

The Advocate of Truth

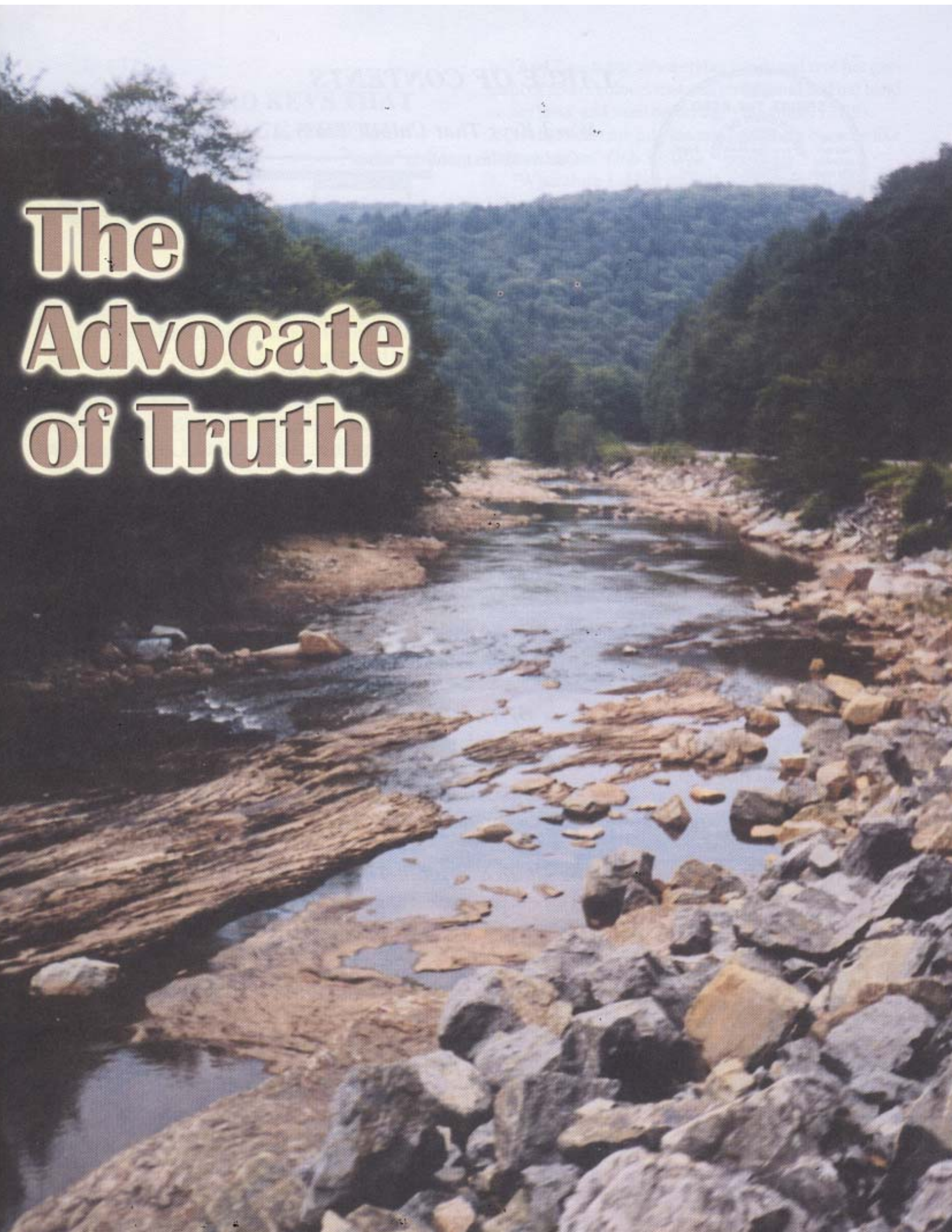




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We hope everyone has a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

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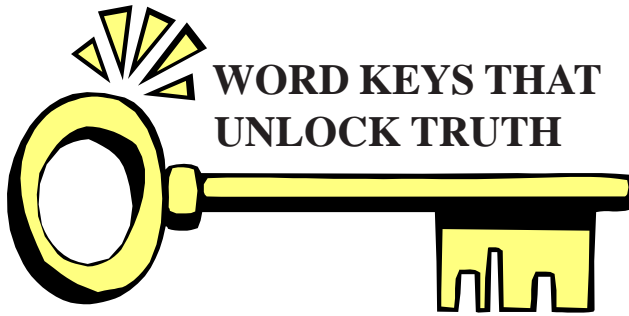
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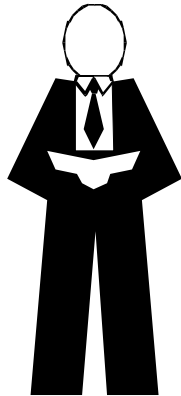
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ASHES

In the Scriptures, ashes symbolize human frailty as in Genesis 18:27: "And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." Ashes also symbolize deep humiliation as in Esther 4:1: "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry." To sit in ashes was a token of mourning as in Job 2:8: "And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." Feeding on ashes appears to express grief. "For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping" (Psalm 102:9).

Some more Scriptures which mention ashes are as follows:



In our society, we have many Christian ministers and pastors who preach in the name of Jesus Christ. But when they are examined by what they preach, we find that in many instances that they actually teach and preach a different Gospel than that of Jesus Christ. Teachings of man's ideas and traditions become intermingled and are presented to the people as the teachings of Jesus Christ. Many people who just believe their teachings, without person-

1. "And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying" (II Samuel 13:19).
2. "He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes" (Job 30:19).
3. "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).
4. "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isaiah 44:20)
5. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him: wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" (Isaiah 58:5)
6. "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us" (Jeremiah 6:26).
7. "For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (Jonah 3:6).
8. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13).

Christ's True Minister

By Siegfried Maywald

ally reading the scripture and verifying what they heard is correct, become misled into a man-made gospel which is preached in the name of Christ, but in fact is contradicting His words. Christianity has become in many instances a popularity contest to please people and their ideas about God. They represent a Christianity which is popular and "politically correct." It does not restrict, offend or degrade anyone's individual way of life. It allows a "freedom

of expression" whether it is in agreement with the scriptures or not. This then is more acceptable in our modern society because strict adherence, restraint, discipline and respect toward the Word of God is too restitutive, does not allow the freedom of individual expression, which is now accepted and has to be tolerated according to many modern theologians.

God's Word sets definite standards. It sets moral guidelines and tells us what is good and acceptable and what is not. So we see what is going on in the world today. We see what kind of Christian stewards are being set up. Many Christian leaders practice what one calls in worldly affairs as "jobbing". A jobber is one who tries to turn his or her official position and actions to his or her own advantage. Religious "jobbers" are those who seek holy office and do Christian work for their own benefit, just like jockeys who ride someone else's horse for their own profit. Those Christian workers are only spotted with Christian characteristics, but in truth are far from being Christian. They simply present to the people another foundation which is not in Jesus Christ, but after their own liking.

"Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law" (Zephaniah 3:4).

"For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness saith the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:11-12).

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teachings for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Matthew 7:15-19 gives us a warning: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them

by their fruits, Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." We see the fruit which we now reap according to our actions. We see the corruption, the moral decay, the criminal activity, the disobedience to order and discipline among the youth in our society. We see these things happening, and still Christianity does not seem to wake up nor recognize the failure in their teachings and begin to counter this decline in our society. We have to wake up and start to teach the full truth as found in the Word of God. We have to return to proven wisdom and reintroduce and accept the restraint, the discipline as outlined in the scriptures and teach man so, to return our society again to decency, respect and order. For Matthew 24:5-7 gives us a reminder: "For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." This is exactly what we see happening in the world today.

Qualifications

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:2-7). A warning was given to the wayward pastors in Israel: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold,

I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:1-2). Let our modern day ministers take warning!

Directives

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:2-4).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Timothy 2:24-26). A true servant of Christ does not exercise lordship over his flock but leads by example. A true follower of Christ does not teach just theories or assumptions as the teaching of Christ. Theories and assumptions have nothing to do with the issue of salvation, but are issues of genealogy with probabilities which only cause strife and contentions to the detriment of the Gospel. Neither should a minister strive about words to non profit. "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (II Timothy 2:14).

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" (I Timothy 1:4).

"But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among

you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister" (Mark 10:42-43).

Admonishment

Shepherds who engage in theological debates are feeding themselves only and forget to feed the flock. They forget the commission which Jesus gave them in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock" (Ezekiel 34:2-3).

Acts and traits of character

It is remarkable how some ministers can preach and teach, but when it comes to actually living according to what they preach, they seem to completely falter in their efforts to do so and thereby set a bad example to all who observe their actions. It is in similarity just like the outline of a leaf that in fact represents the nature and type of the whole tree. It reveals the tree's character to which it belongs so the implanting of a little word or deed of the person will also reveal the whole character. The words are the deeds which reveal the whole character of the person that speaks them. Therefore a hasty, uncharitable, unbecoming, unloving act shows that this man's heart is not right with God. Just like a tree's leaf reveals that character of the tree it originates from, so likewise will a person's words reveal the character and intent of the heart they come from. They reveal whether there is love and compassion or not, whether they bear fruit according to God's Word or not.

"And they come unto thee, as people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31).

The shepherd, the watchman to warn the people

"But if the watchman sees the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 33:6-9).

Power for shining Christian leaders

Just like all cut diamonds don't shine alike, so also all ministers don't shine alike. But the brilliance depends largely on the character of its diamond facets. A diamond that isn't cut does not shine. Therefore, we need three things that make ministers as well as Christians to shine. These three things are:

1. They must be diamonds hardened and tried by the Word of God, steadfast and unmovable. A person who ministers must be consistent in his life and God's Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit transforms a person by indwelling in him and gives him the power, the influence to become effectual.

2. They must be cut, polished by God's Word after His will. They must have adopted the character traits of Jesus Christ our Lord. A man can not work in an evangelistic field if he does not belong to the army of God.

3. They must abide in the truth as found in the Word to become the lights that shine in the world for people to see. They can not make compromises to please people or accommodate "political correctness", but have to be able to defend the Word of God against any attack or misrepresentation.

Ways to seed the Word

Just like the farmer has two ways of planting his seed, so also has the preacher two ways of spreading the Gospel to the world. The farmer in planting may scatter the seed by broadcasting it or may use the careful measured way of seeding with the help of a seed drill. So the preacher may seed the word of God by broadcasting it via radio or TV, or may personally plant God's word into the hearts of people in a spoken or written form as they are able to hear it. He thereby is rightly dividing the Word of God as we read in II Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Hypocrisy in theology

Hypocrisy is when people profess to believe in Jesus Christ, but through their wicked ways deny Him. By doing so, they put Jesus Christ to shame and also deny Himself a place in their lives. What we mostly see is confession with the mouth but no true action. They may propagate an outward appearance of holiness, but their heart in truth is far removed from God in all their ways.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5).

General advice

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:18-21).

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any-

thing, nor uncircumcision, but (we all become) a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:15-16).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

RULING OVER OUR OWN SPIRIT

By Moises Torres M.



"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28).

The verse above is expressly related to the wrath of men.

When people do not have self control over their own spirit or aggressive impulses, they may get so excited and mad that they can work their own destruction committing unpardonable sins. Some people easily get out of control and become so offensive over anything that they can seriously hurt or even kill others in a moment. This kind of people is "like a city that is broken down, and without walls" or defense, because nothing can keep them from doing their evil desire.

King Solomon gives us some moral and spiritual precepts to help to control our spirit.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Proverbs 16:32). "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated." "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (Proverbs 14:17, 29). In short, these verses point to the difference between being slow or impulsive to anger. Those able to rule their spirit are compared to a mighty conqueror; the others are considered

foolish and hated.

We're all exposed to offenses, critics, and aggressions, but the admonition of the Lord is to be slow to wrath, (James 1:19), and even learn or suffer to be defrauded.

"Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:7).

Other good advice is given in Proverbs 25:21: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." (Romans 12:20). Paul, the apostle, knew these scriptures also.

A quick tempered character may be an evidence of being captive in lust and idolatry: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud...etc." (II Timothy 3:2). Today, this is very common everywhere.

The solution to controlling our spirit is to give place in our lives to the Power of God, and not only knowledge. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded" (James 4:7-8).

THE CLOTHESLINE SAID SO MUCH

A clothesline was a news forecast
To neighbors passing by.
There were no secrets you could keep
When clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link
For neighbors always knew
If company had stopped on by
To spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the fancy sheets
And towels on the line;
You'd see the company tablecloths
With intricate design.

The line announced a baby's birth
To folks who lived inside
As brand new infant clothes were hung
So carefully with pride.

The ages of the children could
So readily be known

By watching how the sizes changed
You'd know how much they'd grown.

It also told when illness struck,
As extra sheets were hung;
The nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too,
Haphazardly were strung.

It said, "Gone on vacation now"
When lines hung limp and bare.
It told, "We're back!" When full lines sagged
With not an inch to spare.

But clotheslines now are of the past
For dryers make work less.
Now what goes on inside a home
Is anybody's guess.

I really miss that way of life.
It was a friendly sign
When neighbors knew each there best
Because of that clothesline!



THANKFUL FOR THE LORD'S WORKS TO BE DONE

By Bond Tennant

November is national Thanksgiving month in the United States. The people of this country have much for which to be thankful. They enjoy bounties of food, clothing, and housing far beyond those of other nations. In large areas of the world, the masses are in a state of abject poverty and want. In the United States, the people

also enjoy freedom of speech and action along religious, as well as political lines. This is also a great cause for deep gratitude and thankfulness.

However a true child of God, wholly devoted to knowing and doing God's will, can take little comfort in the realization that he has more to eat and wear, and a better

home in which to live, than the people of other countries. This manifestation of the Lord's greatness is accepted with appreciation. However the child of God longs for the time to come when the people of all nations will share alike in the good things of earth; not because man will find a solution for human problems, but through the fulfillment of the promises of God to establish a kingdom of righteousness when "all families of the earth" will be blessed. See Genesis 12:3.

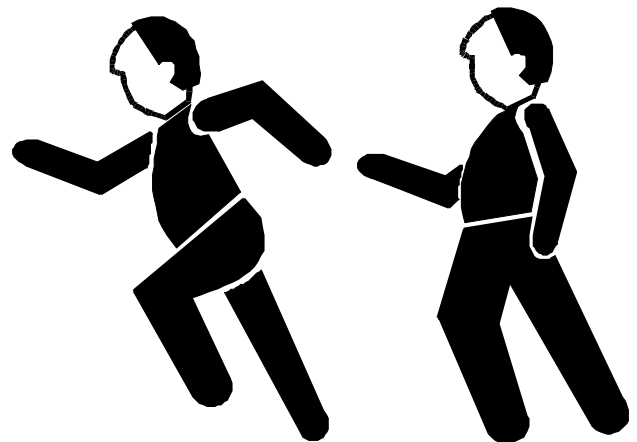
Jesus said to His disciples, "...it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matthew 13:11). "...many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them" (vs.17). The same is true today. As they have been revealed to us, it is another wonderful cause for thanksgiving. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are the works of the Lord. Those to whom they have not been revealed hold the mistaken view that all who do not accept Christ in this life are forever lost. According to the view of many, to be lost means to suffer an eternity of torture in a hell of fire and brimstone.

Let us be thankful that we have been delivered from this hallucination, and to understand that the work of the Lord in this Gospel Age is not the enlightenment and con-

version of the whole world, but the calling out from the world a people to be associated with Jesus as priests and kings in His thousand-year kingdom. "Simeon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:14-18). "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

Let us thank God for the assurance that His works will be victoriously accomplished in His own due time. The saints will rule and reign with Christ, and then God's promised blessings of joy and life will flow out to all mankind during the thousand-year kingdom.

THE RACE



"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of

God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:1-3).

In Hebrews 12, the Apostle Paul assures the children of God that their experiences would be of sufficient length and difficulty that their resolve and commitment will be thoroughly tried. He likens those experiences to a race.

The race will be won not by the swift, but by those who patiently endure. Paul forewarns his brethren that circumstances might arise that would cause some to succumb to weariness, and question their ability to continue their run. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Corinthians 9:24). "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

One of the vital purposes of the race run by the children of God is to bring them to a gradual realization of their personal weaknesses. This purpose is not to humiliate, but to develop within them a more perfect attitude of submission to God's will and transforming power. To enter the race, one must present his body to God thereby surrendering ownership, disowning its appetites and preferences. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). To finish the race, one must be transformed.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (vs. 2). Only if those chosen for the race submit

utterly, as clay submits to the strong hands of the potter, can the necessary process of transformation be accomplished in them. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Romans 9:21).

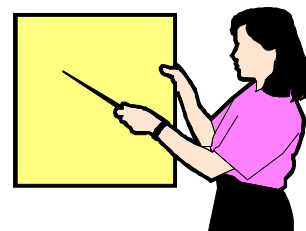
The discovery of one's frailties can be unsettling. Confronted by failings they expected to have long ago overcome, the brethren who have run the longest are often the most vulnerable to doubt. Pondering their frailties for longer, they may question their ability to continue the race. Some say, "I expected to feel stronger by now, but I feel weak, perhaps even weaker than when I began." It is here that Satan can enter in and cause confidence to slip. Those who run this race feel strong when they begin. However, as they run, they perhaps stumble. As they stumble, they become increasingly aware of their inadequacies. That awareness, as essential as it is, can cause great consternation for those in the race, all of whom long to serve God perfectly. It is vital that the brethren who run this race understand their faults, and that they are neither a surprise nor a disappointment to their heavenly Father. He knew precisely how weak they were before He called them and elected them to run the race.

- Contributed

SISTERS...NEVER TAKE FOR GRANTED THE WORK OF OTHERS IN THE CHURCH



By Rebeca Calzada
Houston, Texas



Many times we as women tend to whine about how others don't help do anything in the church or that others have the easiest work to do. This is an attitude or comment that we can easily make, but it is also an attitude with which our Lord is not pleased to see or hear from one of His children.

Let us look at I Thessalonians 5:12-13: "And we beseech you, brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's

sake, And be at peace among yourselves." We can see by these verses that our Lord wants us to appreciate the work of our brethren who preach to us and admonish us, but this also can be applied to the women in the church who serve as deaconesses or help in any other way in the church.

We should also appreciate their work and love them, truly love them for their work simply because they are serving our God. They love Him and demonstrate it through serving us. They may admonish us, motivate us,

or just advise us. Sisters, we should always listen humbly to our brethren who do this work for us just as if the Lord is talking to us. Have we forgotten that God talks to us in these days through His words and His Holy Spirit? Well, our brethren have of that Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us be careful the next time we are about to take for granted the work that our brethren do for the love of God's church.

We also read at the end of verse 13 that we should be at peace among ourselves. How can we have peace if we criticize or take for granted any work of the brethren. "Any" means from just carrying something to the kitchen or to sweeping the floors. Sisters, we need to be examples to our husbands, parents, or brothers by obeying God, appreciating the work of others in the church and helping out as much as we can.

In Acts 9:36 we read, "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." We can see that this woman had the characteristics of a true child of God. This is a good example for us to follow as women in the church. Sometimes many of our sisters do this same kind of work, but they don't make it public. Therefore, we are not aware of it. Your personal opinion may be that she is just sitting there in church. Out in the world, she may be doing God's work, but she is not announcing it. You may think that she is not doing anything. Therefore, you take her work for granted by simply thinking wrongly.

Another example of a work our brethren do in the church is hospitality. I Peter 4:9 tells us, "Use hospitality

one to another without grudging." Many of our sisters offer hospitality not only to the church members but to any in need. This is a type of work that you constantly have to do to be serving your brother or neighbor. If you see any of our sisters doing this work, please don't take it for granted by criticizing it because hospitality is a beautiful work to do.

Let us read about a widow named Anna in Luke 2:36-37. "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." This woman also left us a good example to follow. Many of our elderly sisters do this work, and it may not be visible to your sight. Let's not take their work for granted.

Sisters, in anything we do for the church or for anyone, let us do it with happiness so that we can grow in love. Our Lord commands this in Colossians 3:23-24: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Perhaps you already know this, but it is not about knowing but putting it into practice. So Sisters, let us be righteous like our Heavenly Father wants us to be, and never take for granted the work that others do in the church. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do

THE SIN OF CRITICISM

Reprinted from the November 23, 1992
ADVOCATE OF TRUTH

On a dark night several years ago a man was driving an automobile along a road on which an unusual cloud-burst had washed a gully six feet deep. The gully was hidden by a slight rise, and before the man could stop his car, it plunged into space. The contents of the auto were scattered throughout the vehicle before it finally settled



again on its wheels. The headlights were uninjured and continued to illuminate the damaged road, but within the car were indescribable confusion and darkness.

When man, through Adam, fell into sin, his interior life "went black." He is confused and had little power to see himself as God sees him, not to mention as other men see

him. Yet his "headlights" continue to function, and as he looks out upon the world he has considerable skill in noting its imperfections.

We are trained to be critical; our cultural advancement and the educational process tend only to sharpen our critical faculties. The study of the various sciences and the subjects requires us to tear things apart for minute examination in order that we may understand the structure. This is proper in its place. We could make no advancement without it. But when this highly developed critical faculty, untempered with love, is applied to our human relationships, it damages our spiritual lives and those of our fellow men.

Probably more harm is done to the spread of the Gospel message and the advancement of the kingdom of heaven by our uncontrolled critical faculties than by almost any other sin, and is among those against which Scripture warns most frequently. The sinner has difficulty in keeping his attention on the glorious Gospel of redeeming love when the person whom the Holy Spirit would use is in a critical or "holier than thou" frame of mind. Not always the spoken work of criticism, but the critical attitude of the heart, unexpressed, may exert an evil influence. Criticizing is a besetting sin of people.

Why is a critical attitude wrong?

First, it is unfair to the one criticized.

It spreads damage to his name (Titus 3:2).

It can never be done fairly or righteously (John 7:24; James. 4:12); there are too many uncertain factors governing the action of the person criticized.

To what extent has God laid burdens or handicaps upon the one criticized, at birth (innate), or acquired later through sickness or accident? We may be in the position of criticizing God.

To what extent has Satan bound, beguiled or imprisoned him? We cannot determine the degree to which he is bound by chains of habit.

I am too sinful myself (John 8:7) to be justified in criticizing another.

When I criticize a person my criticism usually gets back to him, causing him to stumble, and making me guilty of producing anger and resentment in this heart (Romans 14:13; Matthew 13:26).

Though unexpressed, criticism affects my attitude toward him - an attitude which he senses and that creates a barrier marring fellowship and usefulness.

Second, criticism is unfair to the person criticizing.

Criticism is in itself sin (Jeremiah 9:8; Galatians 5:20; John 8:15-16).

It is Satan's method of bolstering my pride (Isaiah 65:5).

It proves beyond doubt that I know the act criticized is wrong, which sets the standard of God's judgment of me (Matthew 7:1-2; Romans 2:1).

It causes bickering. Intolerance and impatience are contagious. Sitting in judgment is like a boomerang.

It is Satan's method of hiding my sin from myself. Satan uses another's character as a mirror to keep me from recognizing that sin in my heart; this he accomplishes by fixing my attention on the other person (Romans 2:12).

Criticizing creates an attitude of prejudice which blocks the avenue through which God would bless me. For example, how much I lose if I criticize an educated lay preacher or someone to whom God may have entrusted some segment of His truth. We fail to get the blessing God wants us to have (I John 2:9-11).

Third, criticism is not fair to God Himself.

When we criticize, the law of love taught by Christ and exemplified on the Cross is violated. Loving and "sitting in judgment" are opposites.

When we criticize we sit in judgment on God's handiwork. We do not know what the burdens are that God has laid on that one whom we criticize (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 119:73).

We touch the "apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8) when we harm one of God's own. The Father loves even the deepest-dyed sinner, the most leprous person, as viewed from the human standpoint, and "gave his only begotten Son" for him. The Son loves and "laid down his life" for such a one (John 3:16; I John 3:16).

Is a critical attitude ever permissible? Is it justifiable? What is the proper attitude to take when one sees another sinning or stumbling? Facts must be faced and we must distinguish between right and wrong. What is the Scriptural basis for this?

First, Calvary's love covers (I Peter 4:8). What is the attitude of the parent toward a child when it sins? To defend and cover is then alarum reaction. Love does not enjoy having the "family laundry" on the line. When two motives are possible, love always attributes the better of the two until evidence proves otherwise (Proverbs 10:12; I Corinthians 13:4-6).

Second, Calvary's love restores (Galatians 6:1-2; Leviticus 19:16-17). One must begin by searching his own heart and severely judging of himself. The Holy Spirit must deal with sins in his life that may prove an obstacle in the humble approach to the one to be restored. Then only is one fit to be a co-worker with God, to take Christ's yoke upon him, to grieve for the fellow sinner and seek to bring him into relationship with the Spirit that he may repent, confess and be cleansed and restored through "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son" (I John 1:7).

Third, Calvary's love prays (I John 5:16). There are times when efforts to restore seem only to create more sinning in the form of resentment. This may be because we are not yet spiritual (Galatians 6:1-3), or possibly Satan has too firm a grip on the sinner. Prayer should be employed under every circumstance.

When I am criticized, what is to be done?

When the tables are turned and I am the victim of criticism, there are some definite principles which should be followed.

First of all, guard against self-defense. The Pharisees sought to justify themselves. When someone calls me "stubborn," Satan is liable to urge me to dig a trench and suggest that I shoot the same or similar accusation at the offender, whom Satan then encourages to procure sandbags and think of new words to fling back at me.

Why hit back? The person has already done himself more harm than I can possibly do by retaliating. In the long run, reputation does not depend on words but deeds and the heart condition out of which deeds issue. We can trust our reputations with the Lord. It is sometimes desirable to correct misinformation, but that differs from retaliation, and does not violate the law of love.

I must avoid resentment or bitterness with all the help I can get from the heavenlies, for it creeps in like dust under the doorsill, is harder to detect than poison gas, and its roots go deep.

When you are criticized, say, first, "Thank you, I will think it over!" Then take the matter to God in prayer and thank Him for permitting this test of love for Him and your neighbor to come into your life.

Ask God if that is true of you, if the criticism is true, make it straight, and thank Him again for what part is true. If it is not true, rejoice and forget about it, but let love and compassion flow to the one whom Satan sought to use.

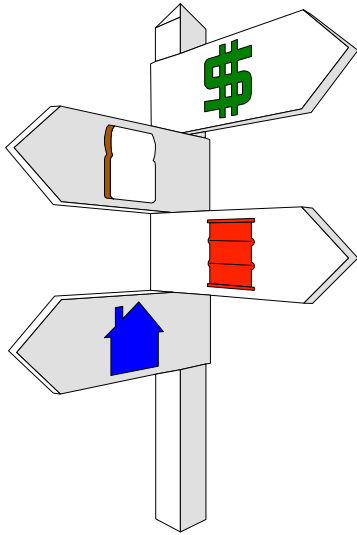
The attitude of the Psalmist is to be coveted: "Let the righteous smite me, time shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head; let not my head refuse it: for even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue" (Psalm 141:5, R. V.).

Christ's attitude, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), was also that of Stephen. When this first martyr died he was living so close to the Lord that he could pray, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Jesus' use of the word "enemy" in the command "love your enemies," was a concession to the vocabulary developed from our human attitudes. Actually, to the spiritually minded person there is no enemy outside of Satan and self. Let us be our own most severe judges and our neighbors' best lovers.

I'M THANKFUL

I'm not too small to thank the Lord
For all His love and care;
And ever thankful I shall be
At home, or anywhere.
He always is so kind to me,
And don't you think I ought
To thank the one, who with His Blood
My sinful self has bought?
So I shall thank Him every day
In every way I can;
For I am sure that for my life
That is His living plan.
I should be very selfish if
I thanked Him once a year -
Just when Thanksgiving Day arrives -
And much ashamed, I fear.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

The following articles appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*.

ANIMAL AFTERLIFE DEBATED

by David Briggs

Newhouse News Service

Heaven can't wait for a lot of family pets.

In some households, a dog's life could be considered paradise on Earth. An indulgent baby-boomer generation has given rise to such institutions as doggie day care, doggie spas and doggie vacations.

Nor does the connection end in this life. Witness the growth in pet cemeteries and sympathy cards for grieving animal owners.

But what about the next life? Do all dogs go to heaven?

Speculation on the afterlife of pets has increased as houses of worship respond to the new devotion by offering more services, including the blessing of animals.

Several books, Web sites and religious services keep alive the memory of pets and offer hope to owners that death will not separate them from their canine loved ones.

In an animal memorial service at the Cleveland Buddhist Temple, Arlene Rosenberg joined other grieving owners in a ceremony celebrating their pets' lives, placed a picture of her pooch, Golda, on the altar and talked about "the tremendous joy, empathy and compassion" the dog brought to her family.

Still fresh in their grief from her pet's death three weeks earlier, the Jewish woman from University Heights, Ohio, said she found the Buddhist service comforting.

"There's no doubt in my mind (Golda) has an incredibly beautiful soul," she said. "I feel very strongly that I will be reunited with her one day."

Dog owners need the reassurance that they will be reunited with their pets in the next life in much the same way that religious people cope with the death of a loved one with the belief they will meet again in heaven, some observers say.

"It gives more than comfort," said Mary Buddemeyer-Porter, author of *Will I See Fido in Heaven?* "Until they actually believe their pets are in heaven, they can't have any comfort."

Religious speculation on the after life of animals is limited. Even a universally admired theologian such as C.S. Lewis, who was fascinated by the topic, worried that he would find himself "in company with all the old maids" for giving it too much attention, according to Stephen H. Webb, professor of religion and physiology at Wabash College.

Several trends, including the gradual historical change from animals serving an agricultural society to the modern pet culture, and the growing animal rights and environmental movement, have created serious interest in the spiritual life - and potential after life - of animals.

There are no direct biblical texts on the subject of animal afterlife. Instead, there are several theories as to whether pets, which are not considered capable of making conscious moral choices, can make it into heaven.

Some say cats and dogs are immune from both heaven and hell because they do not have the mental capacity to make choices affecting salvation.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing for us. "Heaven goes by favor," wrote author Mark Twain. "If it went by merit, you would stay out, and your dog would go in."

Others say that, precisely because they are sinless,

dogs and other animals will be restored in the new creation. It wasn't animal sin that ruined the first Eden, and there is no reason animals will be kept out of the kingdom to come, say those who believe a dog's life extends heavenward. They point to the presence of animals in the images of heaven in Revelation.

"All of the animals will go to heaven. They are sinless," said Niki Behrikis Shanahan, author of *There is Eternal Life for Animals*. "Every creature that was created was created for eternity."

A third theological stream speculates that some animals will go to heaven and others will not. For example, animals that exhibited viciousness toward other animals or human life may not make it; animals who are caring and gentle in this life could have a place in paradise.

Animal-rights advocates often point to the parable of the rich man and the beggar in the 16th chapter of Luke. The rich man who feasted sumptuously while the beggar sought scraps from his table ends up in hell. Would not the dogs who did not ignore the beggar but licked his sores in apparent comfort end up in heaven with the poor man?

The Gospel writer does not say.

Just as human beings ultimately must wait to find out what the afterlife will be like, so, too, will the fate of pets remain a mystery in this life, many say.

But it is important that clergy and theologians and religious folk are talking about the issue, said Webb, author of *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for animals*.

"To think about animal resurrection means that those bodies are valued and will be restored; it means that their lives, as well as their death, will have to be treated with respect," Webb wrote.

For many people, the grief process includes wondering about the next life. And while clergy still are hesitant about giving definitive answers, observers say pet owners are much less likely today to be dismissed as childish or told offhand that their dogs or cats are excluded from heaven.

In a recent discussion on *The Joyful Noise Letter*, the publication of the Fellowship of Merry Christians, the Rev. John Battern, a United Methodist pastor from Iowa, represented the consensus when he said it seems reasonable God would want humans to use their full capacity to love in heaven.

Thus, he said, "Yes, Virginia, there are dogs and cats and other wonderful creatures in heaven."

COMMENT

Animal afterlife is a vain debate. The Bible says nothing about animals having an afterlife. Most do not even understand anything about the afterlife of humans. The Bible does not even hint of a resurrection of animals. It seems that in the article the assumption is made that it is possible that animals could go to heaven after they die. Of course the same is believed (not speculated) when humans are involved.

We know the Bible teaches that there is no life for a dead person until the resurrection. We know that the resurrection, and the future life is only offered to man, and animals are excluded. The whole debate is based on a false assumption!

"THE ROOT CAUSE"

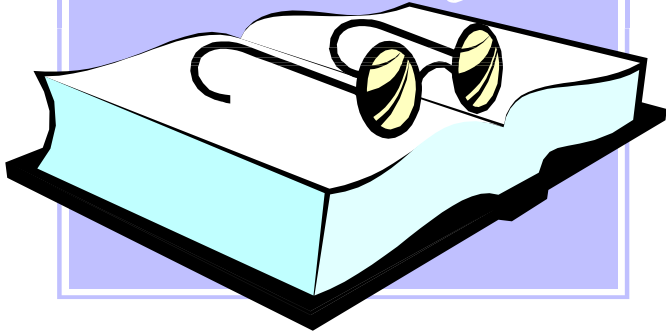
As we observe the events in the Middle East, we witness the mistrust, animosity and hatred that just recently escalated into another shooting war between the Jews and the Arabs. The networks have called in "experts" in a desperate attempt to explain to us the "background" and the "root cause" of the eruptions and bloodshed. Our president repeated several times that "we must understand the root cause" of the conflict. Unfortunately, the networks either do not know "the root cause", or they have failed to tell it! The oldest recorded book on the subject, the only authoritative Source of truth on this and any issue, gives us ample information on the subject.

The "ROOT CAUSE" of the hatred between the Jews and the Arabs is a manifestation of hatred for Israel that has smoldered in the hearts of the descendants of Ishmael (Arabs, Genesis 16) and Esau (Edomites, Genesis 36) since the beginning. As we read Psalm 83:1-12, we can visualize the attitude of the Arabs and their allies today. "They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Verse 4). We are told in Ezekiel 35 that the Arabs have had a "perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword..."

The writer read in a certain source that what is needed is more missionaries to proclaim the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ to the feuding Jews and the Arabs. This is not the solution to the problem! The only solution is the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace!

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Why do you teach that man does not possess an immortal soul? The immortal soul is like a peanut in a peanut shell. When the peanut is removed, the shell is just an empty case, much like our bodies are without our souls. Our bodies are just our earthly tents.

Answer: We teach that man does not possess an immortal soul because we cannot find the teaching of an immortal soul in the Bible. We understand that the belief in the immortal soul is one of the cornerstones of popular Christendom.

We are only concerned with what is taught in the Bible. Ezekiel 18:20 tells us that the soul that sinneth shall die. Souls are people, the whole person. "These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban give unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt were threescore and ten" (Genesis 46:25-27). They went into Egypt to buy bread during a time of famine. The definition of *nephesh*, the Hebrew word translated "soul," is "properly a breathing creature, i.e., animal or vitalities; used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense. It is a term used of a living, breathing creature's body, or person."

Nowhere does the Bible say that the body dies and the soul lives on. However, it does say that when a person dies, his thoughts perish. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:3-4). Ecclesiastes 9:5 tells us, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they anymore a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten." In Psalm 6:5, we learn: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Let us consider Isaiah 38:18, "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." There is no consciousness in the death state!

The Psalmist says of the person who is wealthy and esteemed and dies, "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever:) That he should still live forever, and not see corruption...Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Psalm 49:6-9, 14). Ecclesiastes tells us the same thing: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth

the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above the beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20). The illustration of the peanut in a peanut shell seems logical, but it is not according to scripture. When the body ceases to function, when the lungs no longer take in and expel air, when the heart stops beating, the body processes cease, the person is dead. The person is dead, without life and without consciousness and personality. The whole person is dead! Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (breath) shall return unto God who gave it."

Question: What is the "canon" of Scripture?

Answer: The word canon comes from a Greek word that means "measuring stick." Over time, the word eventually came to be used metaphorically of the books that were "measured" and thereby recognized as being God's Word. When we talk about the "canon of Scripture" today, we are referring to all the biblical books that collectively constitute God's Word.

Question: What is the best way to let my light shine before men?

Answer: This is a very good question which many have asked. It is a question for all children of God to ponder. To answer this question to the best of our ability, we want to think of love and the God of love. God's love through you makes you a wonderful vessel to proclaim God's love and His truth. How many people will you have an opportunity to help to make happier today? When others look to you for a word of encouragement, will you be quick to answer and respond? Will you give them a cheery smile, a nod of approval, sincere praise, or a warm embrace, remembering that these expressions make a glad heart?

Is there someone who would appreciate a letter, or someone who would like a telephone call, someone who you need to visit with personally? Does that person feel that you are a busybody or are you really interested in his or her well being and you love them?

As you pray, you will know that God's love, expressed through you, makes you thoughtful of others. God's love makes you a blessing and will bring about a chain of love

that will link you with many lives. "As the Father hath loved, me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:9).

Question: In Revelation 6:12 (last part), we read: "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." What is sackcloth?

Answer: Sackcloth is a very heavy, coarse, dark colored cloth of goat's hair. It is worn as a sign of mourning next to the skin. In Esther 4:1, we read; "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry."

II Samuel 3:31 tells us, "And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier."

The putting off of sackcloth was, and is, a symbol of joy, of thanksgiving for deliverance from an intolerable position or condition. It celebrated a changing of affliction by one's enemies to the casting off of the yoke of bondage. "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness" (Psalm 30:11).

FIVE SIMPLE RULES

Remember five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred - Forgive.
2. Free your mind from worries - Most never happen.
3. Live simply and appreciate what you have.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.



Kenya and Benin

The following photographs show a baptism that took place in Kenya. Pastor Henry Miroro performed the baptisms. One of the candidates was one of our newest ministers from Benin, Paul Odimegwu.





LESSON I

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 29:1-19.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 29:2.

"And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done."

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson that king Ahaz was a wicked ruler. After his death, his son Hezekiah begins to reign at the age of twenty-five years. Let us see if he follows his father or if he tries to build up the kingdom again and cleanse the house of God.

1. How long does Hezekiah reign in Jerusalem? II Chronicles 29:1.
2. Did he please the Lord, and what did he do during the first year of his reign? II Chronicles 29:2-3.
3. Hezekiah brought the priests and Levites into the east street. What did he say to them? II Chronicles 29:4-5.
4. How had the fathers trespassed against the Lord, and what had the Lord caused to come upon them? II Chronicles 29:6-9.
5. What desire did Hezekiah have in his heart at this time? What did he advise the priests and Levites to do? II Chronicles 29:10-11.
6. Did they obey Hezekiah? II Chronicles 29:12-15.
7. What did the priests do first in II Chronicles 29:16?
8. How long did it take them to cleanse the house of the Lord? What did they tell Hezekiah they had done? II Chronicles 29:17-19.

LESSON II

HEZEKIAH CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 29:20-36.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 29:29.

"And when they made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped."

NOTE: Hezekiah is now king of Judah. He reigned from 726-697 B.C. He inherited a disorganized realm and began his reign with a great reformation. He broke down the idols and is now ready to cleanse the temple.

1. For what purpose did Hezekiah gather the rulers of the city? II Chronicles 29:20.
2. What was offered for a sin offering on the altar? II Chronicles 29:21.
3. Read II Chronicles 29:22-24, and then tell how the priests made the offering for all Israel.
4. What service did the Levities render in the house of the Lord? II Chronicles 29:25-26.
5. Describe the service in II Chronicles 29:27-30.
6. How many burnt offerings did the congregation bring? II Chronicles 29:31-33.
7. Were there many burnt offerings? Who helped in this service? II Chronicles 29:34-35.
8. The service of the house of the Lord was now still in order. Did all the people rejoice? II Chronicles 29:36.

LESSON III

**HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER
(PART 1)**

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 30:1-12.
Golden Text; II Chronicles 30:1 (last part).**

"...that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel."

NOTE: Hezekiah is still king of Judah. He has reopened and cleansed the temple of God so that the people may once more worship God. Now we will study about how Hezekiah sends a proclamation to all Israel to keep the Passover.

1. To whom did Hezekiah send a letter, and for what purpose? II Chronicles 30:1.
2. Why were they keeping the Passover in the second month? II Chronicles 30:2-3.
3. Was the decree sent to all Israel or just a portion of it? II Chronicles 30:5.
4. What message did the letters carry to the people of Israel and Judah? II Chronicles 30:6-9.
5. What did some of the messengers do? II Chronicles 30:10.
6. Did any of the people humble themselves and come to Jerusalem for the service? II Chronicles 30:11-12.

LESSON IV

**HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER
(PART II)**

**Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 30:13-27.
Golden Text: II Chronicles 30:21 (first part).**

"And the children of Israel that were present at

Jerusalem, kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness...."

NOTE: We last learned how Hezekiah proclaimed throughout Israel that they should come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the Lord. We will now see if Israel keeps the Passover.

1. Did many assemble in Jerusalem for the feast of unleavened bread in the second month? II Chronicles 30:13.
2. What did they do with the altars that were in Jerusalem? II Chronicles 30:14.
3. They killed the Passover on the 14th day of the second month. Did the priests and Levites sanctify themselves and the people of the congregation? II Chronicles 30:15-18.

NOTE: (A custom for Israel only).

4. Did the children of Israel keep the feast of unleavened bread? II Chronicles 30:21-23.
5. What did King Hezekiah give to the congregation? II Chronicles 30:24.
6. Was there great joy in Jerusalem? II Chronicles 30:25-26.
7. Did the priests and Levites rejoice? II Chronicles 30:27.

PRAYER TIME

All over the world many children are homeless today. Even though the orphanages they live in are nice, they are not like home. Pray for all the orphan children everywhere. Thank God for your own home.



GIVE THANKS

Lila Jo buried her hands in the folds of the soft, white blanket and held it close to her face. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! each step seemed to say. The faster she walked, the more the icy air bit her cheeks until they were chapped as red as apples.

Still she hurried down the muddy road stumbling over the bumps and ruts. "Hey! J.T.!" she called when she saw her brother sitting on the front steps. Then she waved the blanket for him to see. "Look what Mrs. Perkins sent for baby-sister!"

"What do I care?" J.T. grumbled.

Pa looked out the front door to see what was happening. "Come in out of the cold and sit by the fire," he said to J.T.

"That new baby cries all the time," J.T. complained. "I came out here to think."

"I do not care if she cries," said Lila Jo. "I am so thankful for a baby sister."

"That is the right attitude," said Pa. "Give thanks for everything!"

Lila Jo gave Pa a hug. Then she dashed into the house to give the blanket to Ma.

"This is going to be some Thanksgiving," whined J.T. "Mother will not be able to cook Thanksgiving dinner. That baby is crying all the time. At least the baby could have been a boy!"

Suddenly, J.T. stood up. "Look at that!" he sighed as he watched two figures tramping across the field. "Richard Wright is going hunting with his father. He has a new hunting outfit and not telling how many guns of his very own. I do not have anything! Why should I give thanks?"

Pa put his arm around J.T.'s shoulders to show him that he understood. "We do not have some things we would like to have," Pa admitted. "But God does care for us. We can give Him thanks for that. He is with us because we have always tried to follow Him."

J.T. pulled away from Pa and pressed his forehead against the post. "I just do not feel like it, Pa!" he whispered. "I just do not feel like giving thanks."

"I tell you what!" said Pa. "Just this once, for your Ma's sake and for Lila Jo's sake, let us give thanks anyway. Let us make this a happy thanksgiving for them. We will pop popcorn and play the guitar and sing."

"Well, all right," said J.T. bravely. "I will try to give thanks if it will make Ma and Lila Jo feel better."

J.T. felt better himself once he got started. Soon the corn was poppity-poppity-popping in the iron skillet in the fireplace. Pa tuned up his guitar while Lila Jo baked some apples until they were shiny red.

At first they did not even hear the knocking above the poppity-popping. Then the knocking got louder. J.T. ran to see who was at the door.

"Hey, Pa!" called J.T., "It is Mr. Wright."

"Please help me," Mr. Wright pleaded. "My son Richard has had a bad fall. His leg may be broken, and I was afraid to move him."

"Come on, J.T.," Pa said calmly. "We will take a quilt and bring him back on that."

Lila Jo watched at the window until Mr. Wright, Pa, and J.T. returned, carrying their helpless bundle in the quilt. She hurried to open the door for them. Then everyone helped to lower Richard carefully in the soft chair by the fireplace. Lila Jo scurried around to find a stool where Richard could prop his hurt foot.

"We will take good care of Richard while you go get the doctor," Pa told Mr. Wright.

As soon as Mr. Wright had gone, Lila Jo brought some popcorn for everyone to enjoy. Pa began to strum on his guitar, and they all began to sing songs of praises to God.

"I feel like giving thanks!" Pa said "God is always with us, caring for us."

"I want to give thanks for a new baby sister!" said Lila Jo. "And for popcorn and apples and guitar music."

"I would like to give thanks, too," said Richard "I am thankful that I got hurt tonight."

"You are?" asked J.T. in surprise.

"Sure!" said Richard. "If I had not gotten hurt, I never would have come here. This is the happiest place I have ever been."

When Mr. Wright returned with the doctor, they were both surprised to find Richard laughing and singing with the others.

"I have had a wonderful time," Richard told his father.

"May I stay here tonight?"

"There is no reason why he should not," the doctor said as he checked Richard's leg and foot. "He has simply sprained his ankle. I will bandage it up."

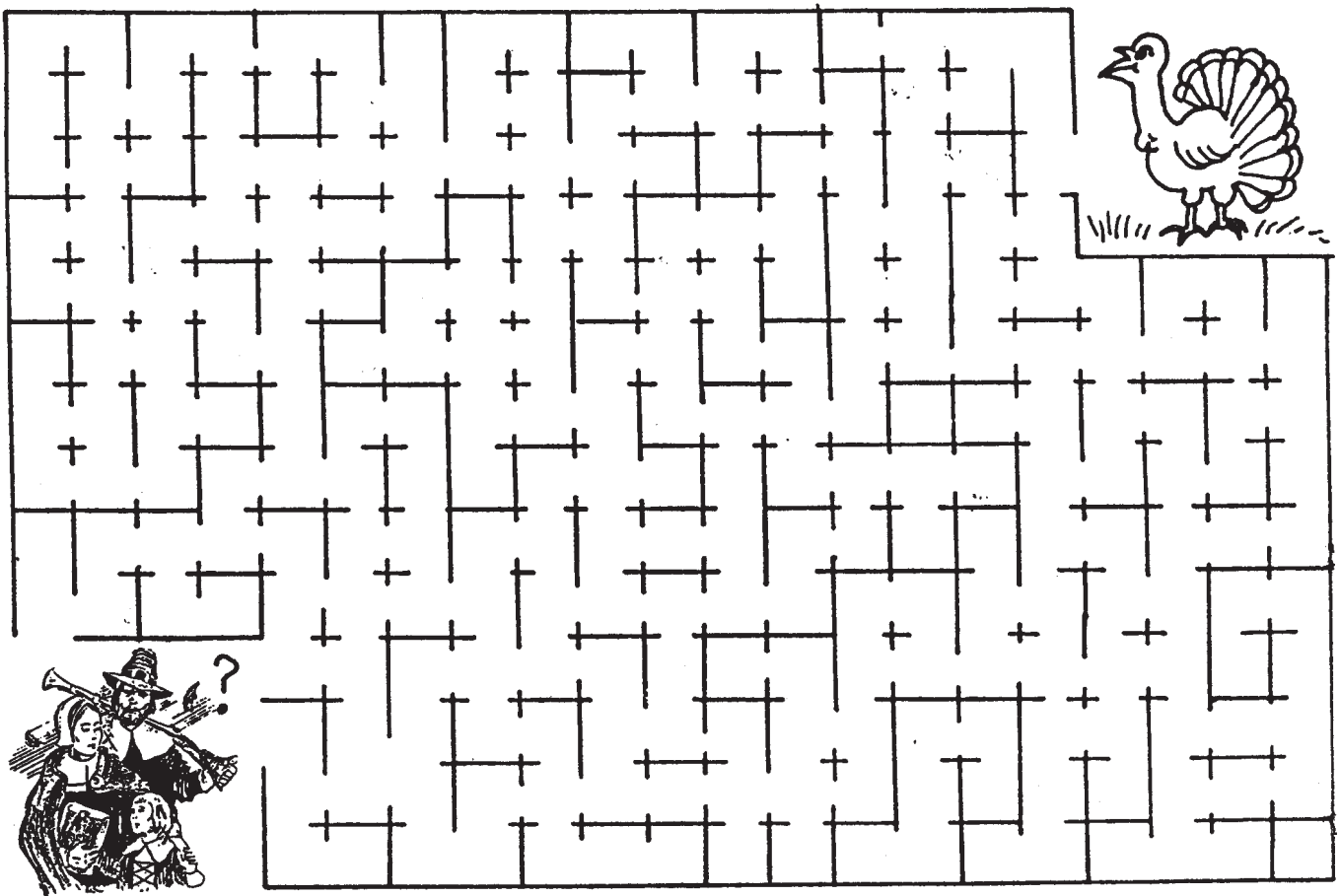
Mr. Wright thought for a minute. "I have an idea," he announced. "You may spend the night here. Our cook is going to prepare Thanksgiving dinner. Mother and I will drive here tomorrow and bring a turkey dinner for everyone."

"This will be the best Thanksgiving ever!" Lila Jo cheered.

J.T. looked across the room and smiled at Pa. A big grin covered Pa's face because he knew what J.T. was thinking. J.T. Had learned to give thanks!

MAZE

Help the Pilgrims find the turkey for Thanksgiving dinner.





Thanksgiving Be To Thee

By David DeLong

Lord —

For life, and health, and liberty,
For happy homes' tranquility,
For grace to pray on bended knee,
Thanksgiving be to Thee!

For a thousand thoughts You have of me,
For America, the land that's free,
For paying my sin upon the tree,
Thanksgiving be to Thee!

For laughter shown in childish glee,
For feasting, fun, festivity,
For folks now grown, and folks still wee,
Thanksgiving be to Thee!

For guiding us on land and sea,
For Scripture's life-unlocking key,
For a billion blessings we don't see,
Thanksgiving be to Thee!

For freedom paid by martyr's fee,
For strength from wickedness to flee,
For You alone—this is my plea
Thanksgiving be to Thee!