

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2)

● This article was written 44 years ago and is still timely.—Editor

Four Things in **HELL**



That the Church Needs!—Luke 16:19-31

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I T IS NOT our purpose in this lesson to try to locate hell, nor explore the different terms used to describe the abode of the dead. We do not doubt the reality of such a place of eternal punishment. The fact of a literal hell looms before us, and only too soon will be realized by sinners, scoffers and unbelievers. Jesus said there was such a place. That is enough for me.

But our theme says, "Four Things in Hell that the Church Needs!" Is this shocking to you? Could there really be things in hell that could be of value to the church?! Mind you, we need to be shocked! We need to be disturbed in our complacency! There are at least four things Luke tells us about that definitely are needed in the church today! What do we need?

I. We Need Tears!

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he *cried*..." (Luke 16:23). It is said, "...There shall be *weeping* and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). Certainly this place of everlasting torment shall be characterized by tears, tears of all kinds. Sinners eyes shall gush tears from pain. Doomed souls shall shed endless tears of sorrow, regret, and even repentance, but, sad to say, it will be too late. However, heaven will be just the opposite, "And God shall wipe away all *tears* from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sor-

row, nor *crying*, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Oh, how we need tears in the church of Christ today! Tears of concern! Too many times our religion becomes barren and lifeless! It doesn't come deep from the heart. Our feelings are callused over, and souls speed on into eternity without Christ while we sit idly by entertaining ourselves with foolishness. The worship of the church becomes cold and formal while we mouth empty words of "praise" to God. Sin runs wild and untamed, and we care not about it. Oh, my brethren, we need tears of concern!

It doesn't mean that we are weaklings if tears come forth. That man of all men, and only begotten Son of God, shed tears. The shortest verse in the Bible says that, "Jesus wept." Not only on the occasion of the death of a loved one, but when he preached and spoke to sinners. Listen to Matthew 23:37,38, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Christ is simply revealing the heart of God. God had patiently dealt with a stiff-necked and rebellious people, the Jewish nation. He had tried to gather them together time after time and they would not. Now Christ could look forward to A. D. 70 when the destruction of Jerusalem

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially *SPEAKING...*

THE FUTURE belongs to those who are mindful of the past.

Because the lives of Christians are filled with meaning, they mean much to one another.

Charity may begin at home, but it doesn't stop there.

The families that pray together, and play together, are the most likely to stay together.

The greatest pleasures in life are those that are shared with others.

Truth must be in love (Ephesians 4:15), and love must be in truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

We reap what we sow, but only in greater proportions.

If the workman is no better than his tools, the Christian is well equipped (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16,17).

A job well done is a prelude to peace of mind, rest and fun.

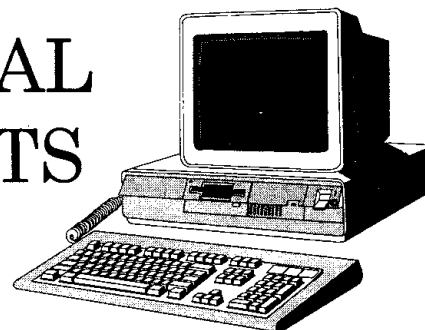
If you dream when you are wide-awake, it is more likely to come to pass.

It is hard to walk with God when you run with the crowd.

We stand the tallest when we spend more time on our knees.

Be different to make a difference. □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



"THAT SIN BY THE COMMANDMENT MIGHT BECOME EXCEEDING SINFUL"

BEFORE THAT MAN can be saved, he must recognize the awfulness of sin (and that he is lost). "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16), but aside from believing in the wrath of God this has limited Scriptural significance. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The Great Commission reads, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not *shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15,16). Consequently Paul said that "we preach, *warning every man*, and teaching every man..." (Colossians 1:28). This warning is given in view of the awfulness of sin in the sight of an all-holy God (who is sinless perfection) and in view of the wrath that is to come because of this sin (Matthew 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 5:9). True Bible preaching will not sugarcoat the concept of sin. It seeks to bring about conviction and the need of a Savior. We are saved from the wrath of God through the love of God. The grace of God has no meaning unless there is the wrath of God from which we are saved. God wants man to be made aware of just how awful sin really is, with the enormity of guilt and uncleanness that comes with it. This is necessary before man will see the need of salvation and before true conversion can take place.

Many having only read the New Testament, and then reading the Old Testament, have felt bewildered. They are astonished at the harshness and violence. There is much killing. They see the judgment of God coming down with a heavy hand. The death penalty was executed for an extensive catalogue of wrong doings. Paul calls the Old Testament "the law of sin and death." The Law did not empower you to keep it, but it nevertheless condemned you if you didn't keep it. And the enormity of sin was and is so great that to break one law is to be guilty of breaking all of the Law (James 2:10; Galatians 3:10). It seems the Law was calculated so as to highlight guilt and to emphasize a feeling of uncleanness. Paul deals with the struggle for righteousness by means of the Law in Romans chapter 7. One of the purposes of the law was to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Romans 7:13), and that all are under the sentence of sin and death (Galatians 3:22,23; Romans 3:9-23). Even ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament, which did not necessarily

involve moral wrong doing, served the purpose of making man feel unclean. The word “unclean” is found 111 times in the book of Leviticus. People were made to feel dirty so that they would want to experience cleansing. Perhaps this was an anti-type, anticipating things to come, and thus typifying spiritual uncleanness. Everything about the Law was a “schoolmaster [tutor] to bring us to Christ” (Galatians 3:24). For about 1500 years man was under this schoolmaster. Everything was calculated to make man see his need of a Savior who alone could purge him from his sins (John 1:29; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:5). God unquestionably got his point across. Now we can but humbly say that it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]” (Titus 3:5). By himself man could not be good enough, nor take away his own sins.

In view of all of this as we bring these thoughts to a conclusion, what do we have to say? How are we to look upon these things today? Sin is still just as awful. The enormity of sin is not diminished by love, but highlighted and made emphatic. Therefore, we need strong Bible preaching about right and wrong (in the context of love) to bring about conviction so that people will understand what grace is all about, so that they will indeed be converted, and so that they will really appreciate the love of God. And, having truly been converted, will exclaim, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15; John 3:16). This realization and appreciation will also make us “abhor that which is evil” and “cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9). We will seriously take heed to God’s Word when he says, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14-19). It will be our soul’s desire to “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Amen! □

“YOU,” The Unspoken Pronoun

MANY TIMES in the way that something is written the word “YOU” is not spoken but implied. Consequently it is possible that sometimes we do not get the full impact of what is being said. It is more impersonal to us. Even in reading the Scriptures this can be the case.

To illustrate, in the Scripture following we are supplying the implied, but unspoken, pronoun “YOU.” Let the full force of its personal application sink in. What is said is not a vague suggestion made to “we-know-not-who,” but it is directly spoken to YOU (us). It is something YOU (we), the readers are to do.

The apostle Paul wrote: “Now we exhort YOU, brethren, [YOU] warn them that are unruly, [YOU] comfort the feebleminded [fainthearted], [YOU] support the weak, [YOU] be patient toward all men. [YOU] see that none render evil for evil unto any man; but [YOU] ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. [YOU] Rejoice evermore. [YOU] Pray without ceasing. In every thing [YOU] give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. [YOU] Quench not the Spirit. [YOU] Despise not prophesying. [YOU] Prove all things; [YOU] hold fast that which is good. [YOU] Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify YOU wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:14-23).

It impacts us a little stronger, doesn’t it? □

A New Leaf

He came to my desk with a quivering lip;
The lesson was done;
“Dear Teacher, I want a new leaf,” he said,
“I have spoiled this one.”
I took the old leaf, torn and blotted,
And gave him a new one, all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled:
“Do better now, my child.”

I came to the Throne with a trembling heart;
The year was done;
“Dear Father, I want a new year,” I said,
“I have spoiled this one.”
He took the old year, torn and blotted,
And gave me a new one, all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled:
“Do better now, my child!”

—Anonymous

EDITORIAL
Byways

“STRANGE DOCTRINE”

WHILE DRIVING along in my car through the area of southwest Virginia and east Tennessee, I was passing the monotonous time involved in a long trip by listening to the radio. I was somewhat startled by the words of a radio preacher that hit my ears. He loudly and dogmatically proclaimed, “*There are a lot of people in glory tonight, right now, for this very reason.*” The reason he went on to say was, “*They backslid on the Lord, going back into sin, and wouldn’t repent.* So the

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Lord finally said, 'I've had it with you! That's enough!' Then he snuffed out their lives and took them on to glory [heaven]." (!!!)

Did I hear him right? I couldn't believe what was being said. Professed religious people, backslidden and in sin, were taken to heaven because they were backslidden and in sin. Something didn't sound right here.

Calvinistic Views

If you are familiar with the doctrine of Calvinism, you will recognize this as one of the explanations of "once in grace, always in grace" or the perseverance of the saints. It is taught that if a person is "once saved" he can never fall or become "unsaved." But religious people do fall and go back into sin. Consequently, when this is pointed out, there are different explanations forthcoming in trying to explain the situation. Here are some of them this writer has encountered through the years in talking with people who hold such views. Needless to say, they are muddled and contradictory.

(1) I have been told that a person cannot fall, and if he does fall, he was never saved in the first place. (2) But, modifying this view considerably, I have been told that if he does fall, the Lord will chastise him and bring him back before he dies—he will not die in a fallen condition. (3) But then, going along with the scenario mentioned in the first paragraph of this article, I have been told that even though a person falls, he cannot fall from grace. (4) And, attached to this line of thought, it is said that although he does fall away into sin, his evil works will be burned and he himself will be saved even though he doesn't personally repent and never returns to the Lord (notice the first paragraph again).

Every Reason Why a New Christian Should Be Successful

Before we address these "explanations," which we believe are wrong, let us emphasize a point. There is every reason why a new Christian should make a go of it in living the Christian life. Having entered into the grace of God, the throne of grace is open to him (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 1:7-10; Romans 5:1,2). He is a new creation in Christ with the gift of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 3:16). He has the Word of God of which Paul says that it "is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). He has fellow Christians to encourage and help him in living the Christian life (Hebrews 10:23-25; Galatians 6:1,2). But in spite of all of this, there are those who

receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:2) and draw back unto perdition (Hebrews 10:35-39).

CAN A PERSON FALL?

"In Time of Temptation Fall Away"

The parable of the sower used by the Lord in getting across his teachings stands out very vividly (Luke 8:4-15). The seed fell in three different places, the stony place, among thorns and on good ground. In each case equally there was life as the seed germinated. However, in reference to the stony place, or the rock, he said, "They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation *fall away*" (Luke 8:13). So, a person can fall, having once believed.

"Take Heed Lest He Fall"

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13. It is very impressive in showing the possibility and danger of falling away. Paul illustrates with the children of Israel in the wilderness journey. Even though they were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual" food, many lusted after evil things and fell—they became idolaters, they committed fornication, they murmured and "they were destroyed of the destroyer." Paul says these are examples and lessons for us. He concludes by saying, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth *take heed lest he fall*." (What Paul has said here follows the sobering words he said about himself in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway"). All of this is very expressive and plain, isn't it? A person can fall after becoming a Christian.

"Lest Any Man Fall After the Same Example"

Continuing the same illustration of the children of Israel in the wilderness journey, the 3rd and 4th chapters of Hebrews make interesting reading. The writer warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in *departing* from the living God...For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*." Then he illustrates with the failure of many Israelites to enter the Promised Land because of "unbelief." Heaven and being with Christ are parallel with the Promised Land for Christians. In view of what happened to Israel, the writer says, "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," and summing it up in 4:11, he concludes, "Let us labour therefore to

enter into that rest, *lest any man fall* after the same example of unbelief." Yes, there is a possibility of falling. (Also, notice Hebrews 6:6).

**"If Ye Do These
Things, Ye Shall Never Fall"**

Read 2 Peter 1:2-11. We are admonished to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, adding one thing right after another in our Christian growth. This process is necessary to our spiritual development. Thus these admonitions are summed up by Peter saying, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for *if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*." And, after warnings about false teachers, 2 Peter 3:17 and 18 sums up the whole epistle, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, *beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall* from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." A person can fall. This cannot be denied.



**CAN A PERSON FALL FROM GRACE?
Modified View of This Doctrine**

Having established the fact that a person can fall, we are faced with a modified view of this doctrine. The modified view is not that a person cannot fall, it is that he cannot fall *from grace*. He can never be lost regardless. And this view, as we have already noticed (and will notice), of necessity leads to many other serious and faulty ramifications if this doctrine is to be maintained.

Saved By Grace

There are many factors that enter into our salvation, but overall the New Testament says that we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5,8). Therefore, if a person can fall from grace, that means he has fallen from that which saves him. He is in an unsaved condition.

In view of this, are there Scriptures that actually say a person can fall from grace?

"Ye Are Fallen from Grace"

Yes. Galatians 5:4 reads in black and white, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace*." Influenced by the proselytizing Judaizers, the churches in Galatia were trying to mix the law of Moses with the gospel. In such a muddled approach to God, the indictment of the apostle Paul comes down heavy upon them, "*Ye are fallen from grace*." Yes, a person can fall *from grace*.

**"Lest Any Man
Fall from the Grace of God"**

Read the 12th chapter of Hebrews. Let us zero in on verses 14 and 15. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently *lest any man fail of the grace of God...*" This word translated "fail" here means to be late, inferior; to fall short, be deficient. Interestingly, in Romans 3:23 it is translated "come short" in the quotation, "For all have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God." In Hebrews 4:1, it is rendered "come short" again, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to *come short* of it." The KJV has as an alternate translation of Hebrews 12:15 in the margin of the Bible, "Looking diligently lest any man *fall from* the grace of God..." Yes, a person can fall *from grace*.

Context of Chastisement

Since one of the comebacks of Calvinistic thinking people is that the Lord will chastise a sinning Christian and he will always come back to the Lord, an extended examination of the context of Hebrews 12:15 is in order. It is tied in with the subject of the chastisement of the children of God. Read the Scripture earlier in this chapter that leads up to verse 14 and 15. God can and does use things that happen to us to chastise and purify us. We are told that we are chastised "that we might be partakers of his *holiness*" (verse 10). It is after this that the writer admonishes, "Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of [fall from] the grace of God..." He doesn't say that an erring believer will always come back to God (many so-called Christians are not brought to repentance), but he does say that without holiness *no man* shall see the Lord. He does say that a person can fall from the grace of God.

THE EXTREME VIEW

Going to Heaven in Ones Sins

Coupled with the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" (a person can't fall from grace) is the extreme view reflected in the first paragraph of this

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article as represented by the radio speaker. My wife and I had the unusual experience a few years ago of being personally involved with a person holding this extreme view. We rescued this person from the middle of the highway, who was drunk and waiting for a big truck to hit him so he could go to heaven (he said). He was supposed to go to prison, but according to his "theology" thought he could expedite things and go on to heaven. He thought he was saved and there was no way that he could be lost. Heaven would be his home.

Works Burned, No Reward, Yet Saved

The appeal is made that somehow a person's evil works will be burned and he will nevertheless go to heaven (like the radio preacher said). Scripture in the 3rd chapter of 1 Corinthians is twisted to try to fit into this framework of thought. In verses 13 through 15 we read, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Yes, it does say there is a trying by "fire" and that if a man's works are burned, he will not receive a reward, but he will still be saved. But what does this mean? What is Paul saying here?

The Preacher's Works, His Converts

Again we need to read the verses before and correctly fit everything into context. Paul had been talking about the various preachers who had visited Corinth and their work there. The Corinthians were all wrapped up in the personalities of men with a decided party spirit ("I am of Paul...I am of Apollos," etc.). Paul pictured the preachers as being God's builders and tenders of God's vineyard. In this context he says that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (verse 8); then, "For we [the preachers] are labourers together with God: ye [the Corinthians] are God's husbandry, ye [the Corinthians] are God's building" (verse 9). The foundation of Christ had been laid (verse 11). The converts were the material that the preachers were building on this foundation, which constituted the temple of God. The nature of the material, or converts, making up the building is spoken of as "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble" (verse 12). So, the reference to trying "every man's works of

what sort it is" has to do with the preacher's converts. If the converts proved to be "wood, hay, or stubble," not good material for the building, the preacher would not receive a reward for what he had done, but he would himself nevertheless be saved. This is not talking about evil works of supposed believers in general, but the converts who had supposedly been added to the church in relation to the one who won them. This is no support of the extreme Calvinistic view.

A Strange Doctrine

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid..." (Romans 6:1,2). It doesn't work that way. The Lord came to save us from our sins, not in our sins ("And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people *from their sins*," Matthew 1:21). Remember: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers [fornicators], and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:14,15). "He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. *But* [in contrast with, contrariwise] the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers [fornicators], and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelations 21:7,8). Only the pure in heart shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Surely what we have examined in this little article is a "strange doctrine" foreign to the Word of God. □

Four Things in HELL



That the Church Needs!—Luke 16:19-31

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was coming, and one stone would not be left upon another of the temple (Matthew 24:2). Countless people would die. The broken-hearted concern of one who could forgive them was not heeded. The apostle Paul likewise shed tears. Notice Acts 20:19-21.

We cannot over-emphasize the concern we should have over a sin-sick world, precious lost souls, a religious world that is divided, and men, who by their human opinions, keep the children of God apart. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that *mourn*: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Also, "They that sow in *tears* shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth

and *weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalms 126:5,6).

II. We Need Prayer!

In hell the rich man cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). Talk about prayer, some day there is going to be one of the greatest prayer meetings ever held down in the bottomless pits of a devil's hell! And like the tears, it will be too late.

The church of our Lord was born in a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14), and it has thrived in the atmosphere of prayer. Prayer has been one of the great factors in keeping the church alive. When the church stops praying, we might as well close the doors and go home, God has. Our Lord always felt the need, although God's Son, of going to the solitary place to spend much time in prayer. Prayer is that necessary ingredient which cements our spiritual life together.

Christians, are we denying ourselves God's blessings that may be in store for us simply by not trusting and going to the throne of grace? Do we pray in secret? Are we faithful at "prayer meetings"? Don't underestimate prayer and what God has promised. Some day if we don't make a practice of prayer we may wish that we had. It should be just as natural for a Christian to pray as a child to talk to his parent. In a world such as we live, how we need to spend much time on the bended knee.

III. We Need to Be Concerned About Ourselves!

Developing another thought to a further extent, we need to be concerned about ourselves. The man in the lake of fire of Luke 16 was very much concerned about himself. He wanted to leave that place, he wanted water. Sinners seem so unconcerned about their soul's relationship to God. It seems a bother to them if you mention the Savior, and they think they are doing a favor for you if they come to church. Indifference and unconcern are an awful plight, but, mind you, one of these days they are going to be concerned! One of these days in screaming horror they will realize what the preacher said was true! He wasn't so foolish and fanatical after all! Oh, dear sinner, there is too much at stake to be unconcerned! Those time-worn excuses will look pitifully silly then!

It is discouraging enough to approach sinners who are not concerned, but how heartrending to have to put up with a bunch of "church members" that way! Their hearts are cold. They have forgotten that they

were purged from their dead works (if they ever were). They are at one with the world. Woe be unto them! "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?" (Hebrews 2:3). "Ex-amine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (2 Corinthians 13:5). "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16).

IV. We Need to Be Concerned About Others!

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For *I have five brethren*; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27,28). Talk about concern, here is concern. This man knew the consequences of sin, and he was willing to do all that he could to keep his brothers from coming there. It is obvious they were not living right. This man had a vision of the world lost in sin, and wanted something done about it. At last he was personally concerned about others.

The apostle Paul was deeply concerned about his lost kinsmen, the Jews. Notice: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). Then: "I say the truth in Christ...that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For *I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites..." (Romans 9:1-4). Here is a concern that surpasses the common concern! Paul says that if it would bring about the salvation of his own people, he would gladly go to hell and spend eternity! That is about as far as a person can go!

Where do we stand in the light of such a great concern? Does the lost man in hell put us to shame? "Where there is no vision, the people perish." At that great judgment will some doomed soul say, "You never mentioned Him to me!" If our religion is not deep enough to produce concern for others, that means we are selfish, thinking only of our own salvation—and selfishness is a terrible sin. Our hearts are not right. If we would go to heaven, we must untiringly try to take someone with us.

YES, even from the confines of the doomed we find many desirable lessons if channeled in the right direction at the right time. May we have a broken heart so that the Lord can use us. May we spend much time in secret with Jesus alone. Let us at least be concerned about ourselves, then reach out with a heart full of compassion and concern for those outside of God's care. These are four things in hell that the church needs. □

"I AM THAT I AM"

GOD identified Himself to Moses by saying, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Paul declared, "By the grace of God I AM WHAT I AM" (1 Corinthians 15:10, caps supplied). The eternal God is self-existent. Being such, He is self-sufficient, and consequently all-sufficient to those who look to Him as the great "I AM." Of himself, as incarnate deity, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). Consequently Paul could say, "I can do all things through Christ which [who] strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). □

Too Much Bible Preaching?

"WHY DO YOU use so many Scriptures when you preach? No one quotes the Bible like that anymore." The answer is very simple. This is the kind of preaching God wants.

God desires men to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2), "teach the Word" (1 Timothy 4:11), and "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). The Lord intended that the content of preaching be the Bible. What is the alternative to Biblical preaching? Preaching and teaching human philosophy. Speaking the doctrines and traditions of man.

"But what if the congregation is not ready for that much Bible?" The solution requires giving the congregation more spiritual food (the Bible) so that they will grow and mature! Every time the amount of Bible is reduced in preaching, the percentage of uninspired material increases. Rather than diminishing the Word in the pulpit to accommodate our immaturity, we ought to increase our spiritual appetites (Matthew 5:6) and prepare ourselves to listen to what God has to say to us. We need more Bible to nurture our faith (Romans 10:17; 1 Timothy 4:6) so that we can become more spiritually minded (Philippians 4:9; Colossians 3:1-4). The church needs more of God's Word and less of man's words, more heavenly wisdom and less earthly wisdom (James 3:13-18). We need to be still and let God do the talking (Habakkuk 2:20).

If we really believe that God's Word is the only thing that is powerful enough to save man (James 1:21; Romans 1:16) and penetrate the heart (Hebrews 4:12; Acts 2:37), then we realize the importance of Biblical preaching. Replacing it with anything else is foolishness. Book, chapter and verse preaching is the kind that we need (Jonah 3:2). Anything else is a cheap imitation. We need to ask, "What does the Scripture say?" (Romans 4:3)

The New Testament writers record teachings saturated with Scripture. The vast amount of Old

Testament quotations and allusions that New Testament characters use ought to impress us. They are an example for us to follow.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who was the first person called a "Hebrew" in the Bible, and what does the name "Hebrew" mean?
2. In the O.T. Scriptures who are the only two people that we have a record of being embalmed?
3. In the history of Israel, who were Shiphrah and Puah?
4. What were the names of Moses' father and mother?
5. What mountain in the Bible is called "the mount of God"?
6. Where is the first place the word "holy" is found in the Bible and what was the circumstance in the use of the word?
7. In the history of Israel, who were Jannes and Jambres?
8. What food in the Bible is described as being "like coriander seed, white [the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium]: and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey"?
9. What was the other name of Gideon?
10. Where in the Bible does it say that God "hanged the earth on nothing"?
11. What O.T. prophet had a vision of "summer fruit"?
12. What is the only record of Jesus ever writing anything?
13. What is the shortest verse in the Bible?
14. Who replaced Judas as one of the twelve apostles?
15. What church in the New Testament is said to have "ears"?
16. Who in the Bible is called "the god of this world"?
17. According to the apostle Paul, how were the people of Crete characterized in the ancient world?
18. The apostle Peter had a relationship to what person that was similar to the apostle Paul's relationship to Timothy?
19. Which one of the apostles said that "God is love"?
20. Where was the apostle John when he wrote the book of Revelation?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper)

Recall when Satan tempted Jesus after his baptism, our Lord responded to each of the temptations with, "It is written," and preceded to quote Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11). In Peter's Pentecost sermon he used Scriptures from Joel, Psalms, and 2 Samuel (Acts 2:14-36). Paul cites no less than 10 different Old Testament passages in Romans chapter nine [and the writings of these men were likewise inspired Scripture].

Let us have the same attitude the familiar song describes, and cry out, "Give Me the Bible!" That's what we need.—*Selected* □

READERS'

...Response

APOLOGY: Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. ☐

FLORIDA:

■ *"Thanks for your wonderful publication. Keep up the great work."*

■ *"We enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF very much. Keep up the good work. Here is a small offering."*

■ *"In the Editorial [Byways] in Volume 41, Number 3, 'I Will That Men Pray Everywhere', are you saying that all men can pray and be heard by God? John 9:31 says that God doesn't hear sinners..."*

Answer: The purpose of the said article (Editorial Byways, "I Will That Men Pray Everywhere") was not to imply that God in a blanket manner hears and answers the prayers of all men. The thrust of the article was to show how that secular humanists were trying to silence religion in the setting of the public schools while giving freedom of expression to almost anything and everything else. The quotation from 1 Timothy 2:8 was to emphasize that God authorizes us (and wants us) to pray anywhere and everywhere.

We believe that prayer is a special privilege of a Christian. It would be best to not use John 9:31 to "prove" this for the one speaking is not a Spirit-inspired man. Actually our reference to 1 Timothy 2:8 implies this. Notice the quotation again: "I will therefore that men pray every where, *lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*" Only a faithful Christian can do this. Also, didn't James write, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"? It is through one Spirit that we have access to God (Ephesians 2:18). And since the Holy Spirit is involved in our praying to the Father (Romans 8:26; Ephesians 3:16-20), this would create problems for the non-Christian (Acts 2:38).

Prayers are to be made within the will of God (Matthew 6:10; 1 John 5:14). For example, it would be a terrible mistake to tell a sinner to pray to God and that God would save him without him doing what God has said. The Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16), and through the apostle Peter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (Acts 2:38). It would be totally wrong to tell a sinner that because he had prayed and was relieved of the burden of his heart that he was saved. There must be the remission of sins before salvation takes place. We are baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), having truly believed and repented. This is how we get into and put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). This is God's will. This is God's plan, and we can't get around it simply by praying. Prayer must be within the will of God.

Check our web site (<http://jgibbons.8m.com>) under "Articles" for an informative and related study entitled, "What is the Meaning of the Expression to 'CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD?'"

SOUTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Keep up the wonderful work—enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF very much..."*

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ *"Still enjoying THE SWORD AND STAFF. May God bless you in your labor for Him."*

■ *"I really enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF and pray that you will be able to continue printing it..."*

■ *"We are thankful for the paper. God bless you and yours, that you may be able to keep on keeping on..."*

TENNESSEE:

■ *"We receive THE SWORD AND STAFF in our home, and we both enjoy reading and answering the questions..."*

"Keep up the good work: we are fighting with old Satan!"

KENTUCKY:

■ *"Please do not send me any more SWORD AND STAFF books [papers]."*

■ *"I would like a complimentary copy of THE SWORD AND STAFF. Thank you." (E-mail; Web Page Response).*

■ *"Please use this money as you need for your publication. I have gained much from the two issues I have received so far..."*

VIRGINIA:

■ *"Please send me bound volumes covering 2001-2002. I am enclosing a contribution for THE SWORD AND STAFF. I have all the bound volumes since 1971-72 (Sure wish I had them all. Just a wish)."*

"I certainly thank God for people like you. Few there are to serve. May God bless you all, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "I'm enclosing a check...Would you be so kind as to add the following people to your circulation list? I would like them to start receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I've really tried to promote your magazine (which is still the best thing I have ever seen) and so they are all eager to receive a copy. So, if it's not too much trouble, could you please send each one of them a copy of the most recent issue? That way they could get started reading it right away and would not have to wait until the next issue is published."

OHIO:

■ "Please send one of each of the bound volumes; also one *POEMS OF THE SOUL*. I'm sure these are older prices; therefore I'm sending more to cover costs...Thank you! My husband loves your publication."

■ "Thank you for publishing the sound doctrine and the Word. I have been receiving duplicate mailings, although, the extra issues I have been giving to brethren where I work. Please find enclosed a small donation to cover your costs."

INDIANA:

■ "Remove my name from your mailing list."

■ "Just a few lines to thank you again for the work you do in putting out this fine paper...I am sending a little gift to help in the printing of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thank you for all the work you do for the cause of Christ."

MICHIGAN:

■ "Thank you for your labor of love and work for our Lord Jesus Christ! We hope this gift will help in the work and service. You are in our prayers! Please keep us in yours also. We hope your health and family are well. We love your work and *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Keep it up. It's needed very much."

ILLINOIS:

■ "...I am the minister here and would like to read your material—you have a very well written publication."

■ "Please send the bound volumes 2001-2002 [of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*]. The extra is to help with the publication of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. May God bless your service."

■ "Thank you for your great paper *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I'm sending a check...to help get the message out. Wish it could be more...God bless you for your faithful presentation of New Testament Christianity to today's world. Keep up the good work!"

MINNESOTA:

■ "We always enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thank you for sending it to us. Please send a gift subscription to our friend...Thank you!"

NEBRASKA:

■ "Thank you for providing Christians with the education we need. My church passes *THE SWORD AND STAFF* out monthly, and I read them from front to back. They help me with my walk with the Lord. I then pass them on to other Christians. Thank you."

TEXAS:

■ "Please remove me from your mailing list."

OREGON:

■ "...Thank you for your continuing publications and works. I appreciate your careful use of words."

■ "...Just finished reading volume 41, # 3, from cover to cover. Surely appreciated each article, but especially the one on Wastefulness and Frugality. Thank you."

CANADA:

■ "Nice to make your acquaintance. May I please be sent a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Thank you in Christ." (E-mail; Web Page Response)

GERMANY:

■ "I want to create a link to your web site in my directory. Please inform me if you don't want to get linked" (E-mail; Web Page Response). □



"I have set before thee an open door..."

"An Open Door"

● By James E. Gibbons

I. GOD OPENS DOORS

An Open Door Means Opportunity

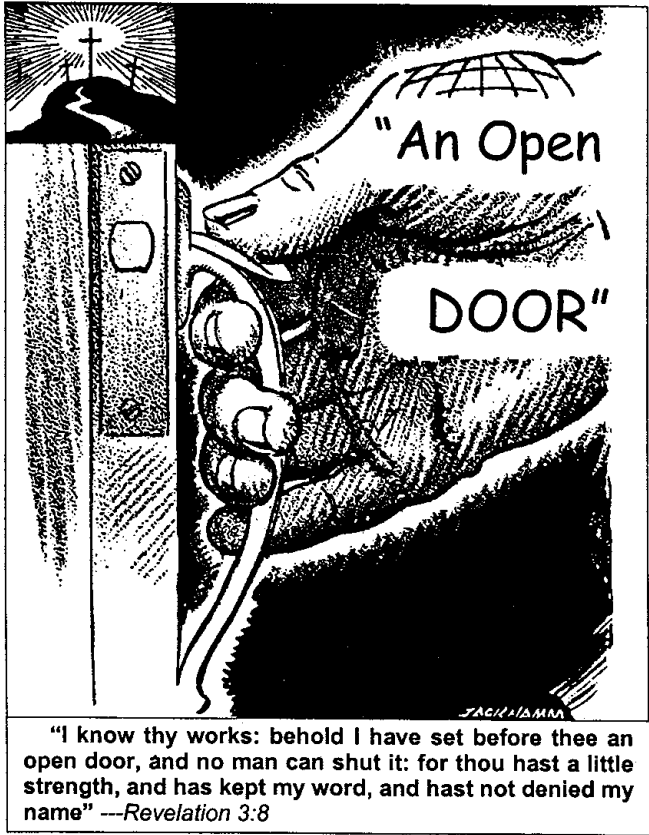
THE APOSTLE PAUL, writing from Ephesus to the Corinthians, said that he would extend his stay there, "For a great door and effectual [*a great and effective door*] is opened unto me, and [but] there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:8,9). Finally, leaving Ephesus after a successful two years of preaching that wherein all of the province of Asia was exposed to the gospel (Acts 19:10) and on his way that would eventually end in Corinth, he records that he "came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and *a door* was opened unto" him of the Lord (2 Corinthians 2:12). Later incarcerated as a prisoner at Rome, he would write to the Colossians, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us *a door of utterance*, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Colossians 4:2,3). Obviously "door" signifies opportunity, and in the Scriptures it many times means a door open for evangelism. The book of Acts is full of examples to that effect.

Doors Opened on Pentecost And With the Household of Cornelius

Before his ascension, Jesus said to the apostles, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy

Ghost [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Before in the declaration of his intentions to establish the church, he had said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Peter used these keys on the day of Pentecost with the establishment of the church and later in going to the household of Cornelius. There was loosing and binding on the day of Pentecost. The doors of the church were opened to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and opened to the Gentiles with the household of Cornelius sometime later (Acts 10 and 11). As God's leading spokesman, Peter used the keys. And with that God opened the door for evangelism, beginning at Jerusalem and finally reaching to the "uttermost part of the earth."

"A DOOR OF UTTERANCE"



An Open Door to Philip

There was an open door to Philip when he was commanded to "go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert" (Acts 8:26). This unlikely place resulted in a conversion that would open Ethiopia to the gospel. On this open road he found a man with an open Bible. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at

the same scripture [which the man was reading, Isaiah 53], and preached unto him Jesus" (8:35). His heart was opened, and when they came by some open water, the Ethiopian said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized" (8:36). "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (8:37,38). Heaven was open to him, and he went on his way rejoicing.

**A Door of Faith Opened
Unto the Gentiles from Antioch**

The largely Gentile church at Antioch became the focal point of Gentile evangelism as God opened doors. The leading of God is very evident as Paul and Barnabas and others were sent out from here to carry the gospel to the Gentile world (Acts 13:1-3, etc.). As they returned to their home base from their great missionary endeavors, we read that they "sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:26,27).

A Man of Macedonia

The Macedonian call is interesting as God further opened doors. The gospel would be carried to Europe. It was at Troas that "a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9). Then we read, "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (16:10). Paul and his company made their way across the Aegean Sea to Philippi in northern Macedonia. And further, interestingly, the man in the vision initially turned out to be a group of women headed up by one named Lydia "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (16:14). "She was baptized, and her household" (16:15). Paul and his workers entered the open door God set before them and found people with open hearts. This is the story of evangelism in the book of Acts.

**The Promise of
The Great Commission**

We can't help but think of the promise in the Great Commission when we consider open doors. On the peak of his resurrection glory the Lord said,

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“An Open Door”

(Continued from Previous Page)

“All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” and then commanded, “Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age]. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20). In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul writes to the Corinthian converts, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed...I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (3:5-7). He goes on to say, “For we are labourers together with God” (3:9). Those who faithfully carry out the Great Commission can claim the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” God opens doors and is with those who would enter in fulfilling the commission.

“I Have Set Before You An Open Door”

Please take a look at Revelation 3:8. This may involve more than an open door to evangelism, but nevertheless notice. The Lord declared, “I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” This is a great verse. These words were spoken to the church in Philadelphia, the only one of the seven churches in Asia Minor with which the Lord found no fault. There was an open door set before it. No one could shut it. What a promise!

II. FOR WHOM DOES GOD OPEN DOORS?

For Those Who Carry Out the Great Commission

As we specifically nail down the truths highlighted in this article, we ask, “For whom does God open doors?” The Great Commission answered this. It is for those who would carry out the Great Commission. The apostle Paul illustrates this well. God called him to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. This was his mission in life. He unreservedly gave himself to Christ. He declared, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Consequently he said, “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I

am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:14-16). He asserts in Colossians 1:27 and 28, “God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Christ Jesus.” He rounds this statement out with these words, “Wherefore I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (1:29).

The record speaks for itself. An open door was set before Paul. He entered thereby claiming the promise of the Great Commission. And the Lord worked “mightily” in him, motivating and energizing him to do this work. An open door is before those who would carry out the Great Commission.

For Those Who Knock

Jesus clearly stated in Matthew 7:7 and 8, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” God opens doors for those who ask, seek and knock. The parable of the persistent friend, wanting bread in the “wee” hours of the night, illustrates this well (Luke 11:5-10). Although a prisoner at Rome, Paul requested prayers that “God would open unto us a door of utterance” (Colossians 4:3). This prayer was answered, a door was opened, and we read of those who had been made converts even in Caesar’s household (Philippians 4:22). To God the carrying out of the Great Commission is always an open door. We need to pray for specific opportunities.

For the Small and Insignificant

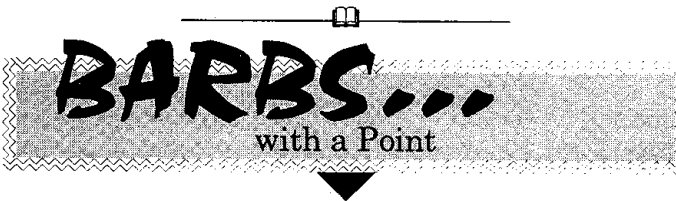
Open doors are many times to the small and seemingly insignificant. This was true of the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:7-13. The Lord spoke of them as having “little strength” (3:8). But he knew their works. He knew that they had kept his word (3:10). Consequently, there was set before them an open door. They had unobstructed access to heaven. Their opportunities for service were and would remain intact. They would be kept in the hour of trial. The mega-church is not always the one before which the Lord has set an open door. Many times the mega-church really is a mini-church, and

(Continued on Page 14)

*The answer to “A Bible Riddle Question”
is found in EXODUS 32:19.*

Added to the Lord's Church

WHEN YOU are converted to Christ in the way the New Testament teaches, the Lord himself adds you to his one church (Acts 2:38-47; Colossians 3:15 [1:18]; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-6); you don't join a man-made denomination. To be a part of a denomination, you must join something not found in the New Testament. □



SOMETIMES the best way to make a point is to make it pointed.

Unless God is in life's picture, everything is blurred and out of focus.

It is not where we came from but where we are in relation to where we came from that really matters in life.

Some people who think they have every thing nailed down don't even have a hammer.

If your concept of success is geared only to material things, you are a failure even before you get started as well as being doomed to a failure later.

The person who says everything that he or she thinks is not thinking.

Your parents took care of you when you were young; it is fitting that you take care of them when they are old (1 Timothy 5:8; Matthew 15:3-6; Mark 7:9-13).

Who wants to be in the nest with a hardboiled egg?—so be nice to your mate.

In marriage if the physical is primarily accented in the intimate relations, the marriage likely will be found to be unfulfilling, but if the spiritual, love, is accented, the physical will take care of itself.

The faithful few will faithfully fill their "pew" in regular church attendance.

It has been said that all work and no play makes Jack a dull person, but on the other hand it can be said that all play and no work makes Jack a jerk.

The Bible only makes only Christians and Christians only, not denominationalists.

It is a strange phenomenon, but many that are the most zealous for their religion have the least to be zealous about, being religiously in error.

It is hard to reason with a person who does not have a reason.

Too many look upon what they believe religiously from the perspective of a denominational platform, not

unlike a political platform, rather than simple trust in the Lord and following the Bible wherever it leads without any denominational allegiance.

You may be free to make a choice, as a free moral agent, but you don't have the right to do wrong.

It is a shame that some professed Christians can't get all excited about Christ as they do some kinky and questionable interpretation of Scripture on some secondary and irrelevant subject.

To sin against the light is to bring upon yourself the darkest night.

Setting your mind on things that are above (Colossians 3:1,2; Hebrews 3:1), and seeking those things that are above (Philippians 3:14), is the only high-mindedness acceptable with the Lord.

If you keep the Word of God, the Word of God will keep you.

The amount that we should give is not determined by how much we give as much as to how much we have left over after giving.

In life things that are "cut and dried" usually are dead.

Not an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, but the turning of the other cheek is what the Lord taught.

You are not really living until you have learned the meaning of giving.

Hypocritical "Christians" are like artificial flowers; they may look "good," but there is no fragrance.

The Lord opens doors to those that have open hearts and are open to him.

You have to stand to get on your feet, and likewise to get on your feet to stand.

We don't leave any footprints on the sands of time standing still.

Sometimes you have to go out on the limb to get the best fruit.

Sound doctrine must have more than sound to it.

Keep the faith, but not to yourself. □

What Word Is the Hallmark of Each of These Bible Characters?

- Abraham: _____
- Job: _____
- Moses: _____
- Samson: _____
- Solomon: _____
- Thomas: _____
- John: _____
- Judas: _____

ANSWERS: Abraham: "faith" (Galatians 3:6,7; Hebrews 11:8); Job: "patience" (James 5:11); Moses: "meekness" (Numbers 12:3); Samson: "strength" (Judges 16:5,6,9,15,17); Solomon: "wisdom" (1 Kings 3:16-28; 4:29-34); Thomas: "doubt" (John 20:24-31); John: "love" (1 John 4:7-21; etc.); Judas: "betrayal" (Matthew 26:14-16,21-23,46-50)

***Preacher, Is
This How You Preach?***
*"I preach as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."*

"An Open Door"

(Continued from Page 12)

the mini-church is mega in the sight of God. ("Enter ye in at the strait gate [narrow door]: for wide is the gate [door, entrance], and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [narrow, restricted] is the gate [door, entrance], and narrow [compressed] is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matthew 7:13,14).

God chooses to use that which is unimposing to accomplish his unfeigned spiritual purposes. At the heart of the message of the gospel is the old rugged cross, utter foolishness and weakness in the eyes of an unbelieving world (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, as he said, "Lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Corinthians 12:7). Not taking it away, the Lord said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (12:9). God's power is more evident in a weak vessel. The Lord's plan is not to work through imposing missionary societies and man-made human organizations, but simply through the simple, local, autonomous church and individual Christians. That is how they did it in the first century. That is how it should be done today.

III. WHY ARE DOORS OPENED?

Doors Are Opened to Enter

The answer to this question is very simple. Perhaps there is no connection in the origin of our English word "through," but as a matter of interest the Greek word for door is *thura*. Doors are opened to enter, to go through. If we don't enter, the doors may not always be open. From another perspective Jesus made that plain in Matthew 25:9-13. When the door was shut, the young virgins who had failed to be prepared, cried out, "Lord, Lord, open to us." If we fail to enter the door the Lord opens, the opportunity may be gone forever.

Doors to Enter

The emphasis in this article has been evangelism. This is very close to the heart of God. The salvation of mankind is why God became flesh in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in the last days. Time is running out. Doors will be closed forever unless we enter them to win the lost. And doors in more of an immediate context don't stay open always. Situations change. Opportunities must be taken advan-

tage of. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4; 2 Peter 3:9). So, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with [all] thy might..." (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

We can think of open doors beyond evangelism. Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good..." Opportunity (open doors) plus ability equals responsibility. The parable of the talents makes this emphatic (Matthew 25:14-30). Each was given opportunity according to his ability and was held accountable for it. God opens the door for all of us to be used by Him. Let us enter that open door.

What We Need

We need to be open and surrendered to the leadership of God, genuinely converted. We must be surrendered to the will of God before His will can be worked out in our lives. "If a man therefore purge himself...he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet [suited] for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). □

Another Year

Another year! (How soon 'tis past!)
Is taken from my shortening days:
Another year! (Perchance my last!)
Is dawning with Aurora's rays.
Another year! "Lord, let it be
A year well spent in serving Thee."

Another year! In which I may
Glean in the Master's harvest field:
Another year! In which I pray
My life shall righteous fruitage yield.
Another year! "Lord let it be
A year well spent in serving Thee."

The goodness of the Lord to me
Despite my follies and my sins—
Contains my soul to make its plea
As another year begins—
Another year! "Lord, let it be
A year well spent in serving Thee"

Another year! How would I live
If I could know my last 'twould be,
And I had but this year to give
To Christ, who gave His life for me?
Still would I pray: "Lord, let it be
A year well spent in serving Thee."

—Anonymous

The Old Testament



Found in the New Testament

“THE OLD TESTAMENT is found in the New Testament” makes sense only to those who are familiar with the seed line promise of Jesus. Hence, the New Testament announces its obligation to the Old Testament. By quoting it the New Testament expresses its dependence upon the Old Testament. A list of 343 Old Testament quotations, as well as 2,309 allusions and parallels can be made. Psalms are used with 79 quotes and 333 notations. Isaiah has 66 quotations with 348 references. The book of Revelation uses 620 Old Testament references. New Testament writers focused the “ominous prophecies” of the Old Testament upon Jesus. New Testament authors start with Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and demonstrate their fulfillment in Jesus, the kingdom and the church.

Writers of the New Testament varied their techniques for quoting and giving references. Some gave expanded narrative with comments inserted as when Stephen preached (Acts 7:2-53). Others said, “This is that which was spoken” (Acts 2:16; Romans 10:8,16). Some joined two or more verses where the same word was from different parts of the Bible (Hebrews 4:3-7).

Old Testament inspiration was apparent. It was maintained that the uses of the Old Testament passages in the New Testament depended upon the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of them (2 Peter 1:20, 21). A premise is that the Old Testament must be distinctly interpreted in a Christian way and not by forced Jewish methods of exegesis. Any interpretation of Old Testament texts has to agree with the New Testament’s conclusions. Thus, a New Testament authenticity is that within its revelation is found the mysteries of God completed (Ephesians 3:1-10). Undoubtedly, the Christian faith made complete sense of the Old Testament as these mysteries were revealed.

Frequently, New Testament writers acknowledged the Old Testament context from which they quoted. They communicated what the Spirit gave to convince others and nurture “the faith.” They did not forget their Jewish heritage, but genuinely sought understanding as to how the “word” spoken

through prophets by the Holy Spirit related to that which was revealed in the New Testament. They discriminatingly probed the Old Testament for patterns which had pointed ahead to Jesus.

Matthew has a special fondness for the Messianic prophecies (Matthew 1:23; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21). He clearly regarded these as *incomplete* without Jesus. *John presents Jesus* by reviewing the figure of Moses. John demonstrated that Moses was unable to deliver Israel from death (John 6:49; 8:51-53) and sin (John 8:12,31-34). Jesus could do both.

Stephen’s powerful speech (Acts 7:2-53) points out the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 15:13,14. Stephen traced history in which significant encounters with God occurred and then pointed to the Old Testament worthies in the seed line of Jesus who had been crucified.

Paul drew upon the Old Testament prophecies to teach how the Gentiles would receive salvation by grace. God is one God for all of mankind. If so, then He cannot be only the God of Israel, but Gentiles also (Romans 3:29,30).

The author of Hebrews (1:5-13) used Psalms to apply to Christ and the Davidic kingship. Psalms 8:4-6 (Hebrews 2:6-8) says things that cannot be true of any other man other than Jesus. A change of the priesthood occupied much of Hebrews. Because of human frailty, earthly priests’ sacrifices could not save people (Hebrews 5:2,3; 7:23). Jesus the new High Priest made up this shortfall (Hebrews 7:25-28). The Levitical priesthood was nullified and a new priesthood appears after the order of Melchizedek. Passages like Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:15-17) and Psalms 40:6-8 (Hebrews 10:5-7) demonstrate the expectation of something better, which were Jesus Christ, the kingdom and the church.

New Testament writers use the Old Testament to explain Jesus and uses Jesus to explain the Old Testament. This is not a circular process, but a demonstration of how God completed His promises. This demonstration is helpful for summing up all things in Christ.—*Don Hatch* □



Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 14:13—a twofold meaning: (1) a descendant of Eber (Genesis 11:17); (2) “one from beyond”—to cross over (people from across the Euphrates, Joshua 24:2)
2. Jacob and Joseph, Genesis 50;
3. Exodus 1:15;
4. Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59;
5. Exodus 3:1; 4:27; Numbers 10:33; 1 Kings 19:8;
6. Exodus 3:5 (notice the context);
7. 2 Timothy 3:8 (Exodus 7:10-13);
8. Exodus 16:15,31; Numbers 11:7;
9. Judges 7:1;
10. Job 26:7;
11. Amos 8:1,2;
12. John 8:1-11;
13. John 11:35;
14. Acts 1:15-26;
15. Acts 11:22;
16. 2 Corinthians 4:4;
17. Titus 1:12,13;
18. 1 Peter 5:13 (2 Timothy 1:2);
19. 1 John 4:8,16;
20. Revelation 1:9. □

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What Might Have Been

We may let many futile thoughts engulf our minds about the past,
And as we contemplate and ponder them,
we are the more harassed.

We see the things as they are now and wonder how they might have been
If everything had stayed the same, unchanged, continuing on as then.

—By James E. Gibbons

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A Bible

RIDDLE QUESTION

What man in the Bible broke all of the Ten Commandments, but in doing this was guilty of breaking none?

[Answer found elsewhere in this issue of the paper]

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