

Disciple Magazine

Equipping believers for deeper life

Vol. 7, Issue 9
September 2015

Come And Reason

By Donald W. Raub

Page 1

Also in this Issue:

Page 2

Can a Christian Be Content?
by Shea Oakley

Page 3

Moral Courage, True Leadership
by Joe McKeever

Page 14

A Thousand Lives for China
by Bernard R. DeRemer

Table of Contents:

Come and Reason - - - - -	1	Counselor's Corner - - - - -	12
Can a Christian Be Content? - - - - -	2	The Story behind the Song - - - - -	13
Moral Courage, True Leadership - - - - -	3	Church Builders - - - - -	14
Exegetically Speaking - - - - -	4	Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel - - - - -	15
Words to Stand You on Your Feet - - - - -	6	Marks of the Master - - - - -	16
Living out the Living Word - - - - -	6	Book Reviews - - - - -	17
Following God - - - - -	8	News Update - - - - -	17
Points to Ponder- - - - -	9	Sermon Helps - - - - -	19
Jewels from Past Giants - - - - -	10	Puzzles and 'Toons - - - - -	21

Come and Reason

By Donald W. Raub

“*Come now, and let us reason together,*’ saith the Lord: *‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool’*” (Isa. 1:18).

God describes His view of the children of Judah as one of rebellion, laden with sin, corrupters who have forsaken God, revolting, spiritually sick, desolate, and guilty of false worship. At this point, we as humans would have said “Enough!” However, God reveals Himself as being merciful, for in the following verses He extends an invitation to these same sinful people which seems totally out of character for a Holy God.

He says “*Come now, and let us reason together.*” Now, why would God want to “*reason*” with such a depraved group of people? In order to deal with this difficult question, we need to know more about the Hebrew word which has been translated as “*reason*” here. Early manuscripts use a very interesting word in this first chapter of Isaiah, which should help us to understand. It can be used several different ways. There are at least five things that take place when we are willing to reason with God. The hardest part for me to understand is why God would desire to discuss anything with humans who are less intelligent, less wise, less knowledgeable, and less caring than He. What actually happens when we “*reason*” with God? The Hebrew word *yakach* suggests several applications.

I. It Is a Time when Things Are Made Right

One of the meanings of the term used is “to justify.” We are aware that man cannot justify himself; this indicates to us that if we are to be justified, God must be the one to do it. In the rest of the verse, God clearly tells us what will happen: “*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*” In order to justify, God must deal with the sin that separates and stands between man and Himself. He does not re-arrange our sinful hearts. He puts a new Spirit within us, removes the stony rebellious heart,

and replaces it with a submissive heart of flesh (Ezek. 11:19).

II. It Is a Time when We Are Made Keenly Aware of Our Sin

Another meaning of *yakach* is “to convict.” God convicts us of the sin that stands between us. Conviction carries a penalty, “*The wages of sin is death.*” This penalty of death can only be revoked by the shedding of blood; “*For without the shedding of blood, there is no remission [pardon or forgiveness] of sin.*” The Bible teaches that Jesus shed His blood at Calvary for those who believe and follow Him. Without conviction, we would feel no need of a Savior; this may be what is lacking in the post modern church.

III. It Is a Time when God Appoints Us to Carry out His Wishes

When we reason with God, He makes known His expectation. He gives us a job (an appointment) which He expects us to carry out under His power and direction. If we comply, we will be blessed of God; if we refuse His appointment, we will be cursed (see Isaiah 1:19,20).

IV. It Is a Time when God Provides Spiritual Maintenance

Just as our cars, houses, and appliances need regular maintenance, the soul of a Christian also must be maintained. Prayer, Bible study, and Christian fellowship certainly help, but a face to face “reasoning” with God is an absolute necessity in order to maintain a sound, spiritual life. To be in the presence of God is the source of spiritual strength and renewal. Without it our lives are merely a hum-drum existence.

Jesus offered spiritual maintenance to all who are “*weary and heavy laden.*” Here, Jesus compares us to a cart which has been overloaded, and about to break down. Many Christians are struggling under an overload of cares, duties, and worries, of everyday life. Others are stressed out by

cramming too many activities in a twenty-four hour day. Jesus told His disciples to “*Come apart and rest for a while.*” They had just buried the body of John the Baptist. Their sorrow was overwhelming. They needed a change of pace, but Jesus did not tell them to sit under a shade tree. Instead He took them into the desert to witness one of His great miracles; the feeding of the five thousand.

Jesus put His disciples to work distributing the loaves and fish, and gathering the remaining leftovers. After that, Jesus sent them across the sea while He went to pray. In the middle of the sea, they encountered a great storm which nearly killed them. What kind of “rest” is that? Ah, but Jesus was watching them from the shore, and after a while He walked out to them and “*stilled the storm.*” Again, this does not resemble the rest we envision. The Disciples were kept busy struggling for their lives, but through it all, they learned to trust in Jesus. Obedience to Jesus Christ always brings rest to the over-burdened, stressed out, burned out Christian. It is when we attempt to satisfy our own agenda, along with the agenda which God requires, that we encounter overload. Always put God first in your life.

V. It Is a Time When God Permits Us to Plead Our Case or Need

Can a Christian Be Content?

By Shea Oakley

The answer to this question depends on what we are content with. It is one thing to be content with our circumstances; it is quite another to be content with our character. The first type of contentment is encouraged by scripture, the second warned against. One of the vital keys to an authentic and flourishing Christian life is learning to differentiate between the two, and deal with the fallen human tendency to reverse them.

Most honest believers, if pressed, will admit that they have a propensity to be comfortable with their faults and distinctly **un**comfortable with the difficult things they must face in life. This is part and parcel of the “old man” within us. Our flesh constantly seeks to excuse our character flaws while simultaneously complaining about every seemingly unfavorable condition in our day-to-day existence. In distinct irony, many of the latter are a result of the former. We are naturally self-indulgent and comfort-seeking, and when we give in to these two temptations, bad circumstances—that stem directly from doing so—result! Perhaps this is the reason why there is a clear biblical imperative not to make idols of indulgence or comfort.

The reverse irony is that, in seeking to improve our Christian character and learning to live with our circumstances, one helps the other. As we grow in the fruit

Even though God knows our needs before we ask, He wants us to ask anyway. There is good reason for that. “*Ask that your joy may be full.*” We are to bring our petitions to Him. Instead of complaining about how tough life is, we should be rejoicing in what God has already done for us.

When we are willing to reason with God, He offers to justify after convicting us of sin. When Isaiah “saw” the Lord, He cried out, “*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*” (Isa. 6:5). In verse seven, Isaiah’s iniquity is taken away, and his sin purged. He then received his appointment to present God’s word to the people of Israel.

We also need constant Spiritual Maintenance which is available through the grace of God, as we reason together. When our soul is in need of repair, when spiritual break-downs occur, take time to “*reason*” with God. He has all the answers.

Donald W. Raub is pastor of East Rockhill Chapel in Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

of the Spirit like kindness, faithfulness and self-control, we may start to resolve some of the bad situations that came about before we possessed these things in increasing measure. For instance, if our lack of kindness made some enemies in this life, becoming more sincerely kind to those enemies might win them over as friends.

Something else to remember about the “circumstantial” side of the equation is that difficult problems in life can themselves be character builders if we approach them with the right attitude. Patience is one of the most vital qualities of godliness. We learn patience by bearing unpleasant situations through the grace of God. The truth is that even the best application of other aspects of a maturing character will not remove every hard circumstance we must endure on this side of Heaven. When we cannot change an external condition (or, in the case of something like illness, an internal one), we have no good choice but to use it as a springboard to becoming more patient in long-suffering, in imitation of our Lord. Through the advent of patience in our character (along with learning to share our burdens with Christ) we learn to be truly content with whatever difficulties we face in life.

It might be said that the primary reason God does not remove the thorns from His children’s sides in this

world is to make us all better, more Christ-like people. It is in the crucible of our circumstances that He does much of the sanctifying work in us. This is absolutely essential in both preparing us for eternity with Him and helping others to know Him that they might be with us in that eternity. So in the quest to be content with our circumstances, but not our character, we are properly ordering our lives not only

for ourselves but ultimately also for the benefit of those around us.

© Shea Oakley. All rights reserved.

Shea Oakley is a freelance Christian writer from Ridgewood, New Jersey.

Moral Courage, True Leadership

By Joe McKeever

Originally published in Pulpit Helps, October 2008.

Peggy Noonan, in her biography of Ronald Reagan, wrote: “In a president, character is everything. A president doesn’t have to be brilliant; Harry Truman wasn’t brilliant, and he helped save Western Europe from Stalin. He doesn’t have to be clever; you can hire clever.... But you can’t buy courage and decency; you can’t rent a strong moral sense. A president must bring these things with him.... A vision is worth little if a president doesn’t have the character—the courage and heart—to see it through.”

Everyone knows what courage is: when a person risks his life or safety in some noble cause. John Wayne said, “Courage is being scared to death—and saddling up anyway.”

But what is moral courage? My working definition is: “A firm spirit that does the right thing at great risk.” In this case, you risk not bodily harm or your life but perhaps your reputation, success in your chosen field, or the support of friends and family.

My friend, Bob, was teaching in a “Christian” college when he was informed by the dean and then the president that he should not be giving his Christian testimony to his students. Someone of another faith might be offended or feel discriminated against. Bob responded that he felt it was important for students to know who their professor is and to learn his worldview if they are to make sense of his teaching. Bob did not get tenure and eventually, God led him on to another institution.

Moral courage is standing up for the hard right against the easy wrong. Moral courage means refusing to stand idly by while others engage in wrong or hurtful acts. Moral courage speaks truth to power. Its opposite is cowardice in the name of getting along, silence in the face of cruelty and persecution, acquiescence in the cause of unity or personal advancement.

Martin Niemoller (1892-1984), a Lutheran pastor, spent years in Hitler’s concentration camps for refusing to go along with the Nazi program. He was only a pastor, not equipped in any earthly way to reverse the Hitler

juggernaut, yet he continued speaking up for truth and calling his nation to righteousness.

Inscribed on a stone marker in New England’s Holocaust Memorial are these famous words from Niemoller: “When the Nazis came for the Communists, I remained silent. I was not a Communist. When they locked up the social democrats, I remained silent. I was not a social democrat. When they came for the trade unionists, I did not speak out. I was not a trade unionist. When they came for the Jews, I remained silent. I wasn’t a Jew. When they came for me, there was no one left to speak out.”

A generation or two ago, I heard a record of a fellow named Don Loney addressing a high school assembly on the subject of moral courage. One story he told has remained with me all these years.

“A speaker rose to address the hundreds of business people in town for a convention. He had not been speaking two minutes before he began using the name ‘Jesus Christ’ as profanity. After he had blasphemed the Lord several times, a man in the audience rose to his feet, stood in his chair, cupped his hands to his mouth and called out toward the podium, ‘Sir! Leave Christ out of it!’ And when the session ended, there were more people lined up to shake his hand than the hand of the speaker.”

Moral courage does not act in rashness, but considers the cost for taking action that could be embarrassing or unpopular or costly, then steps over the line. This is worth the price.

Many years ago—before Congress got around to enacting “whistle blower” laws to protect those who “speak truth to power”—a factory employee insisted to the boss that the exits should be unlocked, that the workers would need those doors to the fire escape in case of an emergency. The owner replied that too many seamstresses were slipping outside to grab a quick smoke, and the work was suffering. That’s why he had the doors chained from the outside. When the worker threatened to report him to the authorities, the owner terminated his employment. A year later, when a spark set the building on fire, a large number of women were burned alive.

An employee speaks to the boss. A White House staffer brings up a problem to the president. A student or teacher goes to the principal with a criticism. A church member or ministerial staff member confronts the pastor. A pastor takes an issue before his denomination. The church stands up in a decadent society and speaks out for righteousness and truth. These are examples of “speaking truth to power.”

On April 18, 1521, Martin Luther stood before the church authorities at a general assembly known in history as the Diet of Worms. Spread on a table before him were copies of Luther’s writings. An inquisitor asked if these were his books and whether he stood by their contents. Luther admitted to writing them, and asked if he could have a day to consider the second question.

The next day, Luther faced the assembly and uttered the lines which changed his life forever and set the

course for what would become known as the Protestant Reformation. They epitomize moral courage: “Unless I shall be convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear reason...I neither can nor will make any retraction, since it is neither safe nor honorable to act against conscience.”

I suspect that one man’s moral courage may be another’s cantankerousness. Still, we honor those who get it right. And we pray for the Lord’s wisdom to know when to try to flag down that train on the wrong tracks, even if it means laying our body across the tracks.

Joe McKeever is a retired Southern Baptist pastor from New Orleans, Louisiana. He blogs regularly at www.joemckeeper.com.

Exegetically Speaking—by Spiros Zodhiates

Judging People by Their Appearance

James 2:1

From Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James, AMG Publishers, 1997.

“*My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons*” (James 2:1).

The second chapter of the epistle of James continues to deal with certain precepts which the born-again Christian ought to live by. We were given several of them in the first chapter, but we need so much more to enable us to live what we believe. The first thirteen verses of this chapter deal with the one general subject of respect of persons, with verse 1 giving us clearly the precept, verses 2-4 giving us the illustration from life, verses 5-11 giving us the reason why respect of persons is sinful, and finally verses 12 and 13 giving us the conclusion. Now we shall deal with the precept as given by James in verse 1.

Frankly, I have never heard a sermon preached on this passage and on this admonition of the Apostle. This is such a common sin within the portals of the Christian Church that we have learned to condone it without our consciences ever bothering us about it. Whenever James is about to scold the believers of his day, he likes to preface the scolding with a word of love, and that word is, “*My brethren*.” It is as if he wanted to assure them that all these sins he is dealing with in his epistle do not make them cease to be beloved brethren. He admonishes in love; he corrects in affection. The admonition he gives to his brethren never has the effect of making him believe that he is beyond these sins himself “*My brethren*,” he says, “what I am saying to you I am often guilty of myself, so it is actually the

instruction of the Holy Spirit which I am bringing to all of us.”

Let us not be like that half-witted man who wore a most curious coat. All down the front it was covered with patches of various sizes, mostly large. When asked why the coat was patched in such a remarkable way, he answered that the patches represented the sins of his neighbors. He pointed to each patch, and gave the story of the sin of someone in the village, then went on to another, until he had related the sins of all in the village. On the back of his coat there was a small patch. On being asked what it represented, he said, “That’s my own sin, and I cannot see it!”

James is addressing all the community of believers, the community in which there are rich and poor, influential and common people. All of you, he says, remember that we are brethren in Christ Jesus and He is our common denominator. There should be no favoritism in the Christian brotherhood. Our standing within that community is not according to what we possess in material things or fame, but according to the common redemption in Jesus Christ.

What is this sin to which James is calling our attention? In the Greek it is *prosōpolēmpsia*, rendered “*respect of persons*” in the English translation. What does that actually mean? This Greek word is a compound made up of the noun *prosōpon*, which means “face, visage, countenance, the front of anything,” and the noun *lēmpsia*, derived from the verb *lambánō*, which means “to receive”

in its primary sense, but which also means “to apprehend by the senses, to understand, to comprehend, to seize with the mind.” Now we can safely arrive at the real meaning of the word. It is understanding, receiving, judging people by what they are in reality. James wants to condemn here the superficial judgment of people by Christians. “My brethren, do not hold to the Christian faith, and at the same time discriminate between different classes of people,” is what James would say to us. “Do not be a Christian, and at the same time a hypocrite.”

Is this not a common sin in the Christian Church today? We judge people so easily by the clothes they wear, by the words they speak, by their appearance, instead of taking the trouble to find out who they really are, and whether there is any good reason the way they act. There was a man who seemed stingy to everybody around. He would be very scrupulous about how he spent even a nickel or a dime, so that he became the butt of ridicule of all who knew him. Finally, it became known that he had an invalid wife and an invalid child whom he had to care for, and they needed the very last penny that he could save to keep them alive. The criticism of outsiders now turned to admiration for him. Because we are unable to know everything about a man, we cannot possibly judge him rightly.

In the Scriptures we find many statements which declare that God does not judge from the external appearance of a person. Of course, the translation is commonly “respector of persons.” “*Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it*” (Deut. 1: 17). The first thing Peter said after hearing Cornelius’ story was, “*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*” (Acts 10:34). God never looks at the external, but judges the heart, for He is the only One who can read it.

There is great difficulty in arriving at the precise meaning of this verse. We are not supposed to have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons. Do you understand it? In order to get at it we must examine the preposition translated “*with*.” In the original Greek it is “*in*,” or paraphrased it would be “*in the practice of*” The other word is *prosōpolēmpsiais*, which we have already spoken of as meaning primarily the acceptance of the outside surface for the inner reality. Significantly this word is in the plural, as if to demonstrate that there are any number of ways in which people mistake that which appears for that which is. The faith of Jesus Christ is one. That is the real thing; that is what transforms our lives. Faith dwells not on the outside, but on the inside; it is something that pertains to the heart.

Many times, however, faith has an outward manifestation. The manifestation is not always the true representation of that which is within or that which is

supposed to be within, the faith of Jesus Christ. James insists that the outside should agree with the inside; that which is on the face should represent that which is in the heart. Since others have no way of seeing what is in our hearts except through that which they see on our faces, it behooves us to be careful of our facial appearance.

He continues his elaboration on the thesis of being doers of the Word and not hearers only. That in reality is the general theme of the whole epistle. Many of us Christians habitually wear masks on our faces, and we have a variety of kinds to fit each occasion. These are the masks of hypocrisy. We like to appear to be what we are not, and yet at other times we prefer not to appear as we are. Sometimes we like to hide the light of Jesus Christ under a bushel, and at other times, when it is expedient, we let it shine and even sing about it. God detests hypocrisy. James commands us to appear what we are and not to try to fool other people, thus putting to shame the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. This business of saying we are Christians and not acting like Christians is a very serious one.

A sweet little six-year-old girl looked up suddenly at her mother and said, “Mother, I think Jesus was the only one who ever dared to live His inside out!” The little girl had something there. The first lesson of James 2:1 concerns what we do with the faith of Jesus Christ, how we make it appear on the outside; for the people of the world have no other way of judging our faith but by its outward manifestations.

An old man, in reading a well-known hymn which contains the line, “Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,” mistook the word “sense” and gave this odd version: “Judge not the Lord by feeble saints.” Let us remember that the world can judge the Lord only through the saints He has saved.

But there is another aspect to this verse. Not only are we to be careful that our appearance portrays the faith of Jesus Christ but, since we know how difficult it is to live the inside out, to be careful how we judge others. We should not blame the faith of Jesus Christ as we look upon the faces of others who call themselves Christians. We should not reject the Bible because professing Christians fail to live up to it. We should not reject Christ because of feeble saints, nor judge the faith of Jesus Christ by what we see in the lives of saved, but weak, Christians.

There is one more word that I want to deal with in this verse, over which there has been much difference of opinion among New Testament exegetes. It has been the word “*glory*”. The King James translation connects it with “*the Lord*,” but I am reluctant to accept this solution to the problem. I take it rather to be in opposition to the whole phrase, “*of our Lord Jesus Christ*,” who is Glory. This, in other words, is another name for the Lord. He is called, Word, Life, Way, etc., and now here He is called Glory. He, Jesus Christ, should be the glory of the believer at all times.

In our behavior there is no need to show off, for we reflect the glory of Christ on our faces, and that is enough to attract people—not to us, but to the Savior and to the faith of Him who died for us. And as we look at others of our fellow believers and see nothing extraordinary, nothing glamorous in them, let us remember that within them is the glory of the Son of God. To be satisfied with the glory of

Christ in ourselves and in others is indeed to be blessed, and thus will result in blessing to others.

Spiros Zodhiates (1922-2009) served as president of AMG International for over 40 years, was the founding editor of *Pulpit Helps Magazine* (*Disciple's* predecessor), and authored dozens of exegetical books.

Words to Stand You on Your Feet—by Joe McKeever

Your Weakness Is No Problem

“He helps us in our weakness...” (Rom. 8:26).

I can hear him now: “O Lord, I am so weak. I am so pitiful, Lord. How you can ever use a nothing like me is beyond me, Lord. I’m so ignorant, so fearful, such a sinner.” I was soon tired of his praying and all I was doing was listening. I wondered how the Lord felt about it. I think I know.

He takes it in stride. He knew from the beginning who we were. Nothing about us surprises Him. God’s word says, *“It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”* (Jer.10:23).

We keep getting surprised on discovering it. Quit groveling in your self-pity, friend. So you have these weaknesses, these areas that throw you for a loop; the Father does not cast you away. In fact, He took all this into His planning from the beginning. It’s not about you. Keep saying that to yourself until it takes root.

1) He knows our weakness. *“He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust”* (Ps. 103:14). He is under no illusions about you.

2) He takes our weaknesses in stride. He is not puzzled, does not panic, and neither does He cast us away. *“He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness’”* (2 Cor. 12:9). It’s like He knew this from the beginning and made plans for dealing with our weaknesses.

3) He helps us in our weakness. *“In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness...”* (Rom. 8:26). *“Helps”* is *synantilambanomai* in the Greek: “together” “with us” He “gets on the other side” and “lifts with us.”

Imagine a man trying to pull a cross-cut saw all by himself. He cannot do it. Then, a friend comes along and gets on the other end and works in tandem with him. That’s the picture of Romans 8:26.

4) Our weakness gives His strengths a place to shine. *“My strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Cor. 12:9).

5) Therefore, I own my weaknesses. *“I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.”* (2 Cor. 12:10).

I love the lesson of Exodus 20. That chapter which gives us the Ten Commandments also provides for an altar. The same chapter. We are given the Lord’s standard of our behavior. But knowing the weaknesses of humans, the Lord also built in a fail-safe plan for dealing with our failures. *“An altar of earth you shall make for me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings.... I will come to you and will bless you”* (Exodus 20:24).

What a wonderful Lord we serve; a God of grace and of glory. So, no groveling. No whimpering. It’s not about you. *“Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves. But our sufficiency is of God”* (2 Cor. 3:5). If that ever sinks in, we will be able to hear you shouting from here!

Joe McKeever is a retired Southern Baptist pastor from New Orleans, Louisiana. He blogs regularly at www.joemckeeper.com.

Living out the Living Word—by Justin Lonas

Restore Us, O Lord

Lamentations 5

As we come to the end of this look through the long poem of Lamentations, we have been examining the book as it is, through the lens of lament: the worship that comes through sorrow and repentance.

This is a heart-cry from Israel in the midst of the destruction of God’s temple and the exile of her people. The scene is bleak, the language brutal, but the poet never wavers from an understanding that the people’s sin brought

this result, and that God was just in bringing it to pass. This is a book that wrestles with the Lord's sovereignty and goodness in the face of evil. Speaking of the events of the Exodus, the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now these things happened to them [Israel] as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." Surely, we would likewise do well to learn from the events of Jerusalem's conquest and the exile, and Jeremiah is our guide in this "instruction."

In chapter five, the poem again turns to prayer, directly addressing God, even in the midst of recounting the nation's woes. Jeremiah begins: "Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us; look, and see our reproach!" (5:1). Rather than dwelling on the horror of the conquest, here he looks at the results of what has already taken place. It is as though the people laid their cards on the table before God. "This is where we are. This is what is left. We are lifting it to you, for where else would we turn?"

We read: "Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens. We have become orphans without a father, our mothers are like widows. We have to pay for our drinking water, our wood comes to us at a price. Our pursuers are at our necks; we are worn out, there is no rest for us. We have submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread" (5:2-6). The people had lost their inheritance and their privileged place in the world. Because of His judgment, God's people were forced to seek their daily bread (and water, fuel, etc.) from lesser sovereigns. His very provision had been taken from them.

Moreover, the social order had been upended. Families were destroyed, women defiled, and children forced into labor as suffering reigned in the land. "Slaves rule over us; there is no one to deliver us from their hand. We get our bread at the risk of our lives because of the sword in the wilderness. Our skin has become as hot as an oven, because of the burning heat of famine. They ravished the women in Zion, the virgins in the cities of Judah. Princes were hung by their hands; elders were not respected. Young men worked at the grinding mill, and youths stumbled under loads of wood" (5:8-13).

In all this, there is an understanding that the Lord's punishment encompassed more than the present generation's transgression: "Our fathers sinned, and are no more; it is we who have borne their iniquities" (5:7). This is in keeping with what we see in 2 Kings 23. Under Josiah's reign, the people of Judah had returned to worshipping God according to His Word. They had turned from idolatry, and reinstated proper worship of the Lord through the Passover. Even so, the Lord's righteous judgment on all the nation's evils was not withheld. "However, the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. The Lord said, 'I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I

have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.''" (2 Kings 23:26-27).

Why would God punish a generation which was rediscovering His righteousness in recompense for the sins of the past? As we have seen previously in this study, at a "big-picture" level, it was a matter of God's covenant faithfulness (they broke His covenant time and again, and His holiness demanded that He keep His promises) and His ultimate plan for his people to come to see their need for a Savior. Jeremiah calls out woe for that generation's sin as well, recognizing that they were guilty also (as are all people) and that sin itself makes it impossible for us to pass any judgment on God's decrees. Because of iniquities past and present, all joy and authority had gone out from Judah: "Elders are gone from the gate, young men from their music. The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned in mourning. The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us for we have sinned!" (5:14-16).

The result of all this was a people in despair, barely able to see the way back to God: "Because of this our heart is faint, because of these things our eyes are dim; because of Mount Zion which lies desolate, foxes prowl in it" (5:17-18). The holy hill where the Temple stood was now overrun by wild animals, usually a symbol in Scripture of abandonment or neglect (Ezek. 13:4, Ps. 63:10). Around them, they witnessed a very definitive end to their society and customs (which, in spite of their imperfect application, they had received from the Lord). That destruction did not square with their knowledge of God as self-existent and eternal. If they were His chosen people, how could this happen? "You, O Lord, rule forever; Your throne is from generation to generation. Why do You forget us forever? Why do You forsake us so long?" (5:19-20).

To close the book, the prayer becomes a humble request: "Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old, unless You have utterly rejected us and are exceedingly angry with us" (5:21-22). If that were the end of the matter, though, the hope that Jeremiah so beautifully distilled in chapter three would have been shown to be false. But we know that God did not "utterly reject" the Jews. In exile Daniel lifted God's name before kings, Esther boldly stood in the gap for her people, and Ezra and Nehemiah were given God's blessing to return and rebuild with a remnant. In His time, He sent Jesus Christ to open the doors of His mercy to all nations.

Jeremiah's prayer for restoration will find its ultimate answer when the Lord comes again. In that day, He will not simply restore what has been lost ("renew our days as of old"), but bring everything to its ultimate consummation. He will sit on the throne and proclaim "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Even as we mourn the ravages of sin, God is on His throne. He hears our cry, and His "lovingkindnesses indeed never

cease, for His compassions never fail” (3:22). That is the hope of mercy new every morning; in His great faithfulness we can trust.

Justin Lonas is editor of *Disciple Magazine* for AMG International in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Following God—by Erik Christensen

Obedience and Instruction: Children and Parents

Ephesians 6:1-4

As we continue our study in Ephesians, Paul has given a beautiful picture of our relationship to the Lord through the marriage of one man and one woman, and now goes on to address the parent-child relationship.

Children are commanded to obey and respect their parents. This is clearly seen in the Old Testament through various passages such as Deuteronomy 5:16: “*Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.*” To the New Testament believers, Paul now affirms this God-ordained child-parent relationship within the context of the empowering ability of the Spirit of Christ.

Contextually, the statements for children as well as fathers found in Ephesians 6:1-4 fall under the continued admonishment of the Apostle that began in 5:17-18. In these earlier verses, Paul states we are not to be foolish, but rather we are to understand what the will of the Lord is. He continues in v. 18 to command that we are not to be drunk with wine but rather we are to be filled with the Spirit.

Understanding the will of the Lord and being filled with His Spirit impacts our relationships with one another, especially within the home.

Paul makes a very clear command to children in verse 1: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord....*” There is no ambiguity in this. This is not optional. Parents are empowered to be parents. Children are commanded to obey.

The word Paul uses here for obedience (*hupakouete*—present active imperative) is a compound word meaning to place oneself under what is heard. This present tense verb indicates that obedience is to be done at all times. The verb is in the active voice, meaning the child is to make the decision to place himself under the parents command. Lastly, this word is also in the imperative mood meaning this is not optional but rather a command.

Importantly, Paul adds the phrase, “*in the Lord*” to his command. Children are not to obey parents who are instructing them, commanding them to do things that are not in alignment with the Lord’s ways. If parents are ungodly and demanding behavior from their children that is ungodly, this is not what Paul’s command entails. Paul concludes his statement with the affirmation that for

children to their parents in the Lord “*is right.*” The obedience of a child to his or her parents is in alignment with the Lord’s will.

Paul continues to set forth the idea of how important the parent-child relationship is by quoting from Deuteronomy 5:16. Children are to honor their father and mother. Honor means to revere, respect and or to put in the proper place of estimation. “*Honor*” is again a command just like “*obey*”. This is not optional and should be what a child does. Paul follows this command by reminding believers that this command is the first to have a promise attached with it. If a child honors his father and mother, the promise is that there will be a long life and it will go well with you in the land.

Paul now speaks a specific word of instruction to fathers. They are not to provoke to anger their children. Husbands and fathers are the head of the home, and as such are the spiritual leaders. They are not to use their leadership role and or authority in such a way as to provoke their children to the point of anger. The word provoke has the idea of moving to a point of anger or bitterness. The picture is of a father who is overbearing, nitpicky, or tyrannical to the point that a child never is able to measure up to the standards being placed upon him. Fathers are not to irritate or move their children to anger or bitterness.

Paul creates a contrast for fathers by adding what fathers should be doing: bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. “*Bring them up*” (*ektréphete*) means to feed them, to nourish them through training them. Paul also uses the word “*instruction*”, which entails encouraging right behavior.

What a beautiful picture this is of fathers who are yielded to the Lord, filled with the Spirit, and walking in the wisdom of the Lord. What a wonderful picture of godliness when fathers are training their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord by encouraging them and training them in the things of God. Clearly, in the midst of this is the role modeling of fathers to their children of what it looks like to walk in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. If a father is telling his child one thing and then acting himself in contradictory ways, confusion will be the result.

A sister passage to this is Colossians 3:21 where Paul states: “*Fathers, do not exasperate your children so*

that they will not lose heart.” The word “*exasperate*” means to irritate to a point of bitterness or anger so much so that a child may lose motivation in doing what is required of them.

Paul has addressed the relationships of husbands and wives and now children and parents. Being filled with the Spirit and walking in wisdom is essential to these relationships. Without the love of God working in and through our lives, no believer will be able to walk in God’s will regarding these relationships. Children are to be

obedient to their parents, honoring them. Fathers, as the heads of the home, are to bring their children up in such a way as to teach their children what it means to walk with God. Following the Lord in all of these circumstances is essential.

Are we walking in the Lord’s wisdom and His way? Are we following Him in every area of our lives?

Erik Christensen is senior pastor of Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Points to Ponder—by David L. Olford

Giving to God

Editor’s Note: David was unable to provide a column this month due to a busy schedule, so we are presenting this piece from our archives. Part 3 in the series “A Passion for the Truth of the Gospel” will appear next month.

Originally published in Disciple, December 28, 2009.

Text: “*Now concerning the collection for the saints...*” (1 Cor. 16:1).

Thought: The occasion of this instruction on stewardship was a crisis in the church of Jerusalem, and enshrined in the teaching are principles that abide for all time. Consider this grace of giving in three aspects:

I. The Purposeful Regularity of Giving to God

“*On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come*” (1 Cor. 16:2). In the Old Testament, the tithe, generally speaking, was an annual tax, but here in the New Testament we find that giving to God is to be a weekly contribution. “*The first day of the week*” is the opportunity for Christians to give as an act of worship. The Apostle insists that giving is not only a holy habit but a high honor.

All giving to God should be a matter of theological conviction, leading to a practical expression. Too often we have dishonored this holy habit by using high-pressure methods in order to extract money from uninstructed and undisciplined Christians.

II. The Personal Responsibility of Giving to God

“*...let each one of you lay something aside...*” Let us remember that though these words are addressed to the whole church throughout time, they also have a particular relevance to the local assembly. Old and young, rich and poor, must all be involved in this matter of Christian stewardship.

Money has inclusiveness about it because God always associates the gift with the giver. Money has no value unless it is the expression of life, labor, and love. To lay something aside suggests an activity of stewardship which takes place before the money is brought to the central treasury of the church and obviates any hastiness or untidiness in the matter of giving. Thus it is clear that all giving represents personal responsibility to God. No one is excluded and no one can act without thoughtfulness or deliberateness. Oh, that the Spirit of God would write these vital principles upon the tables of our hearts!

III. The Practical Reciprocity of Giving to God

“*...lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper...*” Reciprocity is the principle of taking and giving; and if there is a genuine consideration of what we receive of God, there will be a genuine calculation of what we return to Him. Paul does not state the exact amount that we are to give to God, but leaves the matter open to the practical reasonableness of every yielded believer. Whether tithe or additional offering of any kind, all giving must be dedicated to the Lord and for His glory!

To take this truth seriously will make great demands upon us, but let us remember that this is the price of keeping our church alive in order that the Savior may be glorified and the world evangelized.

Thrust: Lord, we ask for grace and for discipline to give according to Your Word.

David L. Olford teaches expository preaching at Union University’s Stephen Olford Center in Memphis, Tennessee.

Jewels from Past Giants

Thirty-one Kings, or the Victory over Self—Part 1 of 2

By A. B. Simpson

Adapted from a tract. Previously published in Pulpit Helps, May 2004.

“These are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west.... All the kings were thirty and one” (Josh. 12:7, 24).

The great conflict of the higher Christian life is not a conflict with the grosser forms of sin, for we leave them behind us when we cross the Jordan and come into the land of holiness, obedience, and rest. But there are other foes more subtle, and these are symbolized, we believe, by these kings with whom Joshua made war so long.

There are various forms of self-life which, while not perhaps directly and willfully sinful, in the grosser sense, are yet as contrary to the will of God, and as necessary to be subdued and slain, before the soul can be in perfect harmony with the divine will. They are all tyrants, which, if allowed to remain, will ultimately bring us into subjection to sin and separate us from the Lord. Let us look at these kings of the old Self Dynasty, and see if we can recognize any of them.

I. Self-Will

This expresses its decrees in the personal pronoun and the active verb: I will, I shall. It recognizes no king but its own imperative choice. Self-will must be slain before love can reign. The will thus surrendered becomes a stronger will, because it is henceforth not our will, but His within us; and when we choose, we choose with the strength of God, and choose forever. Have we yielded our will and received His in return?

II. Self-Indulgence

This is the gratification of self in any of its forms. Is it wrong to eat and drink, and indulge our appetites? No, the act may not be wrong in itself, but it becomes wrong when we do it for the sake of the indulgence. I am not to eat because it gratifies me to eat; I am not to drink because I enjoy the act; but I am to eat and drink for the glory of God; that is, with the distinct thought and purpose of pleasing Him and ministering to my bodily wants that I may be strong to serve and glorify Him. So the commonest acts of life are to be wholly consecrated to Him and done unto Him, and thus they become sacred and holy.

III. Self-Seeking

“Love seeketh not her own.” Her object is not to accomplish some personal end, but to benefit another and to

glorify God. The great business of the people of this world is to seek their own ends and pleasures. But a consecrated life has but one purpose: to *“seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness,”* and then to rest in His will, knowing that *“all these things shall be added.”*

IV. Self-Complacency

This is the spirit of pride that takes delight in our own qualities and rests with satisfaction in ourselves. It is very different from vanity, which seeks the approval of others. Self-complacency is a god unto itself.

V. Self-Glorying

The converse of self-complacency, it seeks the praise of others. Self-glorying inflates its little bubble because it is so small. It is the lack of real greatness that makes the society butterfly eager to attract attention. The truly consecrated life is conscious of its nothingness, and knows that it is dependent on God alone for all it can ever possess, and therefore it hides in His bosom, saying, *“Not I, but Christ that liveth in me.”*

VI. Self-Confidence

This is a form of self-life which relies upon its own wisdom, strength and righteousness. It is Simon Peter, saying, *“Though all men shall deny Thee, yet will not I.”* This person believes in his own opinion. He laughs at the people who talk about the Spirit’s leadings. This must die before we can become established in the strength of Christ. Therefore, the strongest natures have often to fail in order to bring them to the end of self, and lead them, like Peter, to lean on God.

VII. Self-Consciousness

This is the self that is always thinking of itself. Every act and look and word is studied. This is a dreadful bondage. God wants us to have the freedom of a simple child, that acts without thinking from spontaneous impulses and with a beautiful liberty. How shall we get out of this wretched self-consciousness? Only by getting into a higher consciousness, even the presence of our Lord, and realizing that He is living for us and in us, in those sweet spontaneous impulses that are the true springs of action.

VIII. Self-Importance

This is an exaggerated form of self-consciousness. This is very offensive and yet very common in small men and women, who make up for their lack of real weight by self-assertion and swaggering assumption. True humility consists not so much in thinking meanly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all.

IX. Self-Depreciation

Closely allied to self-importance—and just as bad. It keeps its victims from useful service. If called upon to do some service, it will refuse on the ground of inability. This is all self. A truly-surrendered heart hasn't got any ability to work, and if Christ wants to send it, He must equip it and supply it with all necessary resources. Therefore, it goes unquestioning and fully assured because all of its strength must come from God.

X. Self-Vindication

The self that stands for its own rights and avenges its wrongs, it is quick to detect an injury or an offense. This is a very respectable, but a very real form of selfishness. It is directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity and the Lord Jesus Christ. The very idea of His incarnation was the renunciation of all His rights. Being in the form of God, He was entitled to be equal with God, but we are told He did not count this a prize, but "*He emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation.*"

You have not begun to deal with the question of self-surrender until it reaches your dearest rights, and you let them go into His hand. He will pay you back—some of it in this world, but how much more in the day of eternal recompense!

XI. Sensitiveness

One of the most painful forms of selfishness. I have seen people who had been all bright and radiant for a time, but something touched them that was offensive, uncongenial, or humbling, and they seemed to have become all at once like Egyptian mummies, ready for a glass case. What is the matter? Self! "*Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*" The Lord bring and keep us there!

XII. Self-Seeing

There are some people who always see things only from their own side. If they would be willing to believe that there is another side, they would be saved from a thousand misunderstandings. "*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*" Think how you would act if you felt as he feels, saw with his eyes, were placed as he is placed. You will be surprised to see how differently you will look at things.

XIII. Introspection

Our morbid and excessive self-examination is one of the forms of self-life that causes much pain and works much injury in our Christian life. There is a right, but there is a wrong self-examination. God alone can truly search us. Even Paul said, "*Yea, I judge not mine own self, but He that judgeth me is the Lord.*" Let us commit our own way unto Him, and honestly say, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*"

XIV. Self-Love

This is the root of all these forms of the self-life. It is a heart centered upon itself and, so long as this is the case, every affection and every power of our being is turned inward and self-ward, and the whole character distorted. God, who is the type of all true being, is essentially love, and lives not for Himself, but for others, and when we become self-centered we seek to assume God's throne, and become gods unto ourselves. It is the ruin and perversion of a soul to love and live for itself.

XV. Self Affections

Such are the natural fruit of self-life. Even the people we love, we love not so much for the blessing that we can be to them, as for the pleasure that they minister to us. Love that terminates on ourselves is selfish and degrading. The love that seeks another's blessing is elevating and divine.

XVI. Selfish Motives

These may enter into the highest acts and mar and pervert them to their inmost core. It is not only what we say and do, but why. The natural heart cannot do a good thing without some selfish object, which perverts and destroys its purity.

Albert Benjamin Simpson was born on Prince Edward Island, in 1843, of Scottish Covenanter heritage. After seminary training (graduating in 1865), the young Presbyterian minister was called to Knox Church in Hamilton, Ontario. After eight years of helping that church grow, he was called to lead a Presbyterian church in Louisville, Ky., where he helped churches bitterly divided by the Civil War find reconciliation in the love of Christ. As the pastors joined their hands together in unity, over 10,000 local residents joined them in prayer meetings lasting for a year.

In 1881 Simpson left the Presbyterian denomination and founded the independent Gospel Tabernacle in New York. There he published the *Alliance Weekly* and wrote seventy books on Christian living. He helped to form and headed up two evangelization societies—the Christian Alliance and

the Evangelical Missionary Alliance. In 1897, they became the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He continued to

serve as pastor until 1918, a year before his death.

Counselor's Corner—by James Rudy Gray

Domestic Abuse Is Sin

Domestic abuse is a sin, and it is a growing problem in this country—even within the professing church.

LifeWay Christian Resources last year reported that 42 percent of Protestant pastors rarely, or never, speak about domestic violence in sermons. Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, says we “must teach from our pulpits, our Sunday school classes, and our Vacation Bible Schools that women are to be cherished, honored and protected by men.” He emphasizes that we must “explicitly tell the women in our congregations that a man who hits you has surrendered his headship.”

In a recent *Christianity Today* article, “The Silent Epidemic,” writer Corrie Cuter noted that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists reports between 3 and 4 million women are beaten in their homes every year. Retired detective Don Stewart, who handled domestic violence cases for 25 years, said that 25 percent of Christian couples experience at least one episode of physical abuse within their marriage.

Some are calling domestic abuse an epidemic in this country. While this deviant behavior is often infused with anger, the chief motivators are power and control. Usually, a man—using fear, intimidation, threats and even acts of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)—tries to force compliance with his will on another person.

In Malachi 2:16, a parallelism occurs where a man who divorces his wife commits violence against her. Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage*, wrote, “Malachi 2:16 is sometimes used to cement the opposite of God’s intent: keeping a woman in a dangerous home.” He adds: “The church should hate domestic violence as much as it hates divorce. It should support women caught in domestic violence as much as it offers divorce recovery programs.”

Throughout history, women have been abused by men. While men are sometimes abused, the numbers cannot compare to abused women. It is disgusting for a professing Christian male to abuse his wife—or any woman—in any way. Physically, he may be able to do it because he is stronger, but 1 Peter 3:7 warns husbands to “*live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir*

of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” Any man who says he walks with Christ and beats his wife is simply a liar. Men, in general, are physically stronger than women, but that should never be used as a bullying tactic to intimidate, control, manipulate or hurt someone.

Some people have attempted to connect a wife’s submission to her husband as the basis for continuing abuse. In Ephesians 5:21 a general principle is given: “*Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*” Christians should be submissive to one another. From that overall relational setting, verse 22 says wives should be “*subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord.*” The principle of submission is specifically applied and addressed to wives, not husbands. Submission is a voluntary choice or act by the wife and cannot be made for her by her husband. Submission is something that cannot be coerced.

Wives are also called to respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:33), and husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Christ died for the Church! The command is for husbands to love their wives with a love that is willing to die for their wives. In John 15:13, Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*” If a husband is committed to doing the greatest thing (that is, to die for his wife), he can certainly do lesser things, like listen to his wife, respect her, value her, provide for her and protect her. As James Montgomery Boice said, “No good woman will struggle hard against a man who is willing to die for her.”

Any man who demands of his wife or tries to force her to submit to him has missed the point and is entering into the realm of abuse. Domestic abuse is a sin, and the church needs to work diligently to teach people the truth about caring for one another.

The second greatest commandment is “love your neighbor,” and our mate is our number-one neighbor.

James Rudy Gray is certified as a professional counselor by the National Board for Certified Counselors, and is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He serves as the editor of *The Baptist Courier*, the official newspaper of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

The Story behind the Song—by Lindsay Terry

“I Was Floored, Right There in the Grass”

Song: “Holy Is the Lord”

Originally published in Pulpit Helps, April 2008.

“*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory*” (Isa. 6:3).

It is estimated by Belinda Luscombe in *Time Magazine*, November, 2006, that during present times more people are regularly singing songs written by Chris Tomlin than any other songwriter in the world.

Louie Giglio, founder and director of the Passion Conferences for college-age young people, was also instrumental in the birthing of the worship song which is the subject of this story. While flying from Waco to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1997, the Lord spoke to Giglio’s heart about starting this national ministry to students. Thousands of young people flock to these meetings. Chris Tomlin is one of the major worship leaders.

In an interview in 2005, Chris told me the following story about the writing of “Holy Is the Lord”: “I was reading Isaiah chapter six in my home during a devotional time. As I read in verse three, ‘*Holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory*,’ I picked up my guitar and began to sing those words. Those lines and the melody that came to me were all that I had.

“Sometime later—the year was 2003—I was preparing to lead worship at a Passion Conference which was to be held on a large ranch outside of Dallas, Texas. I sensed that God was putting this song, though incomplete, on my heart for this particular meeting. They were expecting between twenty and thirty thousand people for that conference.

“Louie Giglio, whom I sometimes write songs with, and I had gotten together for a weekend. I said, ‘Louie, I have this song, “Holy Is the Lord,” and I feel that it is for the upcoming Passion Conference.’ He was in the throes of planning for the meetings. After I sang the chorus for him he began to give me a number of ideas that were in his heart. Among other things, he helped me with the phrase, ‘It’s rising up all around. It’s the anthem of the Lord’s renown.’

“I took his suggestions and ran with them.

Although I was having some questions in my mind, I basically felt that this song was from the Lord and should be used for the meetings. I had never played it completely through, at that time, and I really didn’t know if it was a good song.

“I arrived at the Passion Conference and found that I was to follow a preacher named John Piper, a gifted communicator and writer. I was to lead worship following his message. While he was on the stage speaking, I was behind the platform on my knees in the grass. I was praying, ‘Lord, I want to lead these people in the right way, with the right songs. You just show me what to do.’

“John Piper walked onto the stage, took the microphone in his hand, and said, ‘Students, God has put a message for you on my heart. It is from Isaiah chapter six: ‘*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory*.’ ‘That floored me, right there in the grass. I thought, God put a song in my heart two months ago. He knows I will follow John Piper and He puts the same message on both our hearts. At that moment it was confirmed in my heart that I was to use that song. We played it for that day, but it is a song for all days. It seems to be a repeating anthem of heaven.’

I am convinced that when you and I see God, through His Word, in all of His holiness—as Isaiah saw Him—then we, too, will say, “*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*”

© Lindsay Terry. Used by permission.

Lindsay Terry has been a song historian for more than 40 years, and has written widely on the background of great hymns and worship songs including the books *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever* (2008) and *The Sacrifice of Praise* (2002).

Church Builders—by Bernard R. DeRemer

A Thousand Lives for China

Originally published in Pulpit Helps, December 2002.

Few ambassadors for Christ on foreign fields have had the long-lasting influence of Lottie Moon, whose life became “a model of genteel and loving service” to nationals as well as fellow missionaries. And she established an outpost for the Gospel even where others had failed. Near the end of her life, she declared, “If I had a thousand lives I would give them all for the women of China.”*

What a long way she had come from a Virginia plantation “with 52 slaves and a thriving mercantile business.”

Charlotte (Lottie) Diggs Moon was born Dec. 12, 1840, at Viewmont, Va. She grew up enjoying all the “advantages of the landed gentry,” with social status and wealth. In spite of spiritual family influences (her uncle was a missionary, her parents staunch Baptists), she remained a skeptic in early years. However, after a revival meeting in 1858, she came to know the Lord. By the time of graduation from Albemarle Female Institute, she had become an excellent linguist. “In addition to French, Latin, Italian, and Spanish, she had attained proficiency in Greek and Hebrew.” Her education was remarkable for a woman of that era. And her interest in missions was growing rapidly, resulting in generous gifts to work in both China and Italy.

After 10 years of teaching school, Lottie experienced her own missionary call “as clear as a bell.” The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appointed her to China, where her ministry began in 1873. With other missionaries, she sought to overcome the “great barriers of hatred and prejudice” against the “foreign devils,” and struggled to learn the difficult language. Lottie opened a school, where she taught the Bible and a catechism with some success. However, recurring famine frustrated her best efforts. Through U.S. periodicals she described the terrible plight of starving Chinese, and money came in, but demands often outpaced supply. She often fed destitute people at her own expense.

Lottie also concentrated on personal evangelism, in company with other missionaries. She told a colleague, “we must go out and live among them... [making] friends before we can hope to make converts.”

Lottie would endure waves of persecution, especially during the terrible Boxer Rebellion. This further endeared her to the growing body of her faithful flock. In the midst of the Chinese-Japanese war in 1895, Lottie with another missionary “made evangelistic excursions to 118 villages in three months.” She often won an audience with

local children “with delicious cookies she baked from an old Virginia recipe.” Instead of “devil woman,” first the children and then their parents began calling her “the cookie lady.” This helped her ministry grow and expand rapidly.

She fought many battles on behalf of the Chinese she grew to love: She was a leader in the effort to ban the foot-binding of young girls; she broke down barriers against the education of girls. And, as a leader among missionaries, she was among the first to suggest the idea of furloughs. In her greatest act of empathy for the Chinese, as local Christians were facing famine due to floods and war, she stopped eating, giving instead her meager resources to others.

While doing the work of three or more missionaries, Lottie kept up a continual barrage of letters home, urging more missionary recruits and soliciting finances to support them. A letter published in the December, 1887, *Foreign Mission Journal* called for an annual Christmas offering for overseas work. Little did she dream the mighty movement that would eventually result from such a small beginning!

The Woman’s Missionary Union began sponsoring her appeal in Southern Baptist churches. The first year brought in some \$3,200. But the idea caught on, and with the God’s rich blessing it spread like wildfire. Through 2000, the cumulative total given to foreign missions through the Lottie Moon Offering (as it was named in 1918) reached the staggering total of \$2.095 billion!

But various hardships, including severe famine, finally took their toll. So Lottie, frail and in failing health, was forced to return home. She went to be with the Lord on Christmas Eve, 1912, in Japan, while en route.

She had often testified, “I am immortal until my work is done.” What a remarkable, lasting legacy—and what enormous rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ await this faithful, fervent witness. “[She] *being dead yet speaketh.*”

Bernard R. DeRemer chronicled the lives of dozens of heroes of the faith in more than a decade of writing for *Pulpit Helps Magazine*, and continued to serve in this capacity as a volunteer contributor to *Disciple*. He joined those he had written about so faithfully in the Lord’s presence in 2014.

*Taken from “A Thousand Lives for China,” in *More Than Conquerors*, by John Woodbridge; Moody Press, copyright 1992, excerpts used by permission.

Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel

Church Planters: Supporting the Truth

By AMG International Staff

Christians know our Lord's command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," and we emphasize that in our zeal for missions around the world. But what about the rest of Jesus' sentence there: "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20)? How about all the instructions and teachings in the rest of the New Testament letters?

In God's plan, calling people to follow Him is the beginning of salvation, but certainly not the end of it. When we make disciples, they are gathered together with others to become **churches**. Churches have structure, order, and procedures taken from Scripture so that disciples can continue to make disciples without confusing and distorting the Gospel. The Apostle Paul wrote that the body of believers is "*the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

This is the motive behind AMG's equipping and sending **national workers** as **church planters**, building up "pillars for truth" in Gospel-impooverished areas around the world. These faithful men go out from their home churches, often against much opposition or even persecution, to proclaim the Gospel and gather believers together. Evangelism is a vital first step, but if we stop there, we are not obeying all of Christ's command. Without connecting new believers with one another through churches, we leave them vulnerable to confusion, error, and discouragement.

Around India, whether in rural villages, crowded cities, or impooverished slums, AMG church planters like **Bangaru** seek opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who have never heard.

In Bulgaria, men like **Stoycho** often serve several young churches as a pastor and mentor. There is hard soil in this former communist country, but he praises God to see fruit from the preaching of the Word as the Holy Spirit leads men and women to repentance and belief.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, AMG church planters like **Pastor Augustine** face many challenges to deliver the Gospel to their sometimes hostile neighbors, often braving rugged terrain and harsh tropical climate to disciple new believers.

Even as we follow God's call, we know that Satan fights hard against the establishment of the truth in new parts of the world. This work that our church planters do is

not easy. Augustine recently shared the following story:

"Members of our congregation work mostly as rubber and oil palm farmers, and have very little income. Many families in the area are still strongly bound by the occult world, and villagers often report strange events. Recently, my wife and I have served people who were injured by black magic. After praying with them, by the power of the Lord Jesus, they were healed and released from the evil power. Some have come to Christ and received baptism. To be sure, I need your prayers in this spiritual warfare against Satan."

Without faithful support from AMG donors, we would not have been able to start this ministry, and we could not continue it. Bangaru, Stoycho, Augustine, and hundreds of others just like them are count on that support to provide them with the resources they need to care their families and the tools they require to spread God's truth.

Through sponsorship, donors are not just supporting a national worker, but sharing in their work and giving them an opportunity to be a blessing to their supporters as well. As Pastor Vasilev, another AMG church planter in Bulgaria, wrote to his sponsor recently, "*I give praise to God for everything. May the Lord bless you hundredfold for everything you do in His name!*"

Our church planters have some of the greatest need for new sponsors among all of AMG's national workers, as they often work far away from areas where short term teams visit or more visible ministries like childcare and medical care take place. Pray with us for these men and their families as they carry the Gospel. "*The harvest is plentiful*" and the workers are ready to be sent.

To learn more about AMG's national workers around the world, and discover how you can get involved, please visit www.amginternational.org or call 1-800-251-7206.

Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel (AMG) International is a non-denominational, international missions agency based in Chattanooga, Tenn. AMG's distinctive has always been its reliance on national workers to carry the Gospel in their own cultures. Today, they operate ministries in more than 30 countries around the world through partnership with national believers.

Marks of the Master—by the Old Scot

Rhythms of Life: Biological Clocks

Originally published in Disciple, June 13, 2011.

Biological science has taken great notice of the cyclical nature of all life on earth. Not only is there a definite rhythm to heartbeats, breathing, sleeping, and waking, but also rhythms have been found in mating cycles, growth periods, hunting/resting times, and many other activities of life in both the plant and animal kingdoms.

Most of these cyclical activities appear to be regulated by the sun or the moon, and scientists speak of “biological clocks” which operate on 24-hour days, or 28-day lunar months, or 12-month years. But there is also strong evidence that something resident within each creature or plant exercises even more basic control of the rhythms of life—something that works in conjunction with the external stimuli, but which can function independently if need be.

For example, a Dutch botanist discovered in 1929 that certain bean seedlings that had been grown in constant artificial light could be trained to adapt their sleep/wake cycle to a 16-hour “day.” But when returned to continuous light—still without ever being exposed to sunlight—the bean sprouts returned to a normal 24-hour rhythm.

Another variety of bean was found to have no regular rhythm when the sprouts were kept in constant light conditions—either fully lighted or fully dark. Those grown entirely in the dark developed a normal rhythm when a mere flash of light was allowed in their darkness.

An example of a lunar biological clock is that of the grunion. This small fish invariably mates on southern California beaches a quarter-hour after the peak tide—following the two highest tides of the summer months. It is so predictable that newspapers have carried announcements in advance, not only of the day but also of the approximate minute the fish will swarm ashore.

An experiment with oysters from the Eastern Seaboard of America, which were moved to a mid-continent laboratory almost 1,000 miles from the sea, showed that they kept their accustomed lunar clock setting for about two weeks. But after that they adjusted to lunar time in their new environment—they opened their shells widest to feed when it would have been high tide in the laboratory, if it had been on a beach.

Many migratory birds use the sun as both a timekeeper and a reference point for their flights. They can even adjust their built-in “compasses” for the passage of the sun across the sky, according to the time of day! In a test of this ability, a starling was trained to fly east for food in the

morning, toward the sun. But when tested in the afternoon, with the sun westering, the bird flew unerringly toward the east feeder and its reward. It had adjusted for the time of day.

Warblers and other night-migrating birds use the stars as navigation aids. But they do this instinctively. It has been found that warblers do not migrate in flocks but individually; and even young birds, which have never made the trip, arrive at their winter feeding grounds as surely as more experienced birds.

One warbler variety begins its fall migration in Scandinavia and ends in southern Africa—almost one-third of the way around the world. Another requires a major mid-course adjustment in its flight: from Germany, the white-throat warbler flies southeast across the Balkans, then shifts to a more southerly course to its destination near the headwaters of the Nile River in Africa.

But an even more amazing demonstration of their built-in navigation ability lies in the fact that young warblers, raised in the laboratory from eggs and isolated from each other as well as all other birds, instinctively followed the same flight orientation when they were placed in a planetarium, under a replica of the stars they would normally see en route.

Equally amazing is the young adult bronzed cuckoo of New Zealand. This bird flies 1,200 miles northeast across the Tasman Sea to Australia, and then an additional 1,000 miles north across the Coral Sea to tiny wintering areas in the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands. The young birds have never flown this course, but nevertheless do so alone, for they leave at least a month after their parents’ departure.

And then there is the lowly potato: were it not verified under laboratory conditions, its ability to predict changes in the weather would be almost unbelievable. But an American scientist, who measured the rate at which potatoes consume oxygen, found that the rate varies according to barometric pressure—but does so two days in advance. The scientist, Frank A. Brown Jr., further stated: “everything studied in our laboratory—from carrots to seaweed, and from crabs and oysters to rats—has shown this capacity to predict, very safely beyond chance, the barometric pressure changes, usually two days in advance.”

So there are many strange and wonderful controls built into probably all of life on earth, including man—controls that establish the rhythms of life and keep each species “on track” and regular. Science seeks eagerly to learn more about how and why these controls work. But

science by itself will never be able to explain them all. Science is merely following in the footsteps of God, who long ago caused it to be written: “*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*” (Eccl. 3:1).

“*To everything there is a season,*” and so it is. So it has been, and so it shall be, until time shall be no more. Because that is the way the One, who is far greater than man, created life.

It is as the German poet-philosopher Goethe wrote: “What more can man profit from life than to apprehend how God reveals Himself through nature, and how constant nature is, imbued with the Spirit.” Amen!

The Old Scot (Ted Kyle) served as managing editor for *Pulpit Helps* magazine (*Disciple's* predecessor publication) from 1993-2008. He was always fascinated by the natural world, and readily saw God’s hand in every detail. Ted went to be with His Creator and Savior in April 2013.

Sources: *The Living Clocks*, Ritchie R. Ward, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 1971, p. 96. Frank A. Brown Jr., “The Rhythmic Nature of Animals and Plants,” *American Scientist*, Vol. XLVII (June 1959), pp. 164-186.

Book Review—September 2015

Why We Pray, William Philip, 2015, Crossway, Wheaton, Ill., ISBN 9781433542862, 112 pages, \$11.99, softcover.

The disciplines of a Christian walk are simple to see (prayer, obedience, service, sacrifice, etc.), but applying them is the work of a lifetime. Even more difficult is writing about them in ways that open hearts to grow in those practices. Too often, books and articles on these disciplines manage either to downplay their significance or to heap guilt on those who struggle in different areas from the author.

Why We Pray is a needed respite from bad ideas about these vital gifts of God to the church. Philip has produced a succinct work on the theology of prayer, stepping back from the application to recapture the awe we should have when we think of such communion with the Almighty. He writes not to burden readers, but to set them free to grow in their own prayer lives.

Philip, senior ministry of the Tron Church in Glasgow, Scotland, accomplishes this by setting our understanding prayer in relationship to God. Prayer, rather than being a “have to” by which we prove our devotion, becomes a “get to” condition of our standing in Christ. A healthy prayer life serves as an indicator of our relationship with God, not an extra measure of spirituality. Prayer is not

about somehow bending God to our will by our passion and dedication, but shaping our desires to His will so that we will cherish Him and receive His leading with gratitude.

This book is short and to the point, almost more of a pamphlet. Philip structures his case around four main points. We pray, he says: because God speaks, because we are His children, because He is sovereign, and because His Spirit dwells within us. Through each of these lenses, he shows how God’s work in us enables, motivates, and sustains our prayer. Because it is God’s work, not ours, prayer becomes not an obligation but a blessing.

In seeking a straightforward reason for prayer and finding it in the manifold grace of God, Philip has produced a work which should be helpful and encouraging to believers everywhere. We are often burdened and downcast in our striving to follow Christ, and the absence of prayer is often the cause. This humble little book seeks to restore prayer into our lives by taking it off the “to-do” list and bringing it back to the center of our relationship with our Maker and Savior.

Justin Lonas

Target: All

Type: Christian Life/Prayer

Take: Highly recommended

News Update—September 2015

Court Shuts Down Attempt to Stop Release of More Planned Parenthood Videos

A federal court has shut down a pro-choice group’s attempt to prevent the Center for Medical Progress from releasing more Planned Parenthood videos.

Life News reports pro-choice group the National Abortion Federation (NAF) served the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) a restraining order on July 31, preventing the CMP from posting any videos with footage from their meetings.

The NAF said it “filed today in federal court seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction which would prohibit the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), David Daleiden, and others from releasing recordings and materials they illegally obtained at NAF’s educational meetings.”

The order was extended several times, but has now been blocked from permanence by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. While the restraining order has not been lifted, the stay indicates that the 9th Circuit court judges question the validity of the restraining order.

Many pro-life advocates say the restraining order violated the CMP project leader David Daleiden’s right to freedom of speech.

Katie Short of Life Legal said, “David Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress are exercising their First Amendment rights in order to expose the unconscionable practices of Planned Parenthood and other abortionists. Despite howls of derision from abortion apologists, CMP’s video evidence has proven very effective in showing the public what the abortion industry is really all about. If these weren’t such a threat to the status quo, Planned Parenthood allies such as the National Abortion Federation would not be pulling out all the stops to silence them.”

Christian Headlines

Court in Sudan Rules Government Interfered with Church

A court has ruled that committees the Sudanese government imposed on a North Khartoum church in order to enable Muslim investors to take it over were illegal, sources said.

A victory in the Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church’s four-year battle to retain ownership of its property, the Aug. 31 ruling by the Administrative Court of Appeal ruled the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments interfered with church matters, the sources said.

The church, which belongs to the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), has been subject to arrests and demolition of its property as the congregation has objected to the attempted takeover. Two South Sudanese pastors were jailed since December 2014 and January respectively, charged with capital crimes, over their support for the congregation’s fight to prevent the take-over by Muslim investors.

The Rev. Yat Michael, 49, and the Rev. Peter Yein Reith, 36, could have been sentenced to death or whipping had they been convicted of the serious charges concocted against them by Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). They were convicted of lesser charges on

Aug. 5 and released on time served. They and their families have since relocated to a third country to protect them from Islamist retaliation.

Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church and SPEC leaders said they consider the court ruling a step in the right direction toward ending all attempts to hand over their property to Muslim investors.

“Things are working well for us; thank God for all your prayers for the church,” said SPEC Treasurer George Adam. The Rev. Yahya Abdelrahim Nalu, a senior SPEC leader, described the ruling as a great victory for the church. Whether the government will try to appeal has remained unclear, though church leaders said the ruling was final.

“The ministry has no right to interfere into the matters of SPEC,” according to the ruling. The court cited the fact that SPEC has its own constitution and leadership structure to govern its activities, and that no entity should interfere in its internal affairs.

Christian Headlines

Anglican Church in Kenya Expels Priests Accused of Practicing Homosexuality

In an unprecedented move, the Anglican Church in Kenya on Sept. 10 expelled five priests for allegedly engaging in homosexual activity.

The priests, from the diocese of Mt. Kenya West in Central Kenya, were under investigation since mid-August. “That is the stand of the church...they have to be out of the ministry,” said the bishop under whom the priests served.

The five had earlier been suspended to allow a tribunal to probe the allegations made against them. Four of the priests are married while one is single. They are said to have had relations with other adult men for as long as 20 years. The identity of the priests has so far not been made public.

“To address the question that many may have on the identity of the persons involved, we are compelled to conceal their identity...it is wrong in the church and in the entire public,” Bishop Joseph Kagunda said. He announced the tribunal formed to investigate the conduct of the priests had established some of the accused had been having sexual relations with fellow priests and members of their congregations for a long time.

Kagunda said the church would withdraw the priests’ licenses but would not report the cases to the police, in spite of homosexuality being illegal in Kenya. He said it was up to the aggrieved parties to decide whether to report the cases to the police or not. “What we have done in the church is to withdraw their licenses...we cannot say whether it is temporary or not because they have the right to appeal,” Kagunda added.

Christian Headlines

Christians Call on Indonesia's President to Combat Islamic Extremism

The president of Indonesia needs to do more to combat Islamic extremists' persecution of Christian minorities, a new report states.

The World Evangelical Alliance said Aug. 31 that though President Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, wants to check growing Islamic extremism in the majority Muslim country, his methods have not succeeded.

“Since the beginning of his presidency, Jokowi has been implementing a cautious bottom-up strategy, which is needed to promote tolerance and moderation, while avoiding a direct confrontation with extremist groups. This perhaps explains why he has not been taking enough top-down measures required to improve law and order. And extremist groups seem to have little fear of action by the government yet,” the report stated.

Indonesia has the highest Muslim population in the world, but legally guarantees religious freedom to people of four other religions, including Christianity. Because of increasing persecution, many supported Jokowi's candidacy in 2014. His agenda included human rights, freedom, and opposition to religious intolerance.

The deputy director of Asia for Human Rights Watch recently credited Jokowi for publicly admitting Indonesia has a religious intolerance problem. He said

militant Islamists have increasingly targeted Christians, along with Shiite and Ahmadiyya Muslims, with intimidation, threats, and violence. As many as 500 Muslims from Indonesia have joined ISIS, according to *The Jakarta Post*. In 2014, Islamic State (ISIS) openly recruited in Indonesia, prompting government concern about the threat to religious diversity within the country.

In recent years, Indonesian Islamists have threatened and intimidated people, vandalized and burned down churches, and forced congregations underground. Catholic Online reported that since 2007, more than 200 churches have been destroyed. Rebuilding can be nearly impossible, in part because of government inaction.

Christians already must go through numerous difficult steps, including soliciting support from Muslim neighbors in their communities, just to get government permission to create new churches. Even when they succeed, radical Muslims often challenge their legal status, forcing them to close down while authorities investigate the charges.

In two cases, the Supreme Court of Indonesia ruled the Christian churches were legal and should reopen, but a local mayor refused to carry out the ruling, “undermining the rule of law,” according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

Christian Headlines

Sermon Helps—from www.sermonhall.com

Sermon Outlines

Three New Testament Fools

Intro.: The Old Testament specifies the fundamental root of the weed of folly (Ps. 53:1) and the New Testament identifies three varieties: the Materialist, the Legalist, and the Rationalist. Only by the Gospel and by the help of God can man escape these deadly follies.

I. The Materialist Fool

- A. Serves the material and the fleshly interests rather than God.
- B. He thinks this will satisfy his inner self. He forgets judgment.
- C. Jesus gives an example (Luke 12:16-21).
- D. The rich young ruler shows the bondage (Luke 18:18-25).
- E. Zacchaeus shows the way to freedom (Luke 19:1-10).
- F. Jesus states the issue (Luke 16:13).
- G. Jesus states the consequence (Luke 9:23-26).
- H. Each person must choose eternal loss or gain.

II. The Legalistic Fool

- A. Trusts self-righteousness rather than God-righteousness.
 - B. He thinks that righteousness is rule-keeping.
 - C. He misses fellowship with God.
 - D. Jesus gives an example in the Pharisee (Matt. 23; Luke 18:10-14).
 - E. Paul gives an example in the Jew (Rom. 9:30–10:3).
 - F. Paul gives an example in formality (2 Tim. 3:5).
 - G. John gives an example in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14–22).
- #### III. The Rationalist Fool
- A. Trusts his reasoning rather than the revelation of God's Word.
 - B. He thinks that his have more value than the Word of God.
 - C. Paul gives an example in “idol” worship (Rom. 1:18-23).
 - D. Paul gives an example in intellectual “wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:18-25).
 - E. Peter gives an example of the corruption (2 Pet. 2:9-22).

Conc.: The essence of folly is the exaltation of self and the satisfaction of the flesh. This exaltation of self dethrones God and denies the authority of the Word of God. Degradation of life and final judgment from God will always be the consequence.

Blessed are the Pure in Heart

Matthew 5:8

Intro.: The Sixth Beatitude continues Jesus' teaching on the maturing of faith. I read somewhere that scientists have discovered that at the heart of every snowflake there is a tiny speck of dust. On the outside it looks clean and pure; but in reality, it's a dirty-hearted little snowflake. When it comes to human beings, it's the same—what are we at our core when you look beneath the facade or the dressing? Faith changes a person on the inside.

I. Defining the Terms

A. "Pure"—*katharoi*—means "clean" (cf. Matt. 23:25-26); and "unmixed" (John 15:3).

1. A pure heart cannot be mixed with worldly or ungodly things.
2. A pure heart be characterized by that which is unclean.

B. "Heart" can mean the emotions (cf. John 14:1), the mind (Mark 2:8; Heb 4:12), or the will (Luke 21:14).

1. In scripture heart is that it is the entirety of the inner man.
2. The heart is the source of all man's trouble (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23).

II. Purity of Heart Characterizes Mature Faith

A. True Christianity is not simply a matter of reformed behavior.

B. It is a matter of the condition and state of a person's heart.

C. Note the emphasis the Bible places on what God does with our hearts (cf. Matt. 6:21; 2 John 7:38; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 10:21-22; etc.).

Conc.: How's your heart? What is it filled with? How would it be described? Faith matured is a wonderful blessing—it brings us into the very presence of God, and allows us to reflect the image of God in our lives.

Bill Denton

Illustrations

Strong but Weak

Edinburgh Castle was captured only once in the whole history of Scotland. Its defenders thought that the steepness of the rock on one side made it inaccessible and impregnable, so they put no sentries there. In the grey mist of the early morning a little part of the enemy crept up the precipitous slopes and surprised the garrison into surrender.

It was captured at its strongest point. Paul said, "*When I am weak, then am I strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10). Yet the reverse is often true also. "When I think I am strong, then am I weak." Anonymous

R. G. Witty **Linked to the Savior**

Two travelers, who fancied they were abundantly able to take care of themselves, entered a railway carriage when the train was being made up and found comfortable seats. They had dropped into conversation when a porter looked in and told them to go to another coach.

"What is the matter with this coach?" they asked.

"Nothing," he grinned, "only it's not coupled on to anything that'll take you anywhere."

That is the trouble with many beautiful creeds and theories—they sound good, but they do not take you anywhere. The soul that would journey heavenward must make sure of the coupling. This is it: "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Rom. 10:13).

Anonymous

Bulletin Inserts

On the Bible

Always the Bible has inspired the noblest courage and the most sublime actions of man. Heroes have dedicated their lives to its principles. Martyrs have died with its words on their lips.

A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't!

Bible mathematics: We do not add to the Bible nor subtract from it, but rightly divide it.

Having truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!

Don't change the Bible; let the Bible change you.

What makes a difference is not how many times you have been through the Bible; but how many times and how thoroughly the Bible has been through you.

These 5 Anonymous

It is easy to talk against the Bible, but did you ever think how dark this old word would be without it?

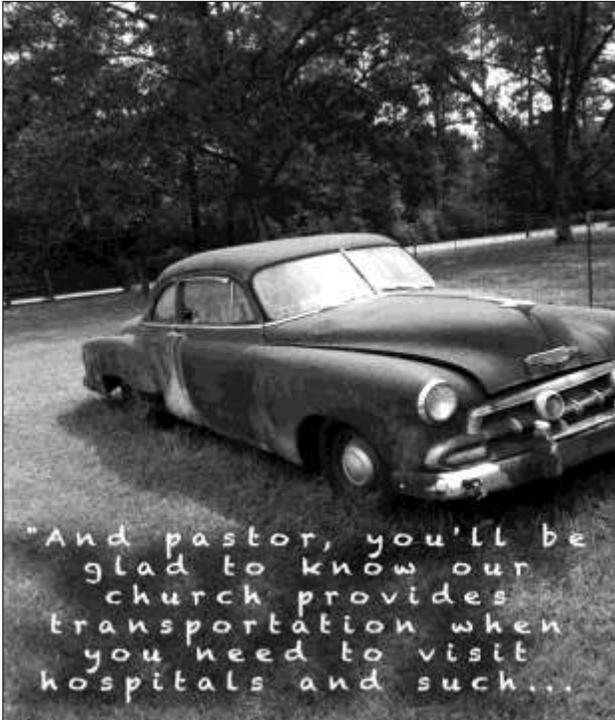
The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.

The trouble is, people who don't know what the Bible says, say they cannot believe it.

These three from D. L. Moody

Puzzles and ‘Toons

Church ‘Toons by Joe McKeever



Answers to last issue's puzzles:

Hidden Wisdom Answers

Nahum (1:7): "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

A. Dotterel • B. Mildest • C. Nehushtan • D. Anathoth • E. Hobart
 F. Ungodly • G. Moseroth • H. Dhow • I. Firkin • J. Tithe • K. Dog

Father Abraham's Answer Box

<p>1. At Bethsaida (Luke 9:10). Neither of the parallel passages in Matthew (Mt. 14) nor John (John 6) mention the name of the locale.</p> <p>2. He was headed toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:53).</p> <p>3. Capernaum (Luke 10:15).</p> <p>4. "Blessed are they that bear the world of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).</p> <p>5. He will confess them before the angels of God (Luke 12:8).</p>	<p>6. Three years (Luke 13:6, 7).</p> <p>7. Herod the tetrarch (Luke 13:32).</p> <p>8. He shall be exalted (Luke 14:11).</p> <p>9. "The best robe," "a ring," and "shoes" (Luke 15:22).</p> <p>10. Mammon (Luke 16:13). The context implies that Jesus Christ did not condemn riches <i>per se</i> but the avaricious desire for and acquisition of wealth (v. 14; c.f., v.9).</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hidden Wisdom and Father Abraham
 By Mark Oshman
 Originally published in *Pulpit Helps*, December 1999

Father Abraham's Question Box
 By Mark Oshman

The Gospel of Luke, Part 3

Fill in the missing word(s):

<p>1. How many men did Jesus Christ heal of leprosy as He journeyed to Jerusalem? (Luke 17)</p> <p>2. In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, how often did the former fast? (Luke 18)</p> <p>3. Where did Jesus Christ heal a blind beggar? (Luke 18)</p> <p>4. In the parable of the ten pounds, what command did the nobleman give his servants? (Luke 19)</p> <p>5. Who did Jesus Christ say "devour widows' houses, and</p>	<p>for a show make long prayers"? (Luke 20)</p> <p>6. What season did Jesus Christ say was imminent when the fig tree put forth its leaves? (Luke 21)</p> <p>7. Of whom did Jesus Christ say, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"? (Luke 22)</p> <p>8. Why was Herod interested in seeing Jesus Christ? (Luke 23)</p> <p>9. Who was compelled to carry Jesus Christ's cross? (Luke 23)</p> <p>10. What did the resurrected Jesus Christ eat in the presence of His disciples? (Luke 24)</p> <p>See answers on page 32</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hidden Wisdom on next page

Hidden Wisdom: Bible Acrostic

by Mark A. Oshman

Solve the acrostic by using the clues to guess the words and by transferring the letter above each number to its appropriate place in the diagram. The result will be a Scripture verse of admonition, comfort, or instruction. Further, the initial letters of the answers will contain the name of the book from which the verse was taken. All quotations are from the King James Version. HAPPY SOLVING! Answers are on page 26.

1C	2A	3F		4K	5H		6I	7G	8D		9F	10K	11H	12B	13E		
14D	15G		16J	17L	18F	19C		20A	21G	22J			23D	24M	25F	26H	
	27B	28C	29E	30G			31F	32H		33I	34K	35B	36F		37G	38M	
39H	40D	41I		42H	43A	44B	45L		46K	47D	48M		49H	50E	51F	52C	
53H		54F	55G	56H		57B	58J	59A	60K	61G		62B	63J	64C		65K	66F
67D	68I		69L	70M		71F	72H	73G		74D	75E	76F	77B		78I	789G	80D

CLUES

- A. Woodwind instrument with a double-reed mouthpiece 43 20 2 59
- B. "Woman, why _____ thou?" 62 12 35 44 77 57 27
- C. Muscular 28 19 1 52 64
- D. Isaac really dug this well! 80 8 23 40 14 47 67 74
- E. A son of Simeon 75 50 29 13
- F. P. L. Travers' heroine (two words) 54 51 3 71 25 66 18 76 31 36 9
- G. What Jesus Christ possessed which lent weight to his doctrine 55 21 30 61 79 7 37 73 15
- H. "I create _____" (two words) 39 5 49 42 26 53 11 72 56 32
- I. Harsh remark (colloq.) 33 68 6 78 41
- J. A son of Canaan 16 58 22 63
- K. Floated 4 10 46 60 34 65
- L. U. S. Inventor (1812-1886) 69 17 45
- M. The polyantha, *inter alia* 48 24 38 70