

Have you ever heard the term "legalist" used? Have you used it? I've heard it plenty! And, I've used it.

A legalist is one who places primary emphasis on legal principles. He views things from a legal standpoint. He is preoccupied with law.

Theologically, this term is employed to describe those who place much emphasis on moral legalism. More simply stated, a legalist is a fellow who is always talking about the law.

I confess that I believe in the Ten Commandments. I do not just say nice things about them. I believe them strongly enough to keep them—including the fourth.

Interestingly, it is because one observes the *fourth* commandment that he is sometimes labeled a legalist. Obedience to the nine others seems to be expected. Obedience to the *fourth* makes one a legalist!

Which is the fourth? It reads like this, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God..." It is because we feel that God is pleased to have us obey this fourth commandment *along with* the other nine that many seem to insist that we are practicing legalism.

Lest this begin to sound like I feel I'm being persecuted, I offer assurance that my only apprehension in this matter comes from the realization that this label "legalist" is little more than an evasion of the truth. It sidesteps the real issue.

I keep all of the Ten Commandments because I believe that sin exists. Sin is the transgression of the Law (I John 3:4). The Bible tells us that God is not pleased when we sin. That is why His law should be obeyed.

Most of those who do not observe the Sabbath suggest that law was done away with by the



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Law and Grace

ministry and death of Christ. If this were the case, there would be no need to preach against sin. Where there is no law it is not possible that anyone can be charged with sin (Romans 5:13).

The label "legalist" can be seriously misleading—actually, to the point of exercising a loss of integrity. This is a bold accusation. It would not be made if there were doubt about the matter.

This label is a false representation. It implies that one who emphasizes law has chosen this avenue to gain salvation in preference to placing his faith in the grace of God.

This suggests that the practice of observing the fourth commandment is evidence of an attempt to earn salvation. Those who worship on Saturday are legalists, trying to be saved by lawkeeping. Those who worship

another day believe in salvation by grace.

These impressions and conclusions are in serious error. No one teaches that we are saved by grace more than the Church of God (Seventh Day) does. I cannot be saved by obeying laws. Nobody can. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says that we are saved by grace "...through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

What is grace? Ironically, many who teach away the existence of law in favor of salvation by grace give strong indication that they may not know what grace is. To teach that there is no law is the same as teaching that there is no need for grace. We claim to be saved by grace. What is the grace of God?

The nearly automatic answer is that "grace" means "unmerited favor." It means that we get

something we do not deserve. Grace results in gifts, something received through generosity as opposed to indebtedness.

That is a good definition. Our analysis of the word "grace" must go much deeper.

The grace of God is not merely a word to be defined, but an experience to be received. We are not through pondering the grace of God when we define it. We are just becoming acquainted with it when we begin to *experience* something — and when we begin to analyze that experience.

Consider what grace is NOT. Grace is *not* God's permission to carry on with the sins that were cause for our death before we came to God. Grace is *not* a set of blinders for God to overlook that kind of behavior He rejected earlier. Grace does *not* assure us that sinning will no longer be held against us.

God's grace brings us forgiveness of our sins. It allows us to come to God to plead for His mercy. It assures us that we can be saved because God loves us. None of this implies that grace makes sins acceptable to God.

Give careful attention to a statement concerning grace and law, remembering it will enable you to retain the relationship between law and grace in proper perspective. *There is nothing about the presence of law that activates a need for grace. It is threatened punishment for breaking law that activates a need for grace. Grace and law are not directly related. Grace and punishment are.*

We were not threatened with eternal death because law existed. We faced death because we broke the law. Please keep this in mind! It is easy to be confused by those who have not taken time to analyze the meaning and function of grace. Grace has no direct relationship with the presence of law. It is *punishment* from breaking law that activates the need for grace.

A truth is brought into ex-

cellent focus in the discussion of the two Adams in Romans, chapter 5. The first Adam caused sin to come upon all mankind because of his disobedience. He failed to observe God's command.

The second Adam (referring to Jesus) brought about our salvation. He laid down a perfect life in sacrifice for us. This life was perfect because Jesus was obedient. In Him there was no sin. He transgressed no law.

The first Adam brought sin because of disobedience. The second Adam brought salvation through obedience. Obedience made the difference.

Now, think carefully. Can you see any logic in having the second Adam come to earth to live perfectly, to give His life in sacrifice for us, only to bring divine sanction to the kind of sin committed by the first Adam? This is basically what

we suggest when we assert that grace nullifies the need to observe law.

Paul closes the fifth chapter of Romans by assuring that no matter how much sin abounds, grace abounds more. This assures that there is enough of the grace of God to forgive even the most flagrant sinfulness.

Recognizing how easily some arrive at wrong conclusions, Paul immediately headed one off. The mention that the grace of God was sufficient to cover any amount of sinning allowed for the conclusion that the more one sinned, the more he could enjoy God's grace.

Paul's correction of this attitude is given in the opening verses of Romans 6. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Please note carefully his simple, direct answer, "God forbid.

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Dying for Us

When gold fever broke out in California, a New Englander quickly headed West, promising his wife that he would send for her and their son as soon as he "hit it rich."

After many months of discouragement and frustration, the Easterner had been able to prospect enough to send for his loved ones. The two boarded a Pacific steamer which set sail from New York, heading for San Francisco.

One tragic night while at sea, however, desperate, fearful cries of "Fire" rang from the ship's bridge. What made matters worse was that the ship was carrying high explosives. When the flames reached the hold, nothing would be left but bits and pieces. Agonizing shrieks pierced the air as space in the few lifeboats was soon gone.

The mother and her son were too late to get on board and were pushed away. She pleaded with the sailors to take her boy. Her persistent wails finally prevailed and she dropped her son to others in a small boat, reminding the boy, "Don't forget, Son, if you live to see your father, tell him I died in your place."

Not many minutes later the ship exploded and only those in the lifeboats were spared. What a picture of a mother's love and sacrifice! It quickly fades into insignificance, however, in the light of what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us.

—The Shepherd's Staff

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How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him... He that committeth sin is of the devil... Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:5, 6, 8).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12).

These verses should convince anyone that to believe in the grace of God *and* to be concerned about keeping from sin by observing God's law are in perfect accord with the teachings of the Bible. Observing law is not the opposite of receiving God's grace. It is a response to it. We need God's grace because we have sinned. Now that God has forgiven us, we should stop sinning. The person who knows God does not continue sinning. In fact, it is because he is tired of sinning; because he is convicted of a sinful life, that he comes to God pleading forgiveness. We do this so that we can *change* our ways.

I am saved by the grace of God. There was nothing I could do to earn it. What was I saved from? I was saved from the death that threatened because I had sinned by breaking God's laws. Now that God has saved me, I want to live for Him. I want to do what He asks of me. The Ten Commandments are His guide for my life. I observe all of them. I am saved by grace. I keep the law because I am saved.

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NESS AND TRUE HOLINESS.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Not in Vain

Dr. Andrew C. Nelson

**If just in kindness I can do
One little act that'll hope renew,
For him who suffers ill and pain;—
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**If I should turn a sinner's way
From error to his God this day,
That true his life may e'er remain,—
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**If I should dry a tear away
From eyes so saddened with dismay,
And thus dissuade his grief and pain;
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**If I should ease a brother's load
As he is wending up life's road
That he might strength and life re-
gain,—
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**If those I meet shall better be
Because I'd helped them e'er to see
The One that doth in glory reign;—
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**My life may seem a failure here,
But if a soul to God turns near,
Because my life show'd Him amain;
Then I shall not have lived in vain.**

**Then when at last in death I'm cold
And good and bad 'bout me are told,
May heaven sound the glad refrain;
"The days he lived were not in vain."**

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, WHEREBY YE ARE SEALED unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:21-42; also see Ephesians 5:1-5).

Those who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit will also be endowed with spiritual gifts to be used to the glory of God. However, there are TWO ADMINISTRATIONS of the gifts of the Spirit. One is a ministry for the members of the church within the body of Christ, and is used for the perfecting of the saints. The other is a ministry for those outside of the church, and is used for heavenly signs of God's power unto the world wherever the gospel is preached.

Paul in enumerating the gifts of the Holy Spirit said, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are DIFFERENCES OF ADMINISTRATIONS, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will... And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps,

Are the Wicked

Destroyed or Preserved?

by Ray L. Straub

Words are vehicles used to communicate meanings. This is why those whose responsibilities obligate them to communicate ideas accurately are concerned about their choice of words.

A slight change in a word can communicate an entirely different idea. In California there is a ski resort named Bear Valley. Where I live, even though not near this resort, I see promotional bumper stickers on cars with the words "Ski Bear."

One day my attention was drawn to one of these because it looked different. Someone had moved the "e" in the word "bear" so that instead of reading "Ski Bear" the bumper sticker read "Ski Bare." Even though the reading of these words sounded exactly the same, the slight change in spelling resulted in a different meaning!

It is fascinating to observe children learning to use words to communicate their childlike ideas. We have a young lady in our family. She is three years old and is learning how to use words pretty well! Of course, to a 3-year-old it is most important that people recognize they are "big." Recently, she attempted to squeeze through an opening that was too small. She refused to be disturbed by the restriction. She simply announced that her head was get-

ting too big—that it had too many muscles!

There are not many ladies that want to communicate such! It is good to be big and muscular if one has notions of participating in some sports, or if one wishes to project the image of being rugged. However, not even these aspirants care to have their heads described as being big and muscular!

Words are vehicles that communicate meanings. Use the correct words and you make yourself understood to others. Words used incorrectly cause misunderstanding.

The secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George Romney, learned this four years ago. He was seeking to become the Republican nominee for the office of president of the United States. Previous to the New Hampshire presidential primary, he visited Viet Nam. Upon returning, he suggested that on previous visits to that war-infested country he had been "brainwashed."

That word communicated more than the candidate intended. He issued several state-

ments attempting to clarify what he intended to communicate through the use of that word. He defined it. He tried to correct wrong impressions. It was no use. The word communicated erroneously, and there was no recalling it.

There are words in the Bible that are meant to communicate one meaning, but there are those who read them over and over, each time failing to comprehend the actual meaning of the word. In normal conversation, they appear to understand the meaning of the word accurately. When using it in Bible study the correct meaning seems to escape.

A case in point is the word "death." Usually, this word is understood without difficulty. We know what it means in reference to plant and animal life. When it comes to persons, though, to many the word "death" suddenly suggests immortality—eternal life in heaven or hell. The Bible does not give this meaning to the word. This is man's doing.

Another word that is apparently easily understood in ordinary conversation is the word "destroy." There is little need to explain it to anyone. But, when we run into it in the Bible, it often becomes necessary to redefine the meaning of the word. In the secular world, the

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word "destroy" carries one meaning. In theology some insist it carries another. This, also, is man's doing.

For example, if someone were asked the meaning of the word destroy, he would respond by suggesting that it means to ruin, to do away with, to put out of existence.

Notice the difference in ideas communicated through the use of the words "damaged" and "destroyed." A house may be subjected to severe adversity, such as tornado, fire, flood, vandalism. As long as it remains functional, no matter how severe the losses it remains a *damaged* house. It is *destroyed* only when it is demolished; when it no longer exists as a house.

Anything that is destroyed, no longer functions. The word allows no other concept.

However, when reading the Bible, there are those who teach that the word "destroy" has an entirely different meaning.

I read from Matthew 10:28: "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." Here is the word "destroy" used in connection with the word "soul."

Nowhere is the conflict of definitions to the word "destroy" more graphically indicated than in the use of this verse. It states plainly that what God does to the body He does to the soul. *Both* are *destroyed*. Man comes along and says that destruction to the soul results in its preservation!

Destroy communicates the idea of putting something out of existence, ordinarily, but here some would suggest that it describes a transfer. They say the soul is immortal. If it sins, it is denied an eternity in heaven, but it still has eternal life—in some endless torture. The Bible warns us to fear Him Who is able to destroy the soul. *Man* says to fear Him Who will *preserve* the soul in hell.

One ought to understand the difference in meaning of the words "destroy" and "preserve." They are antonyms. They have opposite meanings. NOTHING, NOT EVEN THE SOUL OF MAN, can be preserved while it is being destroyed, nor can it be destroyed while it is being preserved.

The Bible says that God is able to destroy body AND SOUL in hell. If man has an immortal soul, it cannot be destroyed.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: *who shall be punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Please note the phrase, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Ponder this a bit. What do these words seek to communicate?

Could they refer to some kind of everlasting preservation—even though in hell? Does "destruction" mean "preservation" here? Many will argue that it does. They insist that the disobedient will be punished with everlasting preservation in hell. That is NOT what the Bible says. The Bible says that they will suffer everlasting DESTRUCTION.

If one allows these words to communicate what they are meant to, he will understand what happens to the disobedient.

What is destroyed ceases to exist. That is the meaning of the word. There is no reason to think Paul meant to communicate anything else. The ad-

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"Almost" is not Enough

Through the faithful ministry of the Apostle Paul, the Gospel was given to King Agrippa. Paul was actually on trial before the king, but this is what he said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (Acts 26:27).

King Agrippa did believe, but belief was not enough. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (verse 28). Apparently, however, he never made the step that would have meant a changed life.

We are made to wonder at his foolishness for not heeding Paul's advice. It was difficult for him because of the prestige and authority he held. After all, Christianity was a minority movement, and he might have either lost his position or at least the support of the people. The world offered too much, even though salvation was worth much more.

All who hear the Gospel today face the same problem. Belief alone will not help. Forgiveness of sins and submission to the will of God must follow belief, and there are multitudes of people who cannot muster the courage to act on their belief.

Loss of popularity, loss of job opportunity, and the fear of failure to follow through are tremendous obstacles to the prospective Christian. But are these reasons justifiable and are they valuable enough to cause anyone to forfeit the right to a life in the Kingdom of God? The answer is obvious, but the same mistake Agrippa made is being made over and over today.

The land of Judah was to lie desolate and to enjoy her Sabbaths for a period of seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11; II Chronicles 36:20, 21). After seventy years they were to return to their homeland (Jeremiah 29:10; Daniel 9:1-7), that is, both the houses of Judah and Israel.

"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are broken in pieces, her images are broken in pieces, For out of the north cometh a nation [Medo-Persia] against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, *the children of Israel* shall come, they and *the children of Judah* together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God" (Jeremiah 50:1-5; also 51:11).

One of the prophets, approximately two hundred years previously, even mentioned the

name of the man who was to cause Israel to return. "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1).

When Cyrus, in 536 B.C., gave the proclamation for the Jews to go up to Jerusalem to build the temple, there were more than forty-two thousand who came to Judah in the initial group. Remember, that in a former article we showed that all twelve tribes of Israel were represented in Judah before Nebuchadnezzar took them captive. And when they returned after the seventy years captivity, the house of Israel and the house of Judah were still present, "and all Israel" dwelt "in their cities" (Ezra 2:70).

Moreover, "Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel,

twelve bullocks for all Israel ..." (Ezra 8:35).

Another proof that "all Israel" were present among the returned captives is this:

"So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of *Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon* for their transgression. Now the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities were, the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims. And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh" (I Chronicles 9:1-3).

How indisputable! Israel and Judah were both carried away to Babylon for their transgressions, and the Israelites and the Jews both returned and dwelt in their cities and in Jerusalem. Prophecy is sure (II Peter 1:9).

DESTROYED OR PRESERVED?

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jective, "everlasting," describes the completeness of the destruction. Once the wicked are destroyed, there will be no recall. That will be it. The effect will be everlasting. It will be everlasting destruction.

There are more than a few references in the Scriptures that support this meaning of the word "destruction." They harmonize in their description of what befalls the wicked.

I read first from Job 4:8, 9. Listen to this verse carefully: "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed."

Proverbs 12:7 begins, "The wicked are overthrown AND ARE NOT. . . ."

The best known of all Bible verses confirms this truth. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son,

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Love and Obedience

It is quite universally preached within the Christian religions that our relationship with God should be in the spirit of love. That is the way it should be. "... God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John 4:16).

This relationship enjoins certain responsibilities. God does something for us, and we are expected to show our love in return by the things we do.

John 3:16 makes it abundantly clear what God has done for us: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Our part of the compact is to live above sin. "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (II John 6). There is no other way that is acceptable.

Everyone is watching world events with many questions about the future. Will another world power emerge, and who will it be? The answer is found in the Bible.

The Next King of the Earth

by Ray L. Straub

Alexander, the Great, is one of the best known kings of all time. He established the world kingdom of Greece. What we remember best about him is that when he conquered all the armies of the world he cried because there was nothing more to conquer. When you mention the name, Alexander the Great, the first thought that comes to mind is his crying when he realized there were no more battles to win; no more victories to celebrate.

What is not as well known is that Alexander established himself as the world ruler in his early twenties. That is young! Of further interest is the fact that he died—of over indulgence in drinking—at the age of 32! He left two young sons. Jealousy and greed on the part of the power-seekers in the wake of Alexander's demise caused the murder of these children. Alexander, once ruler of the world, left it without posterity.

Such an account seems incredible! I found myself rechecking these incidents to make sure that I was reasonably accurate. The authorities I consulted confirm these statements.

So, the song writer speaks wisely when he observes that he would rather have Jesus, "... than to be the king of a vast domain and be held in sin's

dread sway. I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today."

Alexander established the Grecian empire. Rome followed, and this marked the end of the world rulers. There will be no more until Jesus returns.

Jesus was born to be king. Most Christians recognize this. We read about it, sing about it, preach about it, pray about it, look forward to it. Yet there are not many who recognize that the very mention about Jesus being king suggests that the *earth* will be the eternal home of God's children—not some distant heaven.

I begin our study by referring to a prophecy which is among the best known. One hears it often. Children recite it. It is found in Isaiah 9:6, 7. Few are aware of the scope of information it contains.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The

zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Some may feel that Jesus is already filling the role spoken of in this prophecy. To an extent He has, and is. It has *not* met its complete fulfillment. There are portions of these verses that speak of events still coming.

Verse 6 says that "... the government shall be upon his shoulder ..." There is reason to believe that this speaks of an earthly, political government. Verse 7 talks about the increase of his government, "... UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID ..." There is no indication that Jesus ever ruled on the throne of David. This is coming.

Jesus now rules as king in those lives that have been crucified with Him. In this sense He is already filling the role that is described in this prophecy. It also speaks of a time beyond, when Jesus will sit on the throne of David and rule over an actual government.

More passages corroborate this truth. One should understand that there are several more writings in the Bible that speak of Jesus' reign than those I cite here. I have selected some which state the truth in the most clear and definite terms.

I read from Jeremiah 23:5, 6. Note how precisely this speaks

of a time when Jesus will reign on the throne of David—an event that has not yet begun. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby we shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**” (Jeremiah 23:5, 6).

Understanding that Jesus will reign on David’s throne in the future adds significant light to the truth that the righteous will reign on earth. It is for this reason that attention is focused on indications that Jesus has not yet, but will reign as king on the throne of David.

Zechariah 9:9, 10 is similar to Isaiah 9:6, 7 in that it offers predictions concerning the life of Jesus that cover both His ministry when He came as a babe and the time that He will reign as King over all the earth. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”

The angel, Gabriel, who informed Mary of the birth of Jesus referred to these prophecies. “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32, 33).

There is evidence from the Bible itself that confirms the accuracy of the teaching that Jesus

will reign over a kingdom on earth.

This evidence is referred to repeatedly although the essential truths it contains are not widely recognized.

There were wise men who came from the east looking for Jesus following His birth in Bethlehem. They were led by an unusual star. This is reported in Matthew 2:1-10. “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Ju-

dah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel” (Verses 1, 2, 6).

It is clear that these wise men knew that there would be born One Who would be King of Israel. The star led them to Him. Herod gathered his chief priests and scribes together to study the matter. They confirmed it. They were not looking for the King in some place of bliss in heaven. They were looking for a king Who was to reign on earth! What greater confirmation of these truths would one need?

Added to the testimony of the prophets and to that of the wise men who followed the star to the place of Jesus’ birth, is the witness of the Son of God, Himself. When at His trial He was

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One Day at a Time

*One day at a time, with its failures and fears,
With its hurts and mistakes, with its weakness and tears,
With its portion of pain and its burden of care;
One day at a time we must meet and must bear.*

*One day at a time to be patient and strong,
To be calm under trial and sweet under wrong;
Then its toiling shall pass and its sorrow shall cease;
It shall darken and die, and the night shall bring peace.*

*One day at a time—but the day is so long,
And the heart is not brave and the soul is not strong.
O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way;
Give courage and patience and strength for the day.*

*Swift cometh His answer, so clear and so sweet;
“Yea, I will be with thee, thy troubles to meet:
I will not forget thee, nor fail thee, nor grieve;
I will not forsake thee; I never will leave.”*

*Not yesterday’s load we are called on to bear,
Nor the morrow’s uncertain and shadowy care;
Why should we look forward or back with dismay?
Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day.*

*One day at a time, and the day is His day;
He hath numbered its hours, though they haste or delay.
His grace is sufficient; we walk not alone;
As the day, so the strength that He giveth His own.*

—Annie Johnson Flint, selected.

THE NEXT KING OF THE EARTH

(Continued from page 4)

asked by Pilate whether He was King of the Jews, Jesus always responded in the affirmative.

Of the reports given by each of the four Gospels, I read from John 18:37. "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Jesus showed no reluctance in identifying Himself as a king. We have been suggesting that this role is still to be fulfilled. Did the testimony of Jesus confirm this suggestion? "Jesus answered, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD: if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: *but now is my kingdom not from hence*" (John 18:36).

Following the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the disciples continued to look forward to Jesus' reign. Preaching at Pentecost, Peter declared, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29, 30).

Certainly these apostles were preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and part of this gospel was that Jesus was still to reign from the throne of David.

To this point emphasis has been given to the fact that it is still future when Jesus will reign over a literal kingdom on David's throne. I have read this from the writings of the prophets. I indicated that our interpretation of the prophets coincided with that of the wise men

from the east who followed the star in search of this King. Jesus testified in support of this truth by affirming His destined role of a king in some future world. The apostles continued to preach it.

I submit that acceptance of this obvious teaching concerning Jesus' reign is, in essence, an acceptance of the truth that the righteous will inherit the earth. The earth will be the eternal home of the saved. We will not be sailing off to some unknown, distant heaven. To the contrary, Jesus is to reign as King, and He will reign on the earth.

When will this future reign of Jesus begin? The answer: "At His coming." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: . . . then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:31, 34).

Paul agrees with Matthew as he challenges Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,

who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Timothy 4:1).

Writing to the Colossians Paul observes, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). Recall that Matthew states that the Son of Man will come in His glory when He comes as King. Paul says that when He appears, we will appear with Him in glory. These refer to the same occasion.

I now turn to the Book of Revelation where attention is focused on three passages.

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come . . . and from Jesus Christ who . . . loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father . . ." (Revelation 1: 4-6).

It is important to remember that this message is addressed to those who have been washed from their sin through Jesus' blood and have been made kings and priests of God.

Revelation, chapter 19, tells of the coming of Jesus. Verse 16 gives this description. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 20 opens by describing how Satan will be cast into a bottomless pit with a seal upon it. It describes the resurrection of the righteous. Verse 4, ends by saying, ". . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Continuing with Verses 5 and 6, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

SOUR GRAPES

Poor Jonah preached to Ninevites
And when they did repent,
He scolded God and sulked alone
In dreary discontent.

The brother of the prodigal
Refused to join the throng
Who showed their joy and thankfulness
In feasting, praise, and song.

How selfish we can be at times,
How petty and how vain;
How quick to scorn His blessed love
Who suffered for our gain.

When others win some praise or prize
Let us rejoice with them;
And thank our God some day we'll shine
In His own diadem!

—James A. Sanakar, Selected

It is evident that the redeemed will be kings and priests of God. This was stated in Revelation 1. In Revelation 20 these offices are mentioned in connection with the 1000-year reign of Christ. The redeemed will reign as kings and priests when Jesus reigns as King over all the earth.

Now let us give careful attention to Revelation 5:9, 10. These verses bring the truth into sharp focus. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: *and we shall reign on the earth.*"

There it is, simple and clear. The two earlier passages of Revelation already revealed that the redeemed are made kings and priests unto God. This text says the same, and definitely announces that we SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH."

To believe that Jesus will one day be King of the earth is to accept the witness of the prophets, the wise men of the east, Jesus, and the Apostles. To accept this is to reaffirm the truth and the hope that assures that

the redeemed of God will reign with Christ *on the earth.*

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

(Continued on page 7)

was called and sent by God for his work.

Whenever we are called to serve as a witness for Christ, each of us should answer willingly and serve faithfully. There can be no greater joy and satisfaction than to know that we are doing the work that God wants us to do. And God will never place a burden on our shoulders that we are not able to bear.

"... The Lord hath need of him" (Luke 19:31). How wonderful it is to know that our Lord has a need for our poor services, that we can be a help to Him upholding His kingdom on earth. Weak though we are—corruptible bodies that we are—Jesus will give us the needed strength to perform His work.

The apostles of Jesus were commanded to lead others to Him through their ministry of teaching. But no one can be a strong Christian believer unless he has a proper understanding of God's Word. The reading of God's Holy Book and the follow-

ing of its teachings give spiritual strength. And spiritual values can be transmitted. Thus one convert to the gospel of salvation and to the love of God can be the means of obtaining other converts.

God has always used—and will continue to use—men in human history to tell others of Himself. A question that one might very well ask of himself is: "Am I fit for God's use?" May you be able to say: "God, send me!" when the call for workers is sent.

No worker for the Lord is given the power or the ability to convert his listeners; only the Holy Spirit is able to regenerate. God will take our witness and use it to secure and obtain the results that He has planned.

Christianity is the first and foremost missionary-minded faith in the world. None of the other religions have used worldwide evangelism to espouse their cause with the zeal and the fervency of Christianity. The Christian missionary program was not actually of human origin and therefore does not depend actually upon human energy for its furtherance.

The program requires divine motivation and power, and this God-ordained plan is carried on by God's own people, all willing workers. To be a witness for Christ requires only that we tell what Christ means to us, what He has done for us, and what we know about Him. It is our responsibility to preach the "Good News" of His gospel.

There are a great many false religions and erroneous ones, each having a system of indoctrination and induction into their prescribed beliefs. Christianity is the teaching of God's Holy Word to sinners. Its essence is the acknowledgment of oneself as being a sinner, repenting, and accepting in faith Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

The way to salvation is simplicity itself!

Bearing Another's Burdens

These are days when people are primarily concerned with their own problems. The philosophy seems to be to let the unfortunate find their own solutions.

Our problems are very often of our own making, but the mark of a Christian is the degree of compassion he has for the one in need. Consider Galatians 6:1, 2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Our motives for helping must be prompted by more than a sense of duty. It is a joy to know that we have helped someone, either in physical matters or in the spiritual realm. It is good to know that a person has been relieved of oppression or depression. Why not try it sometime and realize the blessing of sharing? God will bless you for it.

This subject is in answer to the question, Does the "born again" experience take place at conversion or is it related to the resurrection?

Are Christians

Begotten or Born?

by Ray L. Straub

Almost everyone who has attended church for any length of time has heard of Nicodemus. This is interesting in view of the fact that he is mentioned briefly only three times in the New Testament—each time in John's gospel.

In John 19:39, 40, there is mention of Nicodemus' involvement in placing Jesus into the tomb. In John 7:50, 51, he is reported to have made a statement of defense in behalf of Jesus. Even though the name, Nicodemus, is familiar to churchgoers, it is probable that many did not know of these instances. It is his conversation with Jesus, found at the beginning of John 3, that makes him so well known.

Nicodemus was a member of the prestigious Sanhedrin. This was a position of prominence in the Jewish community. He had heard about Jesus. He wanted to know more. He came to Jesus by night.

Nicodemus' inquiry took the form of a statement. He acknowledged that Jesus was a teacher sent from God. No one could perform those miracles unless God were with him. The statement reflected unusual re-

spect on the part of Nicodemus for Jesus' work.

The Teacher's response was profound. "Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." This confused Nicodemus—which is understandable! He asked the automatic questions, "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb the second time and be born?"

Good question! How can a man be born again?

Jesus explained, "Except a man is born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is a birth of the water and of the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Flesh can produce only flesh.

The second birth involves that of a spiritual being. He cannot be created by flesh. He comes into being by the Spirit of God.

Jesus compared this spiritual being to the wind. One sees the effects of a wind on the leaves of a tree, but he cannot see the wind itself. It is that way with the new spiritual creature. You cannot see him, but you can observe his results.

There is considerable differ-

ence of opinion when it comes to explaining the new birth. Some consider that we are born again when we receive Christ as our Saviour. This is the most common viewpoint. Another school of thought has it that the new birth refers to our change to immortality; that one is born again when he receives his immortal, incorruptible, heavenly, spiritual body.

This theory teaches that the saints are not born again in this life. The righteous dead receive their new birth when resurrected. The righteous living will be born again when they are translated from corruption to incorruption.

So, we have an interesting question to answer. When are we born again? at our conversion? or at the resurrection?

I am going to state my belief simply so that there will be no confusion about where I stand on this issue. I am convinced that the new birth experience refers to our conversion. I believe we are born again when we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour. There is no question in my mind but what the Bible teaches this emphatically and clearly.

Since the much larger percentage of fundamentalist Christianity believes the teaching this way, it is probable that most readers will find little to dispute. That is good. At the same time, I assure that there is considerable value in reviewing this teaching carefully. It is important. Otherwise, Jesus would not have taught it to a man of Nicodemus' caliber when the circumstances demanded that the teaching had to be explicit and brief.

Consider the question Nicodemus asked in response to Jesus' pronouncement that a man had to be born again. Nicodemus thought that Jesus must be referring to his physical body. He wondered how he could be reborn when he was old.

Jesus clarified the fact that the new birth did *not* refer to the physical body. It speaks of the water and of the spirit; not a birth that involves the flesh.

Does our translation from mortality to immortality have to do with the flesh? Yes it does. The body we now have is mortal, corruptible, of the earth. When Jesus comes we will receive a new body; not of flesh as we have now, but one that is incorruptible, immortal, incapable of dying. Our change to immortality has everything to do with our *physical* body. Jesus made it clear to Nicodemus that the new birth had *no reference* to the physical body. So, it must refer to some experience *other than* our translation to immortality.

Does our conversion, our decision to live for Christ, have anything to do with our physical body? The answer is "No." When we are converted, our physical body is not converted. It remains the same. The conversion is that of spirit, attitude, outlook, discipline. One needs to take care not to experience the same confusion Nicodemus did, thinking in terms of change for the physical body.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But

as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). Those who are born of God become His sons.

The fact that we are children of God is not an obscure nor subtle concept in Scripture. This leaves little question but what the new birth refers to our conversion; the time we determined by the power of God to repent of our sinfulness, our participation in worldliness, and to turn to worship and serve the living God as His sons.

A second important consideration must be kept in mind. Jesus said, "EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" The New English Bible and the Berkeley Version of the New Testament say, "UNLESS a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This language communicates that the new birth is not a DESCRIPTION of our entry into God's kingdom; it is a CONDITION to getting there.

It does not suggest that the new birth is the *physical process* by which we get there, it teaches that it is a *spiritual requirement* before we are qualified to get there. It does not suggest that being born again is getting there. It says, "Be born again, or you will not get there!"

Some insist that entry into the kingdom of God does not refer to our conversion. The kingdom of God comes when Jesus comes to rule as king. It is Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth that constitutes the message of the kingdom.

That is a phase of the kingdom message, but it does not begin with the teaching of the millennial reign of Christ. When both John the Baptist and Jesus taught repentance because the kingdom of heaven was at hand, they spoke of a kingdom that preceded the 1,000-year reign. They spoke of a kingdom of the

Spirit that began with the preaching of the gospel.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:12, 13). One becomes part of the kingdom of God upon experiencing the spiritual new birth.

Please note a series of verses from the first general letter of John. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (I John 2:29).

I John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

I John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God..."

I John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world..."

I John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

These several references indicate conclusively that when we come to know Christ as our Saviour, God becomes our heavenly Father, because we are born into His family. We experience a spiritual birth; a spiritual awareness; an awareness of the goodness and presence of God.

One wonders how anyone could question such a clear, Biblical teaching. It is done. In an instance such as this, the doctrine is usually challenged by casting suspicion on the language of the text.

In this case, the accuracy of the use of the verb, "born" is under indictment. It is suggested that the word used in

these references should not be "born" but "begotten." For instance, I Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Here the word "begotten" is used instead of "born."

It is urgent that we remain aware of certain gimmickry—a certain subtle scheme—in the

use of logic that may easily find us accepting unwarranted conclusions. Here one sets forth a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a tentative assumption awaiting evidence to establish its validity. He proceeds to build logically onto this hypothesis, softly luring people into accepting succeeding logic without examining the validity of the hypothesis!

For example, I might suggest that "Straub" is an Irish name. My last name is Straub, and so I

conclude that my last name is Irish. This logic is flawless, but the conclusion is in error. How can one present unquestioned logic and still arrive at a wrong conclusion? Simply because the opening statement is untrue. Consequently, the conclusion is untrue, no matter how excellent the logic upon which it is constructed.

Now back to our discussion about the words "born" and "begotten." The suggestion is that the Bible does not really intend to convey the message in I John that we are BORN again. If it meant that, one would have to conclude that we are born again in this life, because it is those who believe Jesus and who love one another that are born again. They say that instead of being born again, we are "begotten."

Here is where the gimmickry is displayed: there is the subtle suggestion that begotten has to do with conception; that man is in his "begettal" stage during gestation—the time from conception to birth. They advise that the embryo, then the fetus is "begotten." This lends itself to the concept that Christians remain in this state of gestation, spiritually, until Jesus returns. Then we are born again to immortality.

The proposal is clever and logical. What is important here is whether the hypothesis (that "begotten" refers to conception and gestation) is accurate. When the Bible uses the word, "begotten," "beget," or "begat," does this refer to gestation rather than birth? One needs to research this matter for himself! I can tell you what you will find.

The word "begotten" refers generally to the father's role in PROCREATION. Procreation refers to producing offspring.

It is seriously misleading to try to label the gestation period as the "begettal"; that one is "begotten" when he is conceived. No dictionary will give that definition, and I have

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KINDNESS IN ACTION

When judging someone else, my friend,
You never should forget
That there's, no doubt, at least one thing
Not known to you as yet,
'Bout circumstances of that one,
Which known, would temper you,
And make you ask: If in his place,
I wonder what I'd do.

It may be someone crossed his path
And ruffled up his day,
And that is why he spoke those words
He'd never planned to say,
And you, because you did not know,
A judgment harsh did make,
If you'd but known, perchance a prayer
You'd offered for his sake.

And he, no doubt, would then have felt
A strange, and pleasant glow,
Think how it might have changed his day
Tho you might never know,
Nor pat yourself upon the back
That something great you'd done,
Yet your regard for someone else
Had turned him to the sun.

This world, no doubt, would sweeter be
And we'd be more relaxed
If we'd remember that each man
With problems great is taxed,
And so he often says the things
He later does regret,
But if our heart is filled with love,
Those words we'll just forget.

—Tom Olson in *Now*.

ness of life? It would surely be difficult to accept the proposal that this is done by some unborn creature!

There is a carnal way of life that dies, and there is a spiritual quality that comes to life. The old man dies; the new man comes to life. It is no more difficult to believe that a new spiritual creature with godly qualities comes to life than it is to believe that a creature with natural worldly characteristics died and is buried.

To be consistent, one who believes in baptism by immersion, ought to believe that the new creature, who walks in newness of life, is the result of the new birth. He is a viable, functioning, responsible being.

Part of the explanation of the new birth given by Jesus to Nicodemus goes this way: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

It is suggested that this product of the Spirit cannot be manifest until the righteous become spirit beings after their resurrection or translation.

To the contrary, the members of the family of God are spiritual. Note the mention of this in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are SPIRITUAL, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." How can one be spiritual? Cannot this spiritual quality be the birth of a spiritual consciousness?

Note the interesting wording of I Corinthians 2:12-14, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that IS SPIRITUAL judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

The Bible teaches that children of God reflect a spiritual quality in this life. They enjoy understanding, insight, and strength that the natural man cannot grasp. Question: "From where does this spiritual quality come?" Answer: "From the new birth." That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

THE JEWISH NATION IN PROPHECY

(Continued from page 16)

Speaking of these people, the Almighty has said, "... he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8).

God is still dealing with the nations of this planet. And He has His "called out ones" carrying the gospel near and far.

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed [note Galatians 3:9], and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

AMAZING GRACE

(Continued from page 7)

and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (ASV). God centers our hope in a Person—Jesus Christ.

As Paul says when writing his first letter to Timothy (1:1) the "Lord Jesus Christ, . . . is our hope." He will appear to those who look to Him for salvation (Hebrews 9:28). Then our salvation will be completed. We shall be redeemed in body as well as in soul and spirit. He will "... change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Philippians 3:21). Just now, the hope "... is laid up for you in heaven..." (Colossians 1:5).

Our hope rests in the fact that the One we trust for salvation is the Omnipotent God. Jesus is coming again to receive us unto Himself. Ours is a magnificent hope.

Our past was changed when our guilt was removed and our sin was pardoned. Our present is changed because the GRACE OF GOD enables us to have renewed lives. Our future is changed from eternal loss to a glorious hope.

The Message With Power

"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, BUT THE POWER. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Corinthians 4:19, 20).

We may admire the eloquent speech, the convincing manner, and the strong organization supporting the speaker, but the real value of a message depends on whether it is given by the power of God. Too often eloquence is mistaken for God's power.

The kingdom message is God's message and is a message of truth and hope for God's people. There are those who attempt to take advantage of the Christian faith and substitute other teachings. They may have various reasons ranging from ignorance or financial gain to making a name for themselves, but the real proof is the stamp of God's approval.

Many strong words, eloquence, or other convincing methods are no substitute for God's power. May we recognize His power and know His Kingdom message when it is given.

ARE CHRISTIANS BEGOTTEN OR BORN?

(Continued from page 5)

checked several, both abridged and unabridged.

The fact is that the word from which born is translated is the same word from which "begotten" is translated. They mean the same; the only difference being that the word begotten identifies the male who was involved with the production of the offspring. My suggestion is that *if an offspring is not born, he is not begotten*. These terms have reference to procreation; not conception and/or gestation. There is a vast difference. With this gimmickry exposed it leaves the "New Birth at the Coming of Christ" theory without an argument.

There is more. The Greek word from which "born" is translated in the references that are listed from I John is the very same word from which born is translated when it was used in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus as recorded in St. John 3. The same "born again" Jesus talked about with Nicodemus is the "born again" that people who believe in Jesus and love their brother have experienced.

There is no reason whatever to insist that Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being BORN into immortality; then to insist that in his first letter, John wrote about being *conceived* and *remaining a fetus* until the resurrection. Nothing in these texts calls for such varying interpretations.

Further, in John 9:2, 19, 20, 32, we read about one who was *born* blind. Verse 1 says he was blind from *birth*. The word "born" used in this chapter is the same as that used in John 3 and in each of the references of I John about being born again.

The same word is used in Acts 22:3 where Paul states that he was BORN in Tarsus. Obviously, these verses have no refer-

ence to conception or gestation.

When one reads about or hears about the suggestion that the word "begotten," with its various forms, refers to conception and/or gestation, he should demand authoritative proof. He will receive none, because "begotten" has to do with the *production of offspring*, just as does the word "born."

Notice how Romans 8:1, 14, 16, 17 refer to a spiritual awareness and to the fact that we ARE children of God. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . For as many as are led by the spirit of God, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD. . . . The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

How interesting! We are the sons of God, and heirs. If we suffer with him, we *will be glorified together*. This does not suggest that we become sons *when* we are glorified. We become sons and *then* are glorified.

There is much evidence in the Bible that our Christian experience, our life in Christ, begins with the new birth. This is how we become new creatures in Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he IS A NEW CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Galatians 6:15).

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also *should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). It is the *new creature* who is expected to walk in newness of life. Old

things are passed away. Everything becomes new.

Note the similar language in Ephesians 4:22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Colossians 3:9, 10, is much like it: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the *new man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Surely this series of three passages establishes an irrefutable case of defense for the truth that we are born again in this life when we repent of our sinfulness and when we turn to God seeking help to live righteously. The new birth refers to that new, spiritual creation within us that makes us part of God's family.

It is this application of the new birth that establishes the meaning and importance of baptism for there are significant spiritual changes in the man who converts from the world to the family of God.

Those who are baptized by immersion give testimony to the world that there has been a death of the man of sin. This refers to that part of us which was controlled by the devil without, abetted by weakness within. If we did not believe that this "man of sin" was put to death, there would be no point in burying him in the watery grave. Our baptism without this "death" would not actually offer the answer of a clear conscience toward God.

Believing that there is a man of sin who dies and is buried, we ought to be able to accept the completed concept of baptism which tells us that we rise to walk in **NEWNESS OF LIFE**. Who does this walking in new-

Did Jesus Preach to the Dead?

Ray L. Straub

Recently someone requested, "Please explain I Peter 3:19."

It reads, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." When, how, and why did Jesus preach to "spirits in prison"?

This verse is often linked to another: "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (I Peter 4:6).

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Ephesians 4:8-10).

Putting these three passages together, one might easily come up with the idea that preaching to "spirits in prison" would be speaking to those who died. It is suggested that Jesus, the One Who ascended, first descended into the lower parts of the earth.

Some identify hell to be the lower parts of the earth. The souls of sinners who died reside in torturous hell. There they are imprisoned. It is believed that Jesus preached to them immediately following His crucifixion. While His life-

less body lay in the tomb, His soul transported to hell to evangelize the imprisoned spirits of the wicked dead.

This teaching is not without its backers. It is traditional. We are going to examine whether the Bible supports these conclusions. Did Jesus preach to souls in hell while His body lay dead in the tomb?

What answer does the Bible have? Job expected to go to the grave. "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:13, 14). "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. . . . They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust" (Job 17:13, 16).

Ecclesiastes 9:5 describes the degree of awareness that is experienced by those who have died, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything. . . ."

Each of these verses in the Old Testament is in complete agreement with New Testament teachings. Here death is called a sleep. Three passages are cited to confirm this.

John 11 narrates an incident

where news was received by Jesus and His disciples that Lazarus was seriously ill. Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead. He told His disciples that He was going to go to wake Lazarus from his sleep. The disciples, thinking Jesus referred to normal rest, felt that it would be good for Lazarus to sleep. Jesus then told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. In this instance the words "death" and "sleep" are synonymous.

Secondly, I Corinthians 15:51 states, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." I Corinthians 15 is the outstanding resurrection chapter. It is obvious from the context that reference to those who sleep refers to those who died.

It is impossible for a man to live long without normal sleep. This verse says we will NOT ALL SLEEP. It informs us that we will not all die, but we will be changed when Jesus comes.

Thirdly, I Thessalonians 4:13 reads, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Again, it is obvious that those who are asleep here are those who have died. Normal sleep would hardly be cause for sorrow or hopelessness.

The Bible calls death a sleep.

We are told that the living know they will die, but the dead know not anything. Job indicated that he would make his bed in the grave, and that he would wait there until his change comes.

If Jesus preached to those who experienced physical death, he would be preaching to an audience that is asleep. I know what it is to preach to those who slumber. I fail to find much of value in such an experience, even though a parishoner gets as much as one-half hour of good, uninterrupted sleep! The benefits are sufficiently negligible to cast doubt on the probability that Jesus would spend His time between His crucifixion and resurrection preaching to a vast audience of sleepers! It is not that worthwhile!

You need not embrace the doctrine of soul sleeping to disprove the concept that Jesus preached to souls in hell. Suppose that it were true that souls of the departed wicked go to hell.

Those who support this doctrine insist that the theory of the Rich Man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16:19-31, is an actual incident. They insist that the rich man really existed. They insist that Lazarus existed. They insist that the rich man went to a real hell. They insist that the conversation between the rich man in hell and Father Abraham occurred. The conversation merits examination.

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime

receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

If the men, places and conversation of this story were real, the gulf between Abraham's bosom and hell was real, too. Abraham insisted that there was no way a soul could pass from one place to the other. The gulf was fixed. It could not be moved nor bridged.

Then what good would it do for Jesus to go to hell to preach? Those who consider that Jesus preached to souls in hell must regard this as an exercise in futility. Even if there were converts, they would have remained in hell, anyway. There was no passage from one place to the other.

How did Jesus speak to "souls in prison"?

Note a prophecy predicting this: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he

hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1). Two significant phrases of this prophecy deserve emphasis, "...proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. ..." This would be preaching to spirits that are in prison.

When was this prophecy fulfilled? Luke 4:16-21 reports part of Jesus' earthly ministry, "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

"And he closed the book, and

Christian Unity?

During a visitor's day at a large state hospital a group of social workers were visiting the various wards. One visitor was particularly conscious of the conditions of the various patients and pitied the plight of the inmates. Soon, however, his compassion turned to fear. About a hundred husky, wild-eyed inmates stared menacingly at the visitors while two rather inoffensive guards seemed unaware of the situation.

The visitor spoke to the tour guide: "Do you think two guards are enough to keep these fellows in check if they attack us?"

The guide chuckled and assured him: "There's no danger at all. Don't you realize that lunatics never unite?"

The implication is clear. True Christianity is not a divisive experience, and true Christians are not a divided group. The fact that professed Christianity is so woefully divided can only mean that many are not rational to the cause they profess to represent.

The apostle Paul admonished us thus: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

he gave it again to the minister, and he sat down. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Which day was Jesus referring to? He was speaking of His ministry. It was during His ministry on earth that Jesus preached the gospel to the poor, healed the brokenhearted, recovered the sight of the blind, and set at liberty the bruised. Similarly, it was during His earthly ministry that he preached deliverance to the captives.

Would this refer to "spirits in prison"? The prophecy said He was anointed to open the prison of those that were bound. This took place during His earthly ministry, not after He was crucified.

Is there justification for concluding that the phrases "preached unto spirits in prison" and "preached to those that are dead" mean basically the same? Yes, there is. A comparison of I Peter 3:19 and I Peter 4:6 will confirm this. Our study will so indicate. The identity of death with "spirits in prison" is established traditionally and enjoys obvious Scriptural support.

Who are these dead? We ruled out the possibility of reference to those who experienced a physical death.

The Bible talks about our being dead, even while we live. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Colossians 2:20).

In Galatians 2:20, Paul states, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." How can this be done? "... the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Romans 6 begins, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein?"

Each of these verses refers to our being dead to sin. Our life is in God. It is a life of faith that allows the Spirit of God to work through us. We no longer promote our own will but God's.

There is a second way in which the Bible refers to our being dead, even though we have not experienced physical death. It is mentioned in Romans 8:10, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

An interesting contrast is given here. What could this mean? It is explained in Romans 7. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Verse 5). Paul speaks here of a law that existed in his members. It prevented his giving adequate response to the spiritual, just,

holy and good law of God. Instead, it caused impulsive actions he did not desire, and it found him too weak to do that which he wanted to.

The unwholesome situation is pinpointed in Romans 7:24. Note carefully the wording of this important verse. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is of interest that Paul separates himself from the "body of this death." He wanted to be freed. The following verse states that it can be done through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hebrews 9:27 says that "... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Our bodies will die. They are under the power of death. There is only one exception to this rule of life. When Jesus comes, the righteous living will be changed.

Paul recognized his wretched situation. He was imprisoned in the body of this death. There can be no change in the destiny of the body. It is under the power of death. However, the spirit can be quickened—made free from the sentence of death that the body faces.

Jesus referred to these bodies and spirits in Matthew 10:28. He warned, "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."

Given sufficient thought one can see that the body and soul face the same calamity. Only the direction of God can decree otherwise. Jesus states plainly that if we do not demonstrate a fear of (reverence for) God, our body and soul will suffer destruction. Reconciliation to God will result in preservation of the soul even though the destiny of the body remains unchanged. The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit can be life because of righteousness.

(Continued on page 20)

OUR TASK

Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongue
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side.

We are the only Bible
The careless world will read;
We are the sinner's gospel;
We are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message,
Given in deed and word.
What if the type is crooked
What if the print is blurred?

What if our hands are busy
With other work than His?
What if our feet are walking
Where sin's allurements is?
What if our tongues are speaking
Of things His lips would shun?
How can we hope to help Him
And make His will be done?

—Author Unknown

(Continued from page 4)

thou, O God, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you" (Deuteronomy 26:9-11).

Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

We cannot outgive God. When our spirit of Thanksgiving is such that we honor God from the generosity of our hearts He continues to provide for us in an abundant way. Our trouble is that we either do not take Him literally enough or that a spirit of selfishness spoils our thankfulness just enough to cause us to be unworthy of His added blessings.

The writer of Psalm 116 asked a question that is very fitting for all of us who desire to express our gratitude and thanksgiving. He said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all of his benefits toward me?" Then in answer to the question notice the distinct three-part way that is necessary to properly show our appreciation. "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. . . I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:12-14, 17).

Thanksgiving thus becomes a matter of personal dedication, a matter of freely acknowledging thanks with our lips, and a matter of "paying our vows," by giving something tangible that proves our real feelings.

We certainly have many things for which we should be thankful. In many parts of the world people actually suffer

from starvation. Then there are multitudes who have never enjoyed good health. Added to this are untold numbers who have never realized the joy there is in serving a living God who gives us a wonderful hope beyond the mortal life.

It is true that all of us have desires we never obtain. Too often we let these unfulfilled obsessions give us a negative attitude to such an extent that we fail to see the good side of life. One man made the point very well when he said, "I complained every morning because I had to get up early, until one morning when I was unable to get up at all." Another man said, "I complained because I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet."

The apostle Paul gave the proper expression when he said, "...I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11, 12).

Just before this he had made the statement, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God" (verse 6).

After we have reflected on the goodness of God, and realized that He has been good to us another year may we enter into the genuine spirit of Thanksgiving and then give David's testimony: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 118:1).

Morning Prayer

by Rhea Hendricks

Lord, make my soul like the shining sun

Before their dreary day is done,

May I illuminate

Dark places filled with hate;

Dry people's bitter tears,

And drive away all fears.

DID JESUS PREACH TO THE DEAD?

(Continued from page 7)

Nothing can change the destiny of the body. What about the spirits or souls imprisoned in the body? Can they be made free? Yes, through Jesus Christ. After all, this was the mission of Jesus, as it was given in Isaiah 61:1, "...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

By renouncing this body of sin, we can be crucified with Christ. We can cease walking after the flesh. We can bury carnality in baptism and rise to walk in newness of life.

We return to I Peter 3:19, the passage we seek to explain. Does our proposed answer fit the context? This is most important. Otherwise, our study cannot be considered adequate.

We begin with I Peter 3:17, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (Verses 17-19).

Christ suffered for us. He died, and then was quickened (made alive) through the Spirit. Because of this He went and preached to the spirits in prison. The death and resurrection of Jesus provided the power by which our spirits can escape the sentence of death. Eternal life is now available.

The verses that follow tell of Noah and the ark. These imprisoned spirits indulged in flagrant sinfulness in Noah's day. They deserved destruction. Nevertheless an ark was provided for man's survival. This is an example of how we are doomed to death because of sins, but through the provision of Jesus' death and resurrection,

our spirits can be made free from the power of death.

Does this explanation provide a satisfactory answer to I Peter 4:6? "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

The gospel is preached to those who are under the power of death. They will be judged according to men in the flesh, or their flesh will receive a sentence common to all flesh. There is nothing that can be done about that. But, they will live according to God in the spirit. Their spirits will be free, through Christ.

This verse fits perfectly the observation of Romans 8:10, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

(Continued from page 16)

anything very seriously the devil will produce it and promise it to you — on a condition. He did this with Jesus. Whether or not the devil could have, or would have, delivered the kingdoms, is beside the point. He doesn't always keep his promise.

Do you want a million dollars? Then the devil says, "Serve mammon." But often, even after you have fulfilled his conditions, he does not deliver.

And there was something else which Jesus wanted—earnestly wanted—something which also had been promised to Him and which would be included in this which the devil offered Him. Again and again the Father had promised Jesus that through Him the gospel should be given to all the world; and that the Gentiles, through Him, should receive salvation.

Two thousand years before

this God had said to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ..." (Genesis 22:18). That seed was Christ, and "all the nations" includes the Gentiles. We have read the promise in Psalm 2:8, "... I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance ..." The heathen are the Gentiles. That promise includes us.

Again God had promised the Son, "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

In spite of all this, Jesus was bidden by His Father to preach only to the Jews. Jesus said, "... I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). When He sent forth the twelve, He said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles."

But how eagerly Jesus looked over the broad fields ripe for the harvest, and how He longed to thrust in the sickle! The Gentile world called loudly for the gospel. Time and again the temptation returned to Jesus.

Notice that Luke says, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13). Moffatt translates it thus, "And after exhausting every kind of temptation, the devil left Him till a fit opportunity arrived."

Evidently that fit opportunity arrived several times. Read Christ's response when the Greeks came to the temple saying, "We would see Jesus." Jesus did not speak to them, but He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour."

How the heart of the Saviour went out to the Gentile people in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 15:20-28)! And how great was His joy when at last it was His triumphant

privilege to say to His disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, ... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!" Do you not detect a note of pathos in the words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"?

And there were times when the devil returned with the temptation that Jesus should take the kingdoms. You remember that after the five thousand were fed, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).

Matthew puts it this way. "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23).

These things were still in His mind on that last night before the crucifixion when He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30).

In the mountain alone, in the temple when the Greeks came to Him, and in the garden when faced with the final sacrifice, Jesus went to His Father in prayer. In the light of His bitter experience we may understand when He said, "After this manner therefore pray ye... lead us not into temptation," and again, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Notice that in meeting each temptation Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:13, 16) thus acknowledging Himself subject to the law as given to Moses. Jesus found comfort and strength and victory in the Word of God.

In Deuteronomy also we find,

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee..." (Deuteronomy 33:27).

This response of Jesus is the most beautiful possible application of Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Because Jesus was tempted and gained a victory, He is able to help and to have compassion and to save. We quote from Weymouth (Hebrews 2:16-18). "And for this purpose it was necessary that in all respects he should be made to resemble his brothers, so that he might prove himself a compassionate and faithful High Priest in things relating to God, in order to atone for the sins of the people. For inasmuch as he himself felt the pain of temptation and trial, he is also able to help those who are tempted and tried." And in Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able to also save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that victory can be won without a struggle. A friend of mine, who wanted to quit smoking, asked for prayer. A few days later I saw him placidly rolling a cigarette. I asked him how the battle was going. "Oh," he said, "God didn't take the desire away from me, so here goes."

You and I know that victory is not won in that way. Jesus emptied the bitter cup of suffering and sorrow and death. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

After we have done our very best, then God will take over. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempt-

ed above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

And, "It is written again," "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27, 28).

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10).

"Let us therefore come boldly

unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Let us never for a moment forget Christ's formula for overcoming temptation: The Word of God, prayer, and a constant realization of the presence and power of the Father. If we forget, but for a moment, the devil will find his opportunity.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).—*Reprint.*

Backsliders

The word "backslider" is not a common word in the Bible as one might suppose, although the Biblical record is full of examples of those who have fallen into sin. "Backslider" is used principally in the books of Jeremiah and Hosea and describes the actions of the Israelites in turning away from God.

Our present-day understanding of the word is quite accurate. In Old Testament times the people of God turned back from serving the Lord and this was the term used to describe them. The word "backslider" is not used in the New Testament, but there are numerous examples of turning back and warnings given about the consequences of leaving the faith.

The Christian life is not always the easiest way of life. It takes determination and dedication to live above sin. The Bible sets forth a way of life that is different from that of the world, and the one who endeavors to live a Godly life must be willing to subscribe to this discipline. Jesus preached a way that was difficult and some of His followers could not accept it. This is what is said of them: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66).

The Bible does not say the backslider's condition is hopeless, but it does require that one in that condition do something about it. I John 2:1 says this: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." If we seek His help He will intercede for us and both have our sins forgiven and help us to live above sin. He acts in the capacity of our High Priest.

Backsliding means that while one is in that condition he is lost. That person cannot expect to find favor with God or receive any of His promises. This is what Hebrews 10:38 says of the one who has left his Christian way of life: "Now the just shall live by faith: but IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK, MY SOUL SHALL HAVE NO PLEASURE IN HIM."

Many of the Galatian church had "turned back." They had reverted to some of their old practices, and Paul chided them this way: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9). He went on to say, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (verse 11).

Backsliding is a dangerous condition in which to be. It is time to consider our way of life, and if it does not stand the test of God's Word something needs to be done about it.

Many are wondering today what place the gift of speaking in tongues has in the present-day church. Is it a God-given gift for us?

Speaking in Tongues— Is it Scriptural?

by Ray L. Straub

The "tongues movement" is growing. Its promotion becomes increasingly widespread. Many "Jesus freaks" enjoy speaking in tongues and recommend it. Wealthy and prestigious figures testify to its glory. This spiritual adventure touches all kinds of people in all church denominations, from Miracle Valley to Notre Dame University.

Marjoe, in his shocking filmed expose of the holiness movement gives convincing evidence of counterfeit. That is no surprise. The holiness movement itself continually reports spurious demonstrations.

It matters not *who* is involved or how quickly the movement spreads. Our concern is with Scriptural evidence. What does the Bible say about speaking in tongues? Is it Biblical?

Our study focuses on two chapters, Acts 12 and I Corinthians 14.

Acts 2 records the descent of the Holy Ghost. It tells how that those present spoke in tongues. The audience was bewildered. Explanations were given. Many souls were saved. It is an exciting account!

A sound came from heaven

like that of a rushing wind. A small tongue appearing like fire sat upon everyone present.

The result: the disciples were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They spake with other tongues. To what does this have reference?

Some feel that this refers to an actual language. Others believe it could have been an unintelligible jibberish. We will have no difficulty finding the correct answer.

The purpose for the manifestation of tongues was to indicate that the gospel of salvation was for all nations. Note how this is confirmed with the first mention of tongues.

Acts 2:4 reports that the Holy Spirit came, and men began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Verses 5, 6 continue, "And there was dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of *every nation* under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in HIS OWN LANGUAGE. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying

one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in *our own tongues*, wherein we were born?"

These passages bring up an interesting question. It has been debated for hundreds of years. The question is this: when the gift of tongues came, were the new tongues spoken, or were they heard; every man *hearing* in his own language? Some feel that the language of the Scriptures leans toward the notion that whatever the language was spoken, or whatever sounds came from the tongue, the miracle was in the hearing. Others do not accept this opinion because it credits the miracle to the hearer instead of the speaker.

The whole discussion, for all of its clever and abundant verbiage, is rather amusing. The important point is that the gospel was communicated in the language of each hearer. It matters nothing whether the miracle rested on the tongue of the speaker or in the ear of the hearer. It was performed by the power of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the Gospel.

The "other tongues" referred to in Acts 2:4, 8, 11 are actual languages. Verse 6 says it in so many words. The multitudes "... were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in HIS OWN LANGUAGE."

There is suggestion that some unintelligible jibberish was also present. Verse 13 is cited as evidence. It says, "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine." This evidence is unimpressive. There is nothing in this accusation (that the speakers were intoxicated) that would indicate that their speech was a jibberish, incapable of being understood.

One wonders whether those who take that position are insisting that one who speaks a jibberish sounds like a drunk! Almost all tongues-speaking nowadays is jibberish. Does one who is speaking in tongues sound like he has been drinking too much? We readily recognize the question about drunkenness to be more whimsical than clinical. It is the inquiry of the cynical, not the seeker.

Where, then, do some get the concept that speaking in tongues can have reference to unintelligible utterings, called by some the language of angels, or the ecstatic language? Is there no other passage that might address itself more directly to the phenomenon we see nowadays?

There is. It is I Corinthians 14. This is an interesting chapter. It gives us plenty to think and talk about.

The word "tongues" in Acts 2 refers to an actual known language. Is the word "tongues" in I Corinthians 14 referring to languages or jibberish? That is more difficult to answer. One would be led to think that "tongues" in I Corinthians 14 also refers to intelligible languages since the Greek word "glossa" is the word from which "tongues" is translated in both cases.

Admittedly, it can still vary from one chapter to the other.

They could refer to languages in both cases, one being a language that is understood; the other being unintelligible.

There are important differences between the exercise of speaking in tongues in Acts 2 from that recorded in I Corinthians 14. These are obvious, and it is important that we give them serious consideration. They will help us keep in mind the purpose for which tongues was given, and the context in which they are discussed in I Corinthians 14.

The first important difference between the manifestation of tongues in Acts 2 and I Corinthians 14 is that in Acts 2 the gift fell on many simultaneously. Acts 2:4 says they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak as the *Spirit* gave them utterance. I Corin-

thians 12:8-11 suggests that the gifts, including that of tongues, were distributed among the members of the body.

The text reads, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge..." Included in this list is the gift of tongues. Verse 32 of this same chapter asks, "Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" Only certain members of the Corinthian church spoke in tongues.

Difference Number 2: In Acts 2, the gift of speaking in tongues was apparently irresistible. It was a temporary impulse directed by the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 14, its exercise is under the control of the speaker.

Referring again to Acts 2:4, the apostles spoke as the spirit gave them utterance. Paul is suggesting the exercise of certain disciplines in the use of this gift at the Corinthian church. He advises first that there be no speaking in tongues unless there is someone present to interpret. Secondly, he suggests that it be held to two or three instances per meeting, and that these persons do so "by course." Such advice would be useless and fruitless, were this gift not under the control of the speaker.

I suggest that in Acts it was temporary because on two occasions Peter referred to this Pentecost experience by reviewing how that the Holy Ghost fell on them "at the beginning," referring to their experience at Pentecost. These passages, one in Acts 11 and the other in Acts 15, both imply that with Peter, at least, this was not a continuing practice.

The third difference is that in Acts 2 the words spoken in other tongues needed no interpretation. In I Corinthians 14 they required interpretation.

To summarize, in Acts 2, the gift of tongues came by impulse

IF YOU KNEW JESUS

by Mary G. Lippen

Were you to know my Jesus,
How happy you could be;
He'd come and dwell within you,
And set your spirit free.

He'd fill your life with sunshine,
And drive dark clouds away.
For once you'd let Him enter,
You'd gladly bid Him stay.

He'd gladly bear your burdens
And share your troubles too,
For really there is nothing,
That my Jesus cannot do.

He'd take away your sorrow,
And dry up all your tears;
He'd always stay beside you,
Throughout the many years.

You'd always want Him with you,
Because you'd love Him so;
His love would be so filling,
You'd never let Him go.

Then at His great appearing,
When time shall be no more,
You'd find your blessed Jesus,
Waiting at the door.

To welcome you to Glory,
Forever there to be,
With Him and God the Father,
For all eternity.

of the Holy Spirit upon all present, giving them ability to speak in a language understood by foreign listeners. The occasion of the gift seemed temporary in nature. In I Corinthians 14, it was a continuing practice by a portion of those present. It was self-induced, under the control of the speaker, to be kept in proper discipline, and it needed interpretation to be understood. That is quite a difference!

Few people have had the experience that is recorded in Acts. The kind of speaking in tongues that is practiced in our time is more akin to what we read about in I Corinthians 14.

There are those sufficiently versed in the Scriptures who probably anticipate adverse remarks that I will have to make about speaking in tongues. They become defensive. They are assuring themselves that they know what they have from the Lord, and no one will take that from them.

I have no intention of taking away anything that anyone has from the Lord. No one can do that!

Even though someone's attitude toward tongues may be quite in error, no one can take that from him! Any change, where a need for such is indicated, comes through yielding. Whether we think ourselves to be spiritual or not, our ultimate need is always to lean on the Word of God.

This should be especially understood by those who speak in tongues. Regardless of what attitude or belief anyone may have about this practice, one thing is sure, the experience does not come without yielding.

So, all I ask is that we have the same willingness to yield to the Word of God that we have to yield to the Spirit of God. If that which is in us is of the Spirit of God, we ought to fear nothing that the Word of God has to say.

Turning to I Corinthians 14, we consider some points that

offer support to speaking in tongues. These need to be kept in mind in order for us to get a clear picture of this subject.

First, Paul advises that we should desire spiritual gifts. There are those who shrink back from turning their lives over

to the Holy Spirit. We ought not to do that. We should desire spiritual gifts.

Secondly, in verse 5 Paul expresses this sentiment: "I would that ye all spake with tongues. . . ." Paul considered that the

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SHORTCUTS

by Eugene Lincoln

On the campus of the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a sign at the edge of a grassy area which reads, "This shortcut saves only a few steps. Isn't your environment worth more than that?"

At another university, the campus had become so criss-crossed with paths made by students who did not use the sidewalks that someone facetiously suggested the whole campus be paved.

We see these paths across nearly every vacant corner lot and even on some lawns where the owners have not put up fences to keep trespassers from taking a "shortcut" to save a few steps.

Several years ago—before the advent of interstate highways—a family going from Madison, Indiana, to Blue Ridge, Georgia, had gotten as far as Lexington, Kentucky, when they found from the roadmap that another unnumbered route seemed to be about fifty miles closer than U.S. 27, which they had planned to take. They decided to take the shorter route, and were congratulating themselves, for the road was wide and well-paved. But soon it deteriorated into a gravel, and then a dirt, road. Arriving at their destination about three hours later than they had planned (after becoming lost several times), they resolved to be more careful before wandering off on unmarked routes again.

In the field of theology, too, there are many persons who desire a "shortcut." The paths of religious history are cut across by the steps of thousands—no, millions—who are not satisfied with the plain paths outlined in the Word of God. Instead men have cut across His truths in an attempt to go their own way, with little concern over whether it is the right way.

When Jesus' disciples asked Him, "...how can we know the way?" He answered unequivocally, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Almost two thousand years later, those words are still true. Any creed that denies or minimizes the truth that salvation comes only through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is outlining a shortcut that leads to eternal loss. Even keeping the Ten Commandments from the wrong motives can result in one's being lost in the final day of judgment. Only when the love of God infuses every part of our being will we resist the temptation to avoid these "shortcuts" to salvation.

Solomon knew what he was saying when he said that first we must "acknowledge him" in all our ways, and then He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:6).

agation of Christmas, with all its heathen practices, is pagan and harmful. Those who accept and observe the ancient pagan holiday should heed the admonition of the Lord Jesus Himself, who said: "... But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men.*"—*A former tract.*

SPEAKING IN TONGUES Is It Scriptural?

(Continued from page 7)

exercise had certain value.

Thirdly, Paul recognized that he who speaks in tongues edifies himself. This experience is not destructive. It is at least edifying to the speaker.

Fourth, in Verse 39, it is said quite plainly that the Corinthians should "... forbid not to speak with tongues." This indicates that the practice was not entirely without virtue—certainly not diabolic.

While I grant that these phrases do not constitute an outstanding endorsement, they fall short of describing tongues-speaking as the product of the Enemy.

A reading of I Corinthians 14 gives the clear impression that tongues is a human phenomenon. It is induced by the person speaking and is under his control. Putting it simply, Paul teaches that the person who speaks in tongues does so

by his own choice and under his own command.

It is necessary to set the stage for the writing of this chapter. Confusion was rampant during church services at the Corinthian church. This was not only brought on by those who spoke in tongues. Verse 2 says, "How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."

Those who insisted on performing had too much interest in their own self-enhancement. Plainly, it was a time to "show off." The meetings were boisterous, confusing, undisciplined, disorderly, and meaningless.

In trying to bring order and purpose to their meetings, Paul offered several suggestions. He set forth priorities and advised how to set them into order and practice. That is what makes this chapter so worthy of our attention.

Paul established the purpose of the meeting. It was to edify the church. This is found in Verses 4, 5, 12, and 26. It is alluded to in verses 19 and 31. Those who perform in a church service should do so for the purpose of bringing inspiration to everyone present.

Those who have something to say should do so in a manner that communicates and may be appreciated by all. Speaking in

tongues serves to inspire only the speaker. That can be done when one is alone. In church, he should make the kind of contribution that benefits everyone. For this reason Paul is promoting preaching, teaching, or prophesying.

He puts it plainly. Unless there is an interpreter present, or unless the person speaking in tongues is able to interpret, he is advised to remain silent. That statement is easy to understand. It deserves respect and obedience.

Further, Paul advised that no more than two or three persons speak in tongues during a service. It should be done in order, one person following the other. This was also true of those who prophesied. They were to take turns. If a prophet received an important revelation while another was speaking, the prophet speaking should yield to the second so that both would not be speaking at the same time.

Earlier, I quoted from several verses to indicate that Paul did not label speaking in tongues as a product of the devil. It is important for us to recognize this. Of equal importance are passages which cast plenty of doubt on the claim that speaking in tongues is always of God.

Verses 6 through 10 propose the argument that to be of value to a hearer, sounds must communicate. Paul notes that this is even true of inanimate objects such as musical instruments. There has to be an orderly distinction and variation of sounds. He then states plainly in verse 9, "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air."

Does this sound like a special unction of the Holy Spirit—to move a person by supernatural power to give a special message that goes only into the air? Hardly would this be the case.

In verses 18-20 Paul declares

The Badattitudes

1. **UNHAPPY** are the spiritual snobs, for theirs is the kingdom of chaos.
2. **UNHAPPY** are the "hilarious," for they shall have no comfort.
3. **UNHAPPY** are the arrogant, for they shall be cut off without inheritance.
4. **UNHAPPY** are they which hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, for they shall be forever unsatisfied.
5. **UNHAPPY** are the merciless, for they shall receive no mercy.
6. **UNHAPPY** are the impure in heart, for it is impossible for them to see God.
7. **UNHAPPY** are the troublemakers, for by their actions they identify themselves as children of the devil.

Arthur D. Zahniser, *Selected*

that he is capable of speaking in tongues more than any of those present. At the same time, he would rather speak five words that are intelligible than 10,000 words that none can understand. In verse 20, he pleads with the brethren not to be children in their understanding. Instead, they should mature. If speaking in tongues were the sole domain of the Holy Spirit, why would Paul call these practitioners immature in their attitude?

It is in verse 28 that Paul commands those who have no interpreters for their speaking in tongues to keep silent. If speaking in tongues is brought about by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, who is Paul to command silence in that situation? And, why would the Holy Spirit inspire this writing, when the message is designed to stifle the Holy Spirit's own product? This sounds like the Holy Spirit is telling *Himself* to remain silent.

Verse 33 says that God is not the author of confusion. He is not the cause of chaos. He does not inspire tumult. Knowing this about God, it matters none whether the confusion is in one language or the other, it is not the product of God.

When worshiping God, all things are to be done decently and in order. Paul gives this as a characteristic of things sent from God. Where is the person whose authority and insight supersedes that of Paul's to declare that God also inspires non-communicative, inordinate sounds and unsightly physical displays?

I do not suggest opposition to displays of emotion in a church service. To the contrary, I consider that church meetings can get so dry that all they reflect is an anemic concept of an inanimate God. We get emotional about many things such as the purchase of something new, seeing a loved one after a lengthy absence, feeling proud of the performances of our chil-

dren. We are moved. Why not in church? The Bible does not speak against displays of emotion in church.

The Bible does criticize inordinate, spectacular performances that offer little more than self-enhancement. Why should the demure housewife suddenly become boisterous in church? Why should happy, well-adjusted teen-agers cry constantly in church? Lack of emotional restraint does not prove the presence of power from on high. It demonstrates lack of control inside.

Speaking in tongues is Scriptural. Not every display of it is Biblical. As with any other human exercise, it can reflect carnality. It is important that our attitudes and practices find endorsement in God's Word.

THE LAWS, STATUTES AND ORDINANCES OF THE ETERNAL CREATOR

(Continued from page 4)

nant of Christ that would take away sin forever. By the works of this law contained in ordinances no man can enter the kingdom of God. This was what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "... a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ ..." (Galatians 2:16).

The Eternal Law

Many people will agree that God did abolish laws and ordinances given in the Old Testament. But were all the laws that were in force from the beginning of time (the laws that Abraham kept, the law that Noah kept, and the law that was written by the finger of God) changed or fulfilled by Christ? (Matthew 5:17, 18).

Was there a law at the beginning of creation? The absence of law is the absence of sin, and sin was from the beginning. Romans 7:7 says, "What shall we say then? Is the law

sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." And Romans 6:23 reads, "For the wages of sin is death..." Death was from the beginning.

The old covenant at Sinai, or laws given to the Hebrews, was a completely different covenant than the everlasting law of God, also called a covenant in John 12:50.

In James 2:14-20 we read, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest there is one God; Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" This law regulates man, making him follow a straight path that is godly—a path that spells out the way of righteousness.

The law of liberty is the ten commandment law (James 2:8-10): "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

God included the "Ten Commandments" in the law given to Israel, but they differed from the rest of the code in that the Ten Commandments was the only law that God wrote, for it was His law—not man's.

ness of life? It would surely be difficult to accept the proposal that this is done by some unborn creature!

There is a carnal way of life that dies, and there is a spiritual quality that comes to life. The old man dies; the new man comes to life. It is no more difficult to believe that a new spiritual creature with godly qualities comes to life than it is to believe that a creature with natural worldly characteristics died and is buried.

To be consistent, one who believes in baptism by immersion, ought to believe that the new creature, who walks in newness of life, is the result of the new birth. He is a viable, functioning, responsible being.

Part of the explanation of the new birth given by Jesus to Nicodemus goes this way: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

It is suggested that this product of the Spirit cannot be manifest until the righteous become spirit beings after their resurrection or translation.

To the contrary, the members of the family of God are spiritual. Note the mention of this in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are SPIRITUAL, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." How can one be spiritual? Cannot this spiritual quality be the birth of a spiritual consciousness?

Note the interesting wording of I Corinthians 2:12-14, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that IS SPIRITUAL judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

The Bible teaches that children of God reflect a spiritual quality in this life. They enjoy understanding, insight, and strength that the natural man cannot grasp. Question: "From where does this spiritual quality come?" Answer: "From the new birth." That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

THE JEWISH NATION IN PROPHECY

(Continued from page 16)

Speaking of these people, the Almighty has said, "... he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8).

God is still dealing with the nations of this planet. And He has His "called out ones" carrying the gospel near and far.

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed [note Galatians 3:9], and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

AMAZING GRACE

(Continued from page 7)

and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (ASV). God centers our hope in a Person—Jesus Christ.

As Paul says when writing his first letter to Timothy (1:1) the "Lord Jesus Christ, ... is our hope." He will appear to those who look to Him for salvation (Hebrews 9:28). Then our salvation will be completed. We shall be redeemed in body as well as in soul and spirit. He will "... change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Philippians 3:21). Just now, the hope "... is laid up for you in heaven..." (Colossians 1:5).

Our hope rests in the fact that the One we trust for salvation is the Omnipotent God. Jesus is coming again to receive us unto Himself. Ours is a magnificent hope.

Our past was changed when our guilt was removed and our sin was pardoned. Our present is changed because the GRACE OF GOD enables us to have renewed lives. Our future is changed from eternal loss to a glorious hope.

The Message With Power

"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, BUT THE POWER. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Corinthians 4:19, 20).

We may admire the eloquent speech, the convincing manner, and the strong organization supporting the speaker, but the real value of a message depends on whether it is given by the power of God. Too often eloquence is mistaken for God's power.

The kingdom message is God's message and is a message of truth and hope for God's people. There are those who attempt to take advantage of the Christian faith and substitute other teachings. They may have various reasons ranging from ignorance or financial gain to making a name for themselves, but the real proof is the stamp of God's approval.

Many strong words, eloquence, or other convincing methods are no substitute for God's power. May we recognize His power and know His Kingdom message when it is given.