that your busyness with life got in the way of the spiritual priorities you should have exampled to those little souls you brought into the world."

India Chandigarh

Hugging Erin goodbye, I landed next at the new, huge airport in New Delhi and was greeted by Sunny David, longtime co-worker there. The following morning, Francis and Elsy David, and their son, Vinay, and I boarded a train for Chandigarh, the capital of the Punjab state, and home of Earnest and Benu Gill. Earnest has the North India Bible School, and we were participating in a three-event weekend: their annual lectureship, the graduation of students from the school, and the planned ladies' classes. About 150 attended, with Christians from numerous states throughout the country, and Russell Bell and John O'Neil from the U.S. The lectures were excellent, as was the fellowship.

On Friday evening we had a class in the home of one of the local Christians, attended by some who were not members of the Lord's church. I taught a "pretend" lesson, following along with the prophets as they were speaking about the coming kingdom, and then through the Scriptures with John the Baptist, Christ, and the greatness of the event unfolding on the Day of Pentecost when those who cried out, "*What must we do?*" were baptized, and three thousand became the beginning of that new kingdom — the church. I concluded, of course, with the application that when we understand the Gospel today and learn about the Lord's

church, asking "What must we do?" we have the same answer: "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

We had classes with translation Saturday and on Sunday afternoon, attended by all the ladies who had come for the lectureship. Then we were compelled to stay over because of riots in the southern part of the state, with the



**Speaker [Betty Choate]
and translator [Benu Gill].**

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burning of shops, vehicles, and buses. Damage to the highway and railway cut off departure routes for most who had come to the lectures. I couldn't help but think that Satan was sure he was wreaking havoc on our program but God must have been enjoying the joke on the devil, instead, because our response was to have two more days of beneficial classes for the women, as well as for the men!



The classes were a special treat for all of us!

New Delhi

The crisis passed, we went by hired car to Delhi, a lengthy drive which put us there too late for the class that had been proposed for that evening. I was dropped off at Sunny's and Nargis' house, excited to be with the Christians in Delhi again.

Since no classes were scheduled for Thursday, Sunny volunteered to drive me around in Delhi, the capital of the country, with a population of 18.7 million people. India, itself, now boasts the largest population in the world, with about 1.4 billion souls. You would have to experience the traffic in Delhi to know the courage



It takes lots of courage...

it takes to drive there! Bumper-to-bumper traffic, five vehicles abreast on three-lane streets, cars easing into ongoing traffic from every direction, continual honking... Yet, somehow it jostles along!

Friday and Saturday were devoted to the classes at the church building at C.R. Park, two hours in the morning, lunch, and another two hours in the afternoon, with 50-60 in attendance. Worship on Sunday was a privilege, hearing the lessons delivered by men we have known and loved for decades. Afterwards there was a good time of fellowship and picture taking.

Vishakapatnam and Skinner's Garden

There was sadness in leaving our "Indian home" on Monday, flying to Visakhapatnam for the classes there. Jerry Bates, our co-worker, teaches classes each year at the **Visakha Bible College**, a **Bear Valley School** extension in India.

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Ladies' classes were arranged for churches in that area as well as at the location of Skinner's Garden, an orphanage developed by the Ivan Skinner family. Women who work there with the children are often Christian widows who have no family and no means of support, so the home serves two very valuable purposes. John Dean works with both of these programs.

I had asked that no gifts be given but no one listened! As you can see from the picture, those garlands of fragrant flowers can get heavy! The people of India have very giving hearts.

Kakinada

John Dean drove me to Kakinada to be with the Gootams and the church there for five days. We had ladies' classes, morning and afternoon, with more than 300 attending from several congregations in the general area. The following



day we went to a village called Bala-badhrapuram where we also had classes. On the way back to Kakinada we stopped at the TV studio where some of the programs are recorded and from which a new series is transmitted locally. Using World Evangelism funds, the nominal cost for 6 months of programming was paid. The owner of the

studio is a member of the church.

Joshua Gootam's wife — Kabita — developed an infection early in March, and, within a month she went from normal health to being in the hospital almost at the point of death. We visited her the evening of my arrival, and she was so weak she could not even lift an arm because the muscles had just quit working. The day I left Kakinada she came home, walking with the aid of a walker and much improved from a few days earlier when we had visited a second time. She is slowly recovering and is having therapy to restore her strength. Please be praying for her. She is a dedicated co-worker with her family, being the one who translates materials into the Oriya language for printing.

Ricky drove me to the airport at Rajamundry to catch a flight to Chennai on the 9th of March. Rajanayagam and Rachel, from Kangayam, picked me up and took

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me to a hotel. The following day we had classes in Chennai with an attendance of more than 200 from 20 congregations in the area.

JC School of Evangelism

On the 11th Philemon Rajah and his son-in-law, Kingsly, made the connection and took me to Vidyanagar in the state of Andhra Pradesh. For more than a year Philemon has been going there once a month for two days of classes and to work with the JC School of Evangelism. In this excellent program, conducted in three or four locations each month, for eighteen months, men and women in churches are trained in outreach, doorknocking, personal Bible studies, studies of foundational lessons to equip the students to teach others, and ultimately in a concern for everything involved with the welfare of the local congregation. The following is a report made by Vijay, the preacher at Vidyanagar:



Graduation ceremony of a class of students of the JC School of Evangelism.

"Last week, Saturday and Sunday, brother Philemon was with us at Vidyanagar for the J.C.School of Evangelism. There are only 4 months left before the graduation, so we motivate all the students to do the field work. Last Saturday we visited one village called Poolathotamitta. We knocked the doors and distributed tracts. In the evening brother Philemon preached concerning the young people, how they need to behave in order to honor and glorify our good Father in heaven. In every way the school is a great blessing for the progress of our local church.

We have seen these results so far:

1. Last 3 months we have baptized 10 souls.
2. There is much improvement in our church collections.
3. Members are motivated to build toilet rooms for the local church.
4. Members are following punctuality.
5. Members are attending to the church programs without missing.
6. Members are sharing the good news and bringing new people for worship.
7. Members have printed about 2000 tracts with local church money.
8. Three families are dedicated to start after-school care centres at 3 villages.
9. Some young men have dedicated to visit villages and preach the Gospel.
10. As a preacher's family, JC School is of a great encouragement.

We are thankful to brother Philemon for traveling to our village and conducting this training school, we appreciate his good talents in teaching and exhortation.

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Madurai Programs

In addition to the more serious lessons, we did have some fun and question-and-answer times. After worship at the Arasaradi church in Madurai on the 13th of March, the ladies (app. 70) were interested in hearing something about my earlier years, so I told them of J.C.'s and my wedding, what an elaborate thing it was! We had no formal engagement, no "wedding" clothes, and the ceremony took place in the living room of Gene Thornton, the preacher who had baptized J.C. My parents had signed for me for the license (because I was the ripe old age of 15), and they also served as our witnesses. We even temporarily borrowed Mother's wedding ring, because we had not bought any. J.C. was 23, and he joked that he would have to raise me before we could have any children! One reason I wanted to share the story was because most Indians follow the local culture and go into great debt for a spectacular show. I encouraged them to develop a "Christian culture", and to be reasonable about the "ceremony", avoiding crippling indebtedness.

I also told them about beginning the Lord's church in Karachi, Pakistan; Colombo, Sri Lanka; and New Delhi; what it was like to be the only Christians in those places, and how much we learned about God's providential care through those walks by faith.

And, as in every stop, there was the curiosity about "the hair"! (People continually amaze me!) I assured them that it is MY hair, not a wig; it is MY color; and I fix it myself, saving a ton of beauty shop money because I never go to one for anything! In response to repeated requests, I did a similar version for one of the young ladies.

Monday (10 AM to 2 PM) was the day planned by Arasaradi, Othakadai, and Tiruvathavoor churches for the Bible seminar. Some 85 gathered and listened attentively to the lessons, translated by Beverly Kingsly. The participants were from 5 congregations in Madurai city and 4 congregations from other cities. Most of those ladies had completed the evangelism course through the J.C. School of Evangelism, so the lessons added to their training for work.

The next day, in the evening, we had a Bible camp for blind people with some



***Sixty-one years ago!
At that time I would have never
dreamed such a wonderful road
lay before us!***

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People attending the "blind camp".

vices to those who are interested. In every meeting, the Gospel is taught, and during 18 years of work among the blind people more than 500 have obeyed the Gospel, resulting in three congregations. Every month through the support of the World Evangelism Team and funds, they work with these visually challenged souls. Philemon is one of the few I know of in churches of Christ who are trying to bring the Gospel to these to-be-pitied people.



ering idols and themselves with ashes from cremations. As the Jews had done in Jesus' time, making merchandise of the Temple, many things can be purchased in the Madurai temple, including small idols for home shrines. Do you see what was printed on the bottom of one that I picked up? "Made in China". How would you like to worship a god, made in China, because it's cheaper there??? Humans are pathetic.

65 participating and receiving Braille literature: The Braille edition of *The Voice of Truth* in Tamil and English languages, *Seekers Bible Lessons* in Braille in both languages, and also an Audio Bible. Every month Philemon and his folks meet with 60 to 80 blind people in different cities and states of India, providing Braille literature and also the MP3 Bible de-

Beverly thought I needed to see the huge Hindu temple around which the city of Madurai developed, so we made the tour. Before leaving, there was an evening procession of a "holy" cow, two "holy elephants" (Ganesh is the name of the elephant god), and some "holy" men. Of course, people were bowing with their faces to the ground before the idols, and some were cov-



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Batlagundu

On the 16th of March, Arjunan and Glory picked me up from Madurai and brought me to Batlagundu where classes were planned for the next day. Sixty-one women gathered from six districts for classes in two two-hour sessions. After the meeting two ladies wanted to be baptized, so Arjunan taught them more to be sure they understood everything, and then they were baptized.

A little girl was sitting on her mother's lap during the classes, and she kept smiling at me. However, when I approached her afterwards and she was not in the security of her mother's arms, she began to scream hysterically. Later, I bought a toy for her, hoping to ease her fear of the "foreign white lady", and, sure enough, when Glory and I went to her home it did the trick! Her mother is a Hindu but she is coming to the worship meetings and studying privately with Glory.



On the way to Batlagundu from Theni we visited two students in their Horticulture College and had tea there; one of them is a member of the church. Many students surrounded us and I had opportunity to share some basic Gospel truths. It was a wonderful visit and I hope Arjunan can have future studies with them.

On the 19th we went to Namakkal. About 160 women gathered for the ladies' meeting, and 4 wanted to be baptized. Brother Paulraj, the preacher there, taught them further and they were baptized the next Sunday. Following the morning class we had lunch and then Arjunan had a class for 30 brothers who came from 14 congregations, while I had an afternoon session with the ladies. Afterwards, we left for Kangayam and reached Rajanayagam's place in the night.

Kangayam

As mentioned earlier, Rajanayagam had arranged classes in Chennai with sisters from numerous congregations in that area. Coming on over to Kangayam, we went first to Erode where about 100 ladies gathered, and then the next day there were classes with the sisters in the church in Kangayam. The proposed bride for Rajanayagam's son, Abel, was with us over the weekend and I was thrilled to have some lengthy studies with her, strengthening the studies she and Abel have been having. Praisey and I continue to be in contact via email.

Rajanayagam and the Kangayam church organize the annual Bible camp, number 19 this year! This is what he has written:

"We had around 550 people from various parts of Tamil Nadu and other neighboring states representing about 60 congregations and there were at least 100 more

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than last year. We had 12 lessons for mixed gathering and 3 each lessons for the split groups, and the participants enjoyed them very well. We had separate class for



TV viewers and Magazine readers, and after that class 5 obeyed the gospel."

In the Kangayam church facilities an elementary school is operated, giving many students the basic Bible knowledge that will impact them throughout life.

Rachael insisted that they give me a new sari, so the last evening with them we went to a sari shop in a big mall. Can you imagine my difficulty choosing among so many offerings as pictured here????



Trivandrum

I traveled by train to Trivandrum and was met by P.K. Varaghese and Thankam.

We drove by Kovalam Beach in the afternoon, seeing some of the area that lies on the southwestern tip of India.



They cook in big pots in India!

The next day at the Kovalam church building we had a ladies' session from 10 AM to 2 PM and had lunch together. Pretty (Vargheses' daughter) translated, doing a very professional job of what seems to me would be most difficult. I am thankful that, throughout the trip, within the church there have been competent translators in each situation.

On the 25th we had a ladies' program at Trivandrum city, with 45 attending, and again, classes were from 10 AM to 2 PM.

From there we went to Kochi and had classes. Thirty-five attended, and Silpa (the preacher's daughter) translated. On Sunday we attended worship services at Kovalam (8 AM) and had two

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baptisms. At Trivandrum we worshiped at 10 AM and had a study in the afternoon, and then I answered some of ladies' questions.

Sri Lanka

Colombo, from Lilani Thomas

Dearest Betty, once again let me thank you for keeping your promise to me to visit Sri Lanka in 2016, and my added happiness of you arriving right on my birthday! Your coming meant more to me so I did not bother to get a birthday cake! Ha. It was a wonderful week of spending time with you. As always from the time I was six years old you have been there for me, and now that I am half a century young (could you believe it?), I STILL NEED YOU!

On the 2nd we had the ladies class in Wennappuwa, 45 km from Colombo. It took us about 2 hours to travel with our Colombo congregation, all travelling together, men included. (As always they did not want to be left behind.) We ladies met at the preacher's home and the men at the church building. There were about 25 ladies for the class, and Julia did the translation. It was a wonderful session of learning. Couple of hours later, the men joined us and we had a scrumptious lunch. No one was making a move to leave so the fellowship lasted the rest of the afternoon. It was such a wonderful occasion with the two congregations present.

The 3rd was the Lord's Day. Harold did the lesson, speaking about the history of USA and of Sri Lanka and Israel, how Israel had Jesus 2000 years ago, and of the church's development in the USA and Sri Lanka. We have so much to be thankful for, that you and brother J.C. and other American Christians brought the Gospel to us!



On the left is a picture of Glen, the son of a Christian in the northern part of Sri Lanka. He was in an accident about three years ago and wound up in the hospital in Colombo, in danger of having his leg amputated because gangrene had set up. Lilani is very good about giving attention to patients in critical condition, and she was so helpful that others — in and out at the hospital — noticed her service. The end result has been that studies were developed and a new family was converted to Christ. They, in turn, have brought their friends, who have also become Christians. I was so happy to see the growth of the church and the zealous involvement of those who have come on the scene since I was there last!

Myanmar

Yangon

I flew from Colombo to Yangon, Myanmar on the 4th of April and was thrilled to see Winsome Vertannes waiting for me at the exit. The sad thing was

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the absence of Sheila, her mother, who died suddenly the day I left the States on this extended trip. Throughout the time there, part of me kept waiting for Sheila to come, and I am sure Winsome is dealing with the same expectancy. We talked deeply several times, so I believe that my being there was some comfort in her grief.

The spring session of the twice-yearly Hmawbi Bible School was in progress, so I taught classes for four days. In addition to the planned lessons, I made an observation and an important suggestion: Most of the students in the schools are young people, many of them still single. In a country where the church is relatively young, and the congregations are small, finding a Christian mate can be a real challenge. So I said someone needs to be responsible for circulating a record of all who attend the classes, so that a “Marriage Service” can be developed! Isn’t that a good idea??? They thought so!

During the course of the five-week school, two of the ladies and six of the young men obeyed the Gospel. The students come from congregations scattered throughout the country, so these converts will be added strength when they go home.

In addition to worshiping on the Lord’s Day morning with the church that meets in Winsome’s home, on Sunday evening we went to Esther’s house, sister of Gertrude [and George] Achard. Another church meets with Kyaw Sein near Hmawbi, and there is a church in Jayati’s area of Yangon. The picture has changed greatly in the years since the Vertannes were converted. We and the Wayne Bar-



Philip, Sian Tang, Esther, and I had dinner together to celebrate Winsome’s (right) birthday.

riers learned of churches that had been begun through the sharing of our literature across the border from Christians in northeast India. The Bible school was started and now there are many congregations throughout the country, and effective work is being done in China by Burmese Christians crossing the border and teaching there.

One of the exciting things about the visits with the churches and Christians with whom we have worked for decades in India, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar was seeing the numerical and spiritual growth. That’s what the work is all about, and it is a success story!

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New Zealand

Auckland

From Hephziba, who organized the classes in the Auckland area. “It’s all glory and praises to our Father in Heaven for granting an opportunity to hear lessons so well presented. We were determined to learn as much as we could within our time frame. Sisters from our neighbouring congregations also attended. It was most edifying to hear the lessons presented so well and with wisdom of God’s Word that we are still discussing them in our classes. We are going through it as we have our young Christian sister who is enthusiastically keen to know more of the **Eternal Sacrifice** lesson. May YHWH richly bless you, and we look forward to seeing you again as we endeavour to serve Him.



A beautiful view of Auckland.

New Plymouth

From Juricz Blackman who organized the classes in New Plymouth: “Thank you so very very very much for spending time with us here. It was such a massive boost for our spirits and our faith. Your incredible heart comes through so powerfully when we hear you face-to-face. May God continue to give you great health so you can raise us up to a higher level in Christ.

“In our first class you taught the lesson on **Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacri-**



fice. Those of us who had heard this years ago were totally changed, then, in our spiritual lives. We were never the same after that, in the most positive way possible. Those who hadn’t heard this before were blown away and deeply moved. The enormity of God’s sacrifice

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never stops touching hearts that love Him.

“You also taught on the applications of this understanding, the core of everything in our Christian life. In addition, you taught on other questions the ladies requested, with great effectiveness, borne of great experience and — obvious to all — from the deepest love for God.

“The ladies enjoyed you so much they kept asking for more and more classes, so we changed the whole programme to make sure we gave precedence to your wisdom. Although it was with sadness we bade you farewell, yet also with much joy, knowing that we are never really apart. In spirit and in front of the throne, we will always join hands and hearts, to lift up His name.”

Palmerston North

From Rachael O'Donnell who organized the classes in Palmerston North: “We had so much fun and the time you spent here was so amazing and helpful! You arrived on Tuesday afternoon, attended the regular Bible class with us that night. You then taught 3 classes on Wednesday, ‘Dealing with Depression’ at 10, shared lunch with the ladies, 1 PM, taught on your life and work in India. After dinner you taught about **Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice**.

“Thursday saw Christi, you and myself (and the kids ☺) cooking all morning and we had about 45 people (ladies with husbands and children) come and enjoy a traditional Indian dinner in the evening. In the afternoon you were able to speak privately with 3 different ladies, helping them with struggles or problems they were experiencing. Friday morning we travelled to Foxton, NZ and you spoke on Depression and the **Eternal Sacrifice** to those ladies. After lunch I took you down to Wellington and dropped you off with Jeanette Raine. We were so glad you were able to make time to spend with us.”



Wellington

From Kristie Mosher in Wellington: “Our ladies’ day was on the 23rd of April, and you spoke on **Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice**. We had about 20 in attendance. On Sunday morning you worshiped with the Wellington congregation, and Sunday evening with the Porirua congregation. Monday (the 25th) lunch

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we had a congregational potluck at our house. We loved meeting you and getting to know you. You remind me so much of my great grandmother, so your presence was especially enjoyed.”

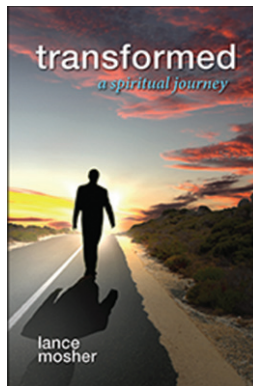
Tasmania Hobart

The time in Hobart with Dennis and Shirley Gresham and the Lindisfarne and Eastern Shore churches was good in many ways, including being restful! As it turned out, the annual lectures at Eastern Shore were scheduled for the same time I was to be there so we had fewer classes than anticipated, but also I was able to attend most of the lectures. Christians were there from 14 congregations, some from the island/state, Tasmania, and some from the mainland of Australia.

In addition to the classes and lectures, the Greshams were gracious hosts, taking me to the MONA Museum, to a wildlife preserve (with kangaroos and Tasmanian Devils!), down to the Port Arthur Historical site and Tasman peninsula, including the world renowned Tessellated [tasserrated] Pavement, the Tasman arch, and Devil’s Kitchen.

Well, that covers all the stops [27 different places] and the classes that were taught [81]. I am continually asked, “How was your trip?” and I have to answer that only God could have made it so perfect! **There are not words to express my gratitude to each one of you who gave funds to underwrite the cost of the travels and the work along the way; nor are there words to express my gratitude to the loving brothers and sisters in each place who arranged all the classes and took such loving care of me. I thank God to be in this Family...**

Love to each one of you! Betty



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variety of formats, including DVDs, CDs, MP3s, Posters, Books, eBooks, Notebooks, Electronic Notebooks, and Websites. **www.wvbs.org**; 25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, TX 78656; Phone: (512) 398-5211

Gospel Gazette Online is a monthly Gospel magazine on the Internet, begun by Louis Rushmore in 1999.

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Thousands of articles, written by faithful

Christians, are archived and selectable through the onsite search engine.

GGO is free to users throughout the world, and it is visited regularly even in parts of the world that remain virtually inaccessible to missionaries. (**www.gospelgazette.com**)

Apologetics Press has been the voice in churches of Christ for many years, speaking clearly and biblically on subjects pertaining to **Creation/Evolution, the Godhead, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and other vital questions of faith**. A new line of Bible class curriculum, **Exploring God's Word**, is available online and much of it can be downloaded free of charge. Dave Miller has produced excellent DVDs on **The Silencing of God in America** and **The Quran**. **Phone: 800-234-8558; Website: www.ApologeticsPress.org**.



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- * For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?
- * Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
- * Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.
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◆ As a congregation we want to help print and circulate copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search (Page 14)

Answers to 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

1. Taking other Christians to court
2. Christians
3. Christians
4. Least esteemed
5. Wise brethren.
6. Suffer wrong or be cheated
7. Cheating others
8. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, or extortioners.
9. Deceived.
10. Washed, sanctified, justified
11. Spirit of God.

Scavenger Hunt (page 86)

Answers:

1. 31 (4:2; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 38; 11:1, 3, 4-9, 11, 13, 17, 20-24, 27-31, 33, 39; 12:2; 13:7)
2. 15 (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24)
3. because of unbelief (3:16-19)
4. two-edged sword (4:12)
5. Jesus (4:14-15)
6. Melchizedek (5:5-6)
7. anchor (6:19)
8. golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, tablets of the covenant (9:4)
9. Enoch (11:5)
10. Italy (13:24)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Bible Find (page 34)



Waiting

No... we have not met.

You do not know my name, nor does my face in memory's world
Haunt your thoughts and urge again to burning flame a love for me.
You know me not.

When the burning rays of sun unclosed my eyes upon this day,
I felt no joy of what this day may hold
— the good that may unfold —

This day will be as yesterday, and tomorrow as the day before.

I know — I know the emptiness

Of empty hope,

Of empty gods that give no life, for they have none to give
— *they* never lived —

And when I die they cannot hear my cry

And breathe again into my dust the breath of life
and make me live...

Yes, Friend... I know we have not met

but I have *heard* of you,

And I have *heard* something of a god,

— a greater god than mine —

Who holds within His hands the power to bless you so

With all these gifts of wealth, of happiness and health...
and *hope*.

I know we have not met

But, Friend, *someday*

— *perhaps* a few days more —

You will come and share your God with me

And teach me what will be

And make my eyes to see

And give me hope

And give me life;

Oh, my friend, in a sea of darkness and despair I grope —

Come soon — come soon — *I die!*

— Betty Burton Choate