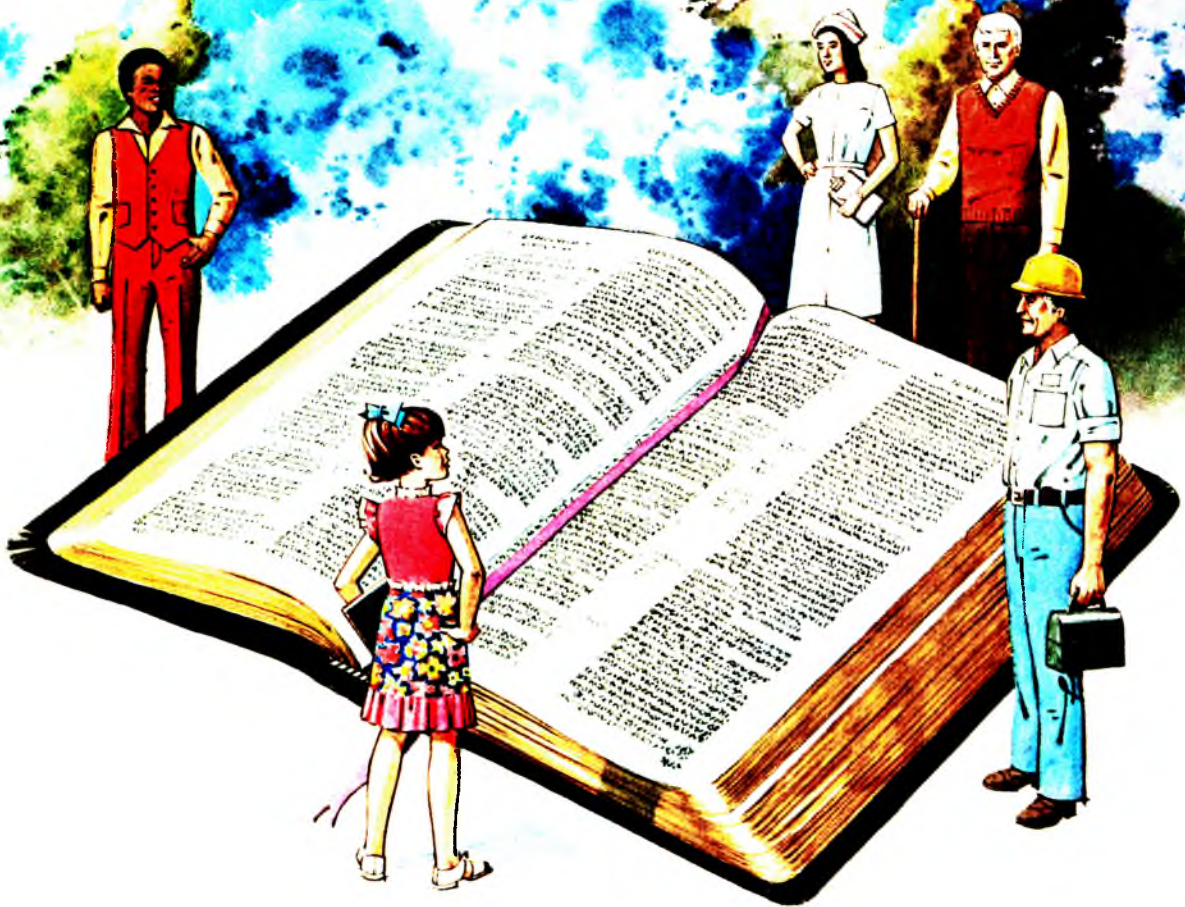


HERALD of HOLINESS

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE



"The Bible Tells Me So."

THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE

Renowned theologian Professor Karl Barth visited the United States in 1962. His appearance at the University of Chicago attracted ministers, theologians, and students from all over North America. And of course the press was on hand.

“Dr. Barth, you are recognized as perhaps the greatest theologian of this century,” one reporter began in an interview. “What is the most profound theological idea you have entertained?”

After a moment’s thought the Swiss theologian replied, “Jesus loves me! this I know, for the Bible tells me so”!

Karl Barth was not being facetious. In his ingenious way he was getting at the very heart of the Christian faith. The Bible, he must have meant, is both profound and simple—so profound no human mind can ever plumb its depths, so simple “that a fool, though a wayfaring man, need not err therein.”

But also Barth was pointing up the basic purpose of the Bible—to disclose God’s love in His Son Jesus Christ.

Many so-called “Bible students” have never seen this. Some consider the Bible an encyclopedia of information about interesting “religious” facts, designed also to tease

the human mind with such questions as, “Where did Cain get his wife?” Others study the Bible as if it were a divinely inspired jigsaw puzzle, and they invest all their ingenuity in trying to put it together in such a way as to answer all the questions about the end-time like “Where will Antichrist come from?” Yet others devote their strength and scholarly abilities to *defending* the Bible as God’s inerrant Word, unwittingly putting their trust in their own ability as men of reason rather than in the Spirit of Inspiration who breathed the Scriptures in the beginning.

The central message of the Bible is Jesus Christ, God’s Son and our Savior. The Bible is not simplistic; but it is “simple” in the true sense of the word—it has *one* theme: “God loved us and sent His Son.”

Martin Luther thought of the Bible as the manger in which Christ is laid. If we spend all our time examining the straw, we may prick our fingers. But if we are wise and faithful, our adoring eyes will fasten on the Son of God.

The one purpose of the Bible is to proclaim Jesus Christ as “the Way without which there is no going, the Truth without which there is no knowing,

and the Life without which there is no growing.”

“The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me.” Commenting on these words of St. Paul in Galatians 2:20, Luther gave this important bit of advice: “Read with great vehemency these words, ‘ME’ and ‘FOR ME,’ and so inwardly practice with thyself, that thou mayest conceive and print this ‘ME’ in thy heart, and apply it to thyself, not doubting that thou art of the number of those to whom this ‘ME’ belongeth. The Son of God loved *me*, poor wretched, damned sinner, as much as He loved Peter and Paul, and gave himself for *me* as much as He gave himself for them.”

The Bible is God’s living Word addressed to our puzzled and hurting hearts. Therefore read it as you would read a love letter from someone who is dear to you. Read not only the lines but also “between the lines” in order to savor the spirit which breathes within it. Pray as you read, “Open mine eyes that I may see!” and God will give you the Spirit who will reveal His love and His truth and heal your inner being.

As the articles of this issue suggest, God’s living Word touches every area of human need and concern. Although the Bible has but one theme, the implications of that message touch all of life and history. If in true obedience and simple faith you will *attend* God’s Word in the Bible, the Spirit who inspired its writers will illuminate your soul. □



by General Superintendent William M. Greathouse

by RUSSELL METCALFE
Wollaston, Mass.

GOD IS LOVE

“This is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10, NIV).



IT IS SUNDAY EVENING. Our congregation is singing. We are singing praise to the love of God. The words are old, familiar. I know them by heart, and love them. But somehow as we sing this evening they seem fresh and new:

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.*

I am deeply moved! Now I confess that many things move me. I have stood high in the Rockies and looked out across more than a hundred miles of mountain peaks with an unspeakable sense of awe. I am privileged to live near the ocean, and often I

“The Bible Tells Me So.”

sense God’s nearness as I am refreshed by the ever-changing beauty of the sea.

But nothing moves me like this deep realization of the paradox of God’s love. God loves me! So indescribably simple! This great Creator-God loves me! The God of eternal ages is light-years near! He fills the universe, but He loves me in particular!

We continue in song:

For me it was in the garden
He prayed: “Not My will, but Thine.”
He had no tears for His own griefs,
But sweat-drops of blood for mine.*

I am moved at the personal thrust of God’s love! God loves me! If He were any lesser person than God it could not be. For love of necessity is limited by the understanding and the integrity of the one who loves. Because we are loved of God in Jesus we may be certain that each of us is known and is important to Him.

It seems too good to be true! But God’s love is not diffused in some vague, shapeless, uncertain influence over all the universe; but rather God has you in sharp focus! He knows the particulars of my situation right now! What concerns us particularly concerns Him, too, because He loves us! He loves us! You and me!

The congregation sings the third stanza. We sing of the cost of God’s love:

In pity angels beheld Him,
And came from the world of light
To comfort Him in the sorrows
He bore for my soul that night.*

I am moved by the passion of the love of God in Christ for me! Before I loved Him, or ever knew He existed, He loved me with a love that was so very costly that it amazed the angels in heaven. As the

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sinless, holy love of Jesus came to grips with the reality of your sin and mine, and as He agreed to actually take our guilt and blame upon himself, His grief was so great that unless those angels had ministered to Him He could not have gone on. He loved me enough to bear deep sorrow in my behalf!

And now together we sing of the Cross:
He took my sins and my sorrows;
He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calv'ry,
And suffered, and died alone.*

I am moved by the power of God's love in Jesus. Not only willing to bear our guilt, grievous as that was, Jesus was able to carry our guilt and sin to the place of complete atonement. He, alone, was able to carry our sins away forever!

What a blending of tender compassion and mighty overcoming! What tremendous victory in this love that Jesus has for you and me! The Lord has permitted all our shame and failure to be laid on Jesus. And Jesus has carried it to Calvary! It is nailed to His cross. The power of His love has made it possible for us to be really free from sin.

We sing that last stanza:

When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see,
'Twill be my joy thro' the ages
To sing of His love for me.*

And I am moved by the thought of the permanence of God's love. Our lives are inextricably bound up with Jesus! As long as He lives, we live! His love does not end at Calvary! We are not a passing project. His love does not end when our years on earth have been numbered.

For Jesus has taken on himself our humanity. He has loved us with so great a love that through the eternal ages men and women may enjoy the privileges of sons and daughters of God! Through the ages I'll sing of His love!

But being deeply moved is not quite enough! On God's part love has been much more than an out-pouring of tenderness and emotion. It has been a reaching out—a seeking after—a quest for relationship. It is a humbling thing to be so very deeply loved. I would seek to respond with my whole being.

And so, deeper even than my deep feelings, at the level of my will I reaffirm my personal relationship of love to God as we sing. Even God appreciates being told that He is loved!

I thank Him again for bearing my sins to the Cross. I praise Him that my sins, even mine, are forgiven. I acknowledge His Lordship over my life. I thank Him for the cleansing, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

And I tell Him that He is Lord, not only of “the future” but of this day, this moment! I ask Him to accept my worship, and help me to love and serve Him better.

And my prayer is echoed by the final chorus:
How marvelous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous, how wonderful
Is my Saviour's love for me!*

*“My Saviour's Love,” by Charles H. Gabriel



Paul M. Schrock

SIN BRINGS DEATH

by CLARE ST. JOHN
Highland, Mich.

STEP INTO the world through the pages of Genesis and you are shortly aware of walking through a vast cemetery! At first it is a beautiful place; a garden, lovely and teeming with life. But suddenly all that changes. Man is ejected from Eden and the earth begins production of "thorns and thistles." The genealogical list in chapter five highlights the calamity which befell the human race. Here's a bit of it, "Adam . . . begat sons and daughters . . . and he died. Seth . . . begat sons and daughters . . . and he died. Enos . . . and he died . . . Cainan . . . and he died." It is a song of many verses each ending with the same refrain, ". . . and he died."

It matters not at all what one accomplished, how many children he had, or how long he lived, he did not escape that final phrase, "and he died." (The one exception was Enoch, who "walked with God . . . and . . . God took him.")

Why this universal death? Had the Giver of Life planned to tease man with a taste of life and then take it away? No. The tree of life growing in the gar-

den suggests that God intended for man to experience life but not death.

But another notable tree was growing there, that of "the knowledge of good and evil." This was to be the touchstone of man's obedience. Concerning it God's command was explicit, "Thou shalt not eat of it: . . . thou shalt surely die" (2:17). But man did eat of its fruit and so brought death into his race. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Romans 5:12).

Writing of the inception of sin and death, James uses the figure of conception and birth. "After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15,



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NIV). Death then is the natural issue of sin when sin matures.

Sin bringing death is a clear biblical teaching, not only as it affects the race but also each individual in that race. The pages of the Bible abound in real-life illustrations of it. One of the most unforgettable is that of Israel's first king.

Go down to the encampment at Gilgal where Saul, preparing to join battle with the Philistines, awaits the coming of the prophet Samuel. Samuel, who is to offer the sacrifice, delays his coming, and in a fit of fear and perhaps impatience, Saul arrogates to himself the function of a priest and commits the sacrilege of offering the burnt offering himself. Samuel arrives and seeing what the king has done sadly affirms, "Now thy kingdom shall not continue . . . because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee" (1 Samuel 13:14).

Go to Amalek and hear the same prophet thunder against the again disobedient king. Saul has defeated the Amalekites, but rather than utterly destroying them, as commanded by God, he has reserved the best of the livestock, and king Agag himself yet lives. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord," Samuel solemnly informs him, "he hath also rejected thee" (1 Samuel 15:23).

Continue to follow the career of the king and see how sin has taken over, growing more blatant as it grows stronger. Saul takes the lives of innocent priests at Nob, and tries on several occasions to kill David. Sin is bringing death.

Finally go up to Gilboa, bloody Gilboa, where among the fallen of Israel lays Saul's lifeless body. He who was chosen among all of Israel to be king, and early had shown extraordinary promise, now lies dead. Why? Hear the final and terrible verdict, "So Saul died for his transgression which he hath committed against the Lord" (1 Chronicles 10:13).

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20) is the unequivocal assertion of the Old Testament. "The wages of sin is death," echoes the New (Romans 6:23).

Sin brings death. Not just the "big" sins but *sin* brings death. Eating the fruit of the forbidden tree was a seemingly trivial act, but the doing of it set the

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will of man in defiance of the divine will. As holiness is found in bowing to the will of God, so the essence of sin is discovered in unbowed *self* will. Sin is self trying to depose God so that it can take the throne. "Ye shall not eat of it," commands the Creator; "I *did* eat," responds the man (Genesis 3:3, 13). In effect, "You shall not be my God," says man. "I shall." Therefore sin cuts man off from God, the Source and Sustainer of life, and so sin brings death.

Not only is the fact that sin brings death stated and reiterated and amply illustrated throughout the Bible, but when the life of the supreme Person was laid on the line, sin took that too! Christ on the Cross was Christ *dying*. His death was not merely apparent,

or a chimera. He died! He actually, literally and awfully *DIED!*

More than that, He died as none else can, and here begins the glorious gospel! Have you considered that Stephen faced death with more equanimity than did Christ? Not shrinking and asking that the "cup" might be removed, he apparently counted it all joy to die as a martyr to his faith.

But Stephen did not die the death that Jesus did! Alexander Maclaren explains; "The New Testament scarcely ever speaks of a Christian's death but as sleep, and with other similar phrases. But that expression, familiar and all but universal as it is in the Epistles in reference to the death of believers, is never in a single instance employed in reference to the death of Jesus Christ. He did die that you and I may live. His death was death indeed—He endured not merely the physical fact, but that which is its sting, the consciousness of sin. And He died that the sting might be blunted, and all its poison exhausted upon Him!"

So when James declares, "Sin . . . bringeth forth death" (James 1:15), he is declaring a truth from which there are no exceptions! *Sin brings death!* It always has, it always will. If sin could take the life of Christ, what hope do you or I have of escaping?

Yet our hope is in the fact that it did take His life! For when Satan through sin reached out for the life of Jesus, he overreached himself! For with *that* death, a way to life was opened to us! For Jesus deliberately put himself in reach of the loathsome hand of sin that we should be freed!

The legendary Faust gambled with Satan for high stakes—his soul! An artist painted it as a chess game; Faust on one side and Satan on the other.

The painting depicts the game as nearly over and Faust has but a few pieces remaining; the king, a knight and a pawn or two. On his face is a look of blank despair. Satan rubs his hands in gleeful anticipation of the coming takeover. Many a chess player has looked at the picture and conceded the game to be finished. Checkmate.

But one day a master of the game came into the picture gallery. He was captivated by the portrayal. At first he was taken in by the expression of hopelessness on the face of Faust. Then his gaze went to the pieces on the board and he stared long and hard, completely absorbed. Others came and moved on, but he remained in rapt contemplation. Then suddenly the gallery was startled by a ringing shout. "It's a lie! It's a lie! The king and the knight have yet another move!"

Man is indeed a sinner and sin brings death. No doubt about that. The situation is apparently hopeless. But the Bible tells us that the King had yet another move!! It was made when He sent His Son and through the blood of the Cross, "abolished death, and . . . brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). So while it is true that sin brings death, it is likewise true that Christ Jesus brought life!

Now, the "knight" has yet a move. It is to come in simple, obedient faith to that death-canceling cross. □

by KEITH A. PAGAN
San Diego, Calif.



JESUS SAVES SINNERS

THE CLOSE of the sentence stunned me for a moment! It was unexpected. I called on my nonelectronic brain to do an "instant replay" of what my pastor had just said: "In all my pastorates, I have made it a point to associate with the *wrong* people!" Yes, I had heard correctly. From that point on, the sermon was lost on me as I attempted to sort out the meaning of his emphasized statement. It seemed a bit incongruous. Here was a respected man, a minister with acceptance in the community, confessing to his congregation that he deliberately sought to make friends with the wrong crowd.

I could hear, in memory, my father's admonitions to me in my youth: "Son, be careful who you run with. Don't hang around the wrong crowd. People will judge you by the company you keep." This ingrained mode of thinking did not fit the sermon I was hearing very well at all. I was uncomfortable.

As I wrestled with the apparent contradiction, I came to a new realization of an ancient truth so often forgotten. God also sent His Son into the world with specific admonitions! It was purposeful: He was sent to the "wrong crowd." His brief lifetime was spent associating with them. So close was His identification that He was called a friend of sinners and taxgatherers. When the recognized religious leaders of His day challenged His behavior, he replied, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17, NASB).

Yes, He came as Friend of Sinners. It was for those who have transgressed His perfect law that He came. The poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed—these are the ones to whom He was sent.

It was a political traitor who received Jesus as a self-invited guest for lunch. It was a woman whose immorality was known throughout the community who lovingly washed His feet with rare perfume mingled with tears and wiped them with her hair. Freely her tears might justly flow, for the perfume had likely come to her as payment for illicit services. Small wonder that the religious community referred to Him as a "gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!" (Matthew 11:19, NASB).

One can almost hear the sneer in the voice and see the raised eyebrow! Our Lord was, indeed, associating with the wrong crowd. And as He did, He unleashed the most scathing attacks of His ministry upon those self-righteous ones who believed that a cup whose outside was washed was fit to drink from. His compassionate concern for the sinner and disdain for those who equated rigid legality with righ-



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teousness finally angered the organized right crowd to the point that they put Him to death.

As a follower of the Master, my pastor is on the right path! It is still true that the well do not need a physician. How easy it is for us to seek the satisfaction of being a part of the "in" crowd. For some this may be primarily a social consideration. For others it takes on the appearance of religious cowardice. It is not the high social strata they seek; it is, rather, the safe company of the righteous. We are also open to malignment for associating with the wrong crowd.

What if Jesus had followed their same priorities? Perhaps He would have been known as the Friend of Priests, the Pharisee's Pharisee, or even the Saint of the Sect of the Sadducees! And, if so, where would you and I be? Few of us are priests or Pharisees or Sadducees.

But He came as a Friend of Sinners—and we all qualify for His friendship. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NASB). The greatest leader of the early Christian Church claimed, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" (1 Timothy 1:15, NASB). Yes, Jesus came in love to St. Paul, when he was the sinner Saul. And He came to a tax collector whose operation was more like a modern protection racket than anything else. And He came to a slave trader who became a songwriter. And He came to one whose dirty tricks placed him in prison at the climax of the most highly publicized political scandal of modern times.

And He came to me! Had He been seeking the famous, the rich, the popular, the righteous, He would never have stopped where I live. BUT HE DID! Praise be to God! He is still the sinner's Friend. He comes to us not because we are good, but because we are needy. He seeks us out not because we are well, but because we are sick. He loved us when we

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had no love to return. His reputation is not enhanced because He has me for a friend. In fact, my shortcomings are painfully obvious to all. Yet, He loved me and gave himself for me.

As His Father sent Him, He has sent us—His disciples—into the world. "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21, NASB). If we go as He commanded, it will be to the *wrong* crowd, not to the *in* crowd.

Yes, pastor, I understand. Thank you for the fresh insight. When I am tempted to wonder if you are neglecting the good folk of the flock, I shall be reminded of Christ's example. I shall seek to remember that righteousness is the reflection of God's love in our hearts, not the reflection of our surroundings. Go to the wrong crowd; extend yourself beyond the confines of the congregation.

And, pastor, *take me with you!* □

WE

BROADLY SPEAKING there are two ways in which we can come to understand the working of any given object. One is by taking it to pieces, or analysis; the other is by putting the pieces together, or synthesis.

This is true, for example, of the human body. Little progress was made in the understanding of physical processes until medical students—in the teeth of fierce public opposition—began to dissect corpses and learn how the various parts of the human body fitted together.

On the other hand, you cannot learn everything about the body by the dissection of a corpse, for in its normal state the body is a living thing. How a cancer responds to a certain form of treatment can be judged only by observing the reaction of the living cell.

The same is true of the Christian life. It is possible to analyse it into steps and stages, to dissect it and take it to pieces. Some things about it can be understood only in this way. But we must never forget that it is a living thing, and it is only *by combining both methods of description*—analytical and synthetic, static and dynamic—that we can do full justice to all the aspects involved.

The separate mention of each aspect is by no means rare in the New Testament. Sometimes, however, both aspects are mentioned together. One of the most comprehensive of such statements is 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

In these words, which form the climax of the section beginning at 6:14, and constitute a vibrant, intense exhortation to Christian holiness, Paul gives a significantly wide description of the whole life of holiness.

Observe, to begin with, how the life of holiness is *grounded in God's promise*. Sometimes in the Scriptures the call to the life of holiness is based on the character of God: "As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16, RSV).

by A. R. G. DEASLEY
Kansas City, Mo.

(2 Corinthians 1:1). Yet he is aware of remaining sin in their lives.

Three points come through clearly in the words "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." For one thing, Paul is urging them to do something decisive. The verb (in the aorist tense) envisages something immediate and decisive. The cleaving sin is to be removed and removed at once.

For another, the responsibility for its removal rests upon themselves. Not that Paul for a moment be-

CAN BE HOLY

However, it is reassuring that the life of holiness is more than a matter of divine *command*; it is equally a matter of divine *promise*. The command by itself would crush us into frustration and despair; it is the *promise* annexed to it which convinces us that the command can be fulfilled. It is another illustration of the principle—to echo Augustine's words—of God's commanding what He wills, and giving what He commands.

The two promises which Paul refers back to are far-reaching in their implications. The first, quoted in 6:16 (from Leviticus 26:11 and Ezekiel 37:37), speaks of Christians as God's temple or, more accurately, God's shrine.

The reference is not to the Temple generally, but to the holy of holies in particular in which God's presence was uniquely located. The point of the promises quoted is that a day would come when the presence of God would be located, not in a consecrated building, but in the hearts of God's consecrated people.

The second promise, quoted in 6:18 (following the command to separation in verse 17) brings together various Old Testament phrases in which God promises that He will one day create a genuine family in which He will be a Father and beget children who will bear His likeness: "I will become a Father to you and you will become sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty."

The foundation on which the life of holiness is based, therefore, is neither human aspiration nor divine command alone—real and relevant though both of these may be—but divine promise.

Note next how the life of holiness *involves a crisis*. Paul is addressing committed Christian people, the church of God at Corinth and the saints in all Achaia

believed that the Christian could cope with sin in his own strength; the apostle of faith was not likely to make that mistake. But frequently when the New Testament writers are concerned to stress our responsibility for implementing the power God makes available, they speak in this way. (1 John 3:3 is another example.)

And finally, the cleansing Paul has in mind is thoroughgoing. It removes "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," a phrase which covers every area of human life.

The life of holiness is not only grounded in God's promise and furthered by a crisis; it is also *sustained by a process*: "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." It is not the act of sanctification which Paul has in mind here but the resulting state of holiness (as the Greek word shows). This must be continually perfected.

How can perfection be perfected or holiness made more holy? The answer is that there is a paradox here, but a paradox which arises directly from the dynamic quality of human life. A baby can be perfect, but his perfection is not that of the older child, the adolescent, or the mature man.

What is more, *he will retain his perfection only as he keeps on growing*. Far from being contradictory of perfection, the child's continued growth is the indispensable condition of it.

Alfred Plummer has translated the point into very practical terms. Referring to this passage, he says: "The mere cleansing oneself from defilement is not enough. It is right that the unclean spirit should be cast out; but the place which he has occupied must be filled with such things as will make it impossible for him to return; there must be a process of self-consecration always going on. This is the meaning of 'bringing to completeness a state of holiness.'"

It is, then, a *whole life* of holiness to which we are called, not merely an "event" or "experience." The promise of purity is the ground of the crisis of cleansing, which in turn opens the way to the process of perfection. □



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RE- CREATION

*My body and soul
are heavy and tired.
But sports and games,
clanging radio and TV,
parties and diversion,
bring no peace to me.*

*Opening the Bible, I find—
"Come unto me all ye
that labour and are heavy
laden,
and I will give you rest."*

*And refreshing comes—
flowing and free.
Ah, Lord, may I ever
seek my rest in Thee.*

—MARCIA SCHWARTZ
Falls City, Neb.

PERSONALLY, THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO I AM THOROUGHLY CONVINCED



AS A SCHOOLCHILD you quickly learned that if you needed help with spelling, you went to the dictionary: *Look it up Johnny, you'll remember it longer.*

For information about the closest shop that sold ball gloves or old coins, you checked the yellow pages: *And let your fingers do the walking.*

When it was time to start hinting about a birthday gift, you knew the sections to turn to in the Sears catalog: *Let us be your Wish Book.*

Now with all or some of adulthood, parenthood, and livelihood commanding your life, where do you turn? The Kansas City phone directory lists

109 marriage and family counselors

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That ought to provide the average person with enough resources. But does it?

The Church of the Nazarene believes that the basic source of guidance, and help for living is the Bible. While Christian literature is valuable for growth in Christ, such books will never replace God's Word.

There is profound truth in this statement, "The Bible tells me so." Why don't you find out for yourself? □

Dave Anderson



THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

Dave Anderson



All About My Family and Me

The most important grouping of people in the whole world live under my roof—it's my family. As a matter of fact, some say, as goes the family, so goes the whole world. The Bible has this to say:

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right (Ephesians 6:1-4).

A wife of noble character . . . is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her . . . she brings him good, and not harm . . . she provides food for her family. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. (Proverbs 31:10-12, 15, 28).

When I was a boy in my father's house . . . he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words . . . keep my commandments and you will live. . . . guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:3-4, 23).

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).

The Church in My Life

The other day, George from next door came over to borrow a rake. We talked for a while about our sons who attend the same junior high. My neighbor complained about the vice-principal's habit of disciplining his son, and the hours spent in teacher conferences. That's when the subject of church attendance came up. "You folks sure spend an awful lot of time at church, don't you?", George observed. "Yeah, I guess we do," I admitted. "But, I've never stopped and figured the time."

When my neighbor walked back to his yard, I began to estimate the hours we spend in the environment of God's house. Then I reckoned the time I knew George spends trying to iron out family difficulties. It doesn't take a genius to see that time in church as a family, is time well spent. It may not guarantee success, but it's way ahead of whatever is second. The Bible says . . .

Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them (Matthew 18:20).

Seek first his [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you (Matthew 6:33).

About Those Less Fortunate

For most of us it would be easy to squander time and resources of me and mine; but, "no man [or family] is an island, entire of itself. The less fortunates, at home and overseas, are not only those lacking money, but they are those who are deprived of hope and love. The Word of God tells us . . .

If there is a poor man among your brothers . . . do not be hard hearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. . . . Give generously to him and do so without grudging heart . . . I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land (Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11).

Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance . . . For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me . . . Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 15:35-36, 40).

Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? (James 2:5).

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Should I, or Shouldn't I?

"Mom, Tony is watching something he shouldn't be watching!"

"Be quiet, Jerry," the older brother hisses. "This show will be over in a minute."

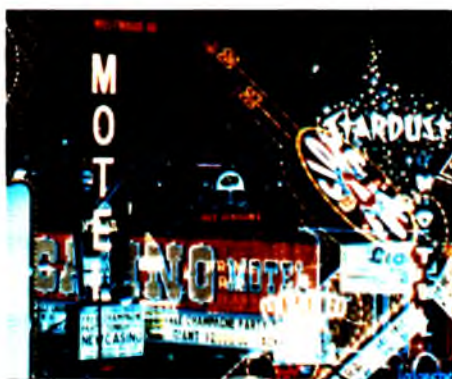
"Boys," a motherly voice calls out. "I hope you're being careful about what you're watching on TV."

"Ah, mom . . . all the guys watch this show."

In the kitchen, a mother mentally rewinds all the struggles she had as a girl and now as an adult to answer the question, "Should I, or shouldn't I?" Entertainment and leisure time, books and magazines, conversations and fashions are all topics about which choices must be made. The parent, the young person, the single adult have a responsibility to weigh these issues in the light of what's best for mind, body, and soul—and for the people they love. The Bible helps us:

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:17).

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . think about such things (Philippians 4:8).



The World and I

Open tonight's newspaper to almost any page, and you'll be reminded there are attitudes rampant in our world that desperately need to have the Spirit of God applied to them: dehumanization, war, poverty, prejudice, secularization, lust. Why doesn't God step back into the world scene and clean up the mess? Because He has never left. He has placed His born-again followers in this world to represent His cause, and to be actively involved in world changing. The Bible says . . .

Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17).

Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40).

The Spirit of the . . . Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor . . . bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives . . . to comfort all who mourn (Isaiah 61:1-2).



"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book."

—Abraham Lincoln





THE BIBLE

The Greatest News in the Word

Of all the truth found in the Bible, none is more important than the fact that every man, woman, and child must have his or her own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That is, everyone must come to God believing that through Jesus' death on the Cross there is provision for the forgiveness of sins committed, beginning of eternal life now, and the possibility to live every day in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Someone has said that Calvary was a low hill, but it cast a long shadow. That Cross is still available so that "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The Bible also tells us . . .

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin (1 John 1:7).

It is by the name of Jesus Christ that this man stands before you . . . salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:10, 12).

You must be born again (John 3:7). □

We search the world
for truth. We call
The good, the true,
the beautiful,
From graven stone and
written scroll,
And all old flower-fields
of the soul;
And weary seekers of
the best,
We come back laden
from our quest,
To find that all the
sages said
Is in the Book our
mothers read.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

Dave Anderson





HISTORY HAS MEANING

HISTORY is the biography of the human race or, as some would have it, the world's diary. More precisely, history is a thoughtfully written record of past events, having truth as a goal. Properly related, history becomes a story, laden with facts and interspersed with humor and human interest. Such a story, said Sir Philip Sidney, is "a tale to draw children from their play and hold old men from their chimney corners."

But how shall history be interpreted; what is its meaning? Shall we view the human drama through the eyes of James Russell Lowell whose melancholy comment was, "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne"? Or should we listen to Browning's lilting phrase, "God's in his heaven—all's right with the world"? Most of us would settle for something in between, admitting that "God's in His heav-

by HOMER ADAMS

Nashville, Tenn.

en" but that not all is right in the world. Our reassurance is, as Lowell went on to observe, that God is standing in the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

Students of history have often inquired if history repeats itself and if men learn from it. It does and they don't, giving rise to the crisp observation that "as a rule, man's a fool." Man is indeed foolish if he relies on an economic or sociological interpretation of history, leaving God out of the scheme of things. Thucydides made this mistake, convinced that the primary force in history was the striving for power rather than the divine influence. Hegel on the other hand affirmed the truth "that a Providence (that of God) resides over the events of the world."

The existence of creation argues the existence of a Divine Creator. For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof . . ." (Psalm 24:1). Moreover, God did not forsake His creation after His work was complete, though sinful man has been prone to forsake Him or to refuse to acknowledge Him as the Lord of the Universe. Much of the trouble in the world would be avoided if mortal man would quit trying to create God in his own image. Rather, man should accept Him on His own terms as Everlasting God and Redeemer of men.

St. Augustine, in *The City of God*, held that the whole record of the world centered on the fact of divine concern for fallen man. The pivotal event of history was the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before this cosmic happening all men had been lost, and after this all could be saved by the merits of this sacrificial death.

God's Word is evidence of His existence and His concern. As Roy E. Swim put it, "The Bible does not argue for the existence of God. It reveals Him." Throughout it reveals Him as a loving God. As Timothy Dwight put it, "The Bible is a window in this prison-world through which we may look into eternity." The Word of God has borne many attacks, but has emerged unscathed, an anvil that has worn out many hammers. Though we change, God's Word stands unshaken and we can rely on it. Through it God carries on a continual conversation with His saints, and the subject is, paraphrasing Barth, a lost world. Some men have been so far from the light that they have proclaimed God dead, not realizing that it is man who is dead—in trespasses and sins.

But man does not need to be lost in trespasses and sins. A divine interposition has prepared a way of escape from eternal death. This was a "great salvation" according to the writer of Hebrews, great because it was founded on sacrifice and great because of what it does for us. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." But the price was great. As someone has said, "It cost more to redeem than to create us."

Human history has been profoundly changed by the advent of Christ. The truth that He spoke, the love that He demonstrated, and the life that He freely laid down caught man's lasting attention. But lost

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sinner, too, believe that Christ died; it is the Christian's faith in His resurrection that is a justifying faith. The long and lonely Saturday after Jesus' death was replaced by the glorious Sunday morning when He arose. Since then, hope has been alive in the world.

Christ is the center of the Christian's life, and when this is so the circumstances will take care of themselves. If He ever seems a long way off, ask yourself who moved.

"If God is really in control of events, how do you explain the evil in the world?" some will ask. Sin and evil are in the world because Satan is still alive and because human beings with freedom of will often choose to do evil. Thus man's inhumanity to man is acted out within God's permissive, not His causative, will. A student asked during the bloodiest part of World War II, "If God is really God and if He loves human beings, why doesn't He stop this terrible war?" The answer is that we would be puppets if we were spared the consequences of our actions. The Christian's hope is Paul's testimony, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . ." (Romans 8:28).

How, then, can we face the future? The major problems that confront the world—grinding poverty, biting inflation, energy shortages, rising crime, a Laodicean drift in morals, a poverty of the human spirit, and a frustration that approaches despair—seem to outweigh the solutions. But we are not in this struggle alone. Existence has meaning because God is at the helm. He "standeth in the shadows keeping watch above his own." The Holy Spirit is active, drawing men to repentance and to God. His wisdom is beyond our knowing, but we can know Him. The great God asked Job sixty questions, as, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" and Job could not answer one. All he could do was to stand in awe of God's power and glory. And so should we.

But He is more than an awe-inspiring Creator, He is a loving Heavenly Father. By His grace we are saved. Grace is God's love in action in Christ and

"The Bible Tells Me So."

God's power in action in the Christian. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

Jack Key has asked, "Why do we say 'Our Father' on Sunday, then act like orphans the rest of the week?" It need not be this way. We can enjoy His presence and live with a peaceful heart in a stormy world. We know the 23rd psalm, but we also know the Shepherd. We can share in God's redemptive work in the world by sharing Him with those around us, remembering that the debt we owe to God is payable to man. Our daily existence is not so much a search for God as it is a response to Him. The knowledge that keeps us strong is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). History does have meaning! □

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PEOPLE MATTER MOST

WE COME in all sizes and shapes, from petite to extra-large. We have intelligence, and its degree depends upon who is evaluating it—you or the other fellow. We have peculiar habits and eccentricities—at least you do! Some of us can fly a spaceship; others have difficulty tying shoe laces. Some can speak many languages; others butcher their native tongues. Our colors range from white, black, red, yellow, brown, tan, and all shades in between. Some are poor; some are rich; most of us are neither. Can something this diverse have anything in common?

In spite of our differences and your eccentricities, there is one beautiful, exciting, sometimes exasperating common denominator: we are human beings with all that the term entails.

The Old Testament is full of surprises. The people there were diverse, too. Some were fat (Judges 3:17); some were tall (1 Samuel 9:2); some were left-handed (Judges 3:15). There were skilled seamstresses, weavers, craftsmen in creating beautiful

things, musicians (Exodus 32). Occupations ranged from shepherding to government leadership, from hunters to priests, from builders to soldiers. Some were courageous; some were cowardly. Some were optimistic; some were pessimistic. Some had the long view; others were shortsighted.

The remarkable thread running through the history of these, our ancestors, is that even though they were sometimes their own worst enemies, these human beings had value and worth. The Psalmist affirmed it in awe: "When I look up into the night skies and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you have made—I cannot understand how you can bother with mere puny man, to pay any attention to him! And yet you have made him only a little lower than the angels, and placed a crown of glory and honor upon his head" (Psalm 8:3-5, TLB).

If we human beings have been given such worth, we matter to God. According to Scripture people mattered en masse. They mattered also as individuals. As social beings there was great concern that they learn how to live together. And most of all, it mattered that people find their place in relationship to their God.

Some sections of scripture can almost produce ochlophobia (fear of crowds). Hordes of people seem to traverse those pages, all with their unique prob-

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lems. In one instance it was the need for food during a seven-year period of famine. God had planned ahead, however, raising up a leader named Joseph. For seven years, Joseph "stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure" (Genesis 41:49, NIV). When the famine came, food was available and, as Joseph said later, it resulted in the saving of many lives, among them Jacob and his family, the small beginning of the nation of Israel.

After they had absorbed years of Egyptian influence Moses faced the task of uniting these people. The Israelites needed to know the one true God, and learn to obey Him, for they were to be the future inhabitants of the land promised to Abraham's heirs. Crowds can be fickle, and these people were, too, at times. In their brighter moments they were obedient and cooperative; at other times Moses was forced to deal with griping, pettiness, lack of appreciation, and sinful disobedience. Yet God said, "I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high" (Leviticus 26:13, NIV). These people mattered to Him.

In the New Testament, the presence of crowds becomes almost sensate. They followed John the Baptist; they swarmed around Jesus who fed them, taught them, wept over them, and even when weary to the point of exhaustion, ministered to them in healing ways. Peter spoke to crowds; Paul preached to crowds. The book of Acts refers to large numbers of people many times. People, en masse, were to be reckoned with.

But crowds are made of individuals, and the Bible indicates that the individual cannot be taken lightly, held in contempt, or subordinated to crowd pressure. Matthew 8 and 9, just a small segment of scripture, tells how Jesus touched and healed a leper, healed the slave of a Roman centurion, cured Peter's wife's mother of a fever, cast out demons from two who were possessed, called a tax collector to be His disciple.

"The Bible Tells Me So."

ate with "notorious swindlers" (TLB), restored life to a young girl, responded to a woman with a chronic disease, and made two blind men see again. There may have been crowds, but Jesus dealt with the individuals. These encounters cut across legal prescriptions to meet human need head-on. At the risk of crowd anger, He healed on the Sabbath, touched an untouchable, commended a non-Jew for his faith, and healed a person who was considered a "thing." He broke with tradition in the light of higher priorities.

It mattered to Jesus that these who had been given physical life not be deprived of a life of highest quality. His works of love show us how people should be thinking and acting toward each other.

For a moment, back to Joseph. He started out with a definite disadvantage. He was his father's favorite

in a large family. His jealous brothers sold him into slavery. When the tables were turned and the slave became master, the revenge which the brothers expected and feared did not materialize. Joseph had cared for their physical needs; now he alleviated their mental and emotional needs once and for all: "You meant it for evil; God meant it for good." He could have been very matter-of-fact, but he "reassured them and spoke kindly to them" (Genesis 50:21). Forgiveness, mercy, flavored with kindness—what a formula for working out sticky situations!

Old Testament concepts of honesty, purity, compassion, justice, and love are rounded out and re-emphasized in the New Testament, especially by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. These were principles established by God by which people can live with each other. Jesus demonstrated them in His ministry.

But there was something else about people which mattered—their relationship to God.

A recent book review in the *Kansas City Times* admits that mankind has made "a miserable botch of life on this planet," but insists that ours is "an endangered but potentially self-healing world." The people of the Bible didn't do too well in the self-healing business! Amos thundered at the social injustices which were occurring in his time; Hosea echoed his words. John the Baptist fearlessly rebuked immorality among the leaders of his country. Somehow the prime quality of life—a person's relationship with his God resulting in right conduct with his fellowman—had eluded them.

And then Jesus came teaching the precepts of God, demonstrating the love of God, remonstrating about the misuse of religion, and generally setting things in order concerning the kingdom of God. It had to do with the inner life and outer action of the individual; it wasn't a political kingdom at all. And best of all, the King himself had made provision for any who wanted to enter the Kingdom.

To Nicodemus He spelled out the way: "Unless you are born again, you can never get into the Kingdom of God . . . Men can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven; so don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again" (John 3:3, 5, TLB).

As this is written, there is overt war between China and Vietnam; there is civil revolution in Iran; the Mideast has trouble in establishing a peace; there are crippling strikes in several countries; we haven't learned to live with each other very well. The outlook could be very pessimistic in today's world. But here and there are pockets of people who have heard about this provision for establishing right relationships with their God. They have taken the statement at face value: "You must be born again." It has made a difference in their lives and in the areas where they live. People sometimes believe they are an endangered species, but the sense of individual worth cannot be dimmed in those who know the Father through Christ. If it all sounds simplistic, idealistic, and unrealistic in this day and age, it's not one person's opinion; the Bible tells us so! □



Luoma

by MERRILL S. WILLIAMS
Texarkana, Tex.

DEATH HAS BEEN DEFEATED

KING PHILIP of Macedon charged one of his slaves with a unique responsibility. The monarch instructed his servant to awaken him every morning with this announcement: "Philip, remember, you must die."

Perhaps we fear no other enemy as much as death. We fear this adversary because we know our encounter with him is inevitable. The anonymous author of Hebrews wrote the last word, "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews 9:27). We cannot in any way escape this divine appointment.

We also fear death because we do not know what lies on "the other side." No one has returned from his passage into eternity to explain its mystery to us. While it's true that modern medical technology has cracked the door slightly and given us a brief glimpse of "life after life," the tomb of death lies largely sealed.

A third reason we dread death is because of its finality. Men know that when they have ridden the rapids of death, there is no return.

Most moderns have not realistically faced death, either their own or that of a loved one, and many, unfortunately, never will. They will pass from this life to the next, fearing, dreading, fighting death's claim on them.

John Wesley had not reckoned with death. Seeking

spiritual peace and thinking he could help himself by helping others, he crossed the Atlantic to minister to the American Indians in Georgia. On board ship he became acquainted with a group of Christians who called themselves Moravians.

A storm tossed the tiny craft unmercifully. When the seas rose high, when it looked like certain death to all on board, when most of the passengers covered in fear of dying—Wesley among them—these Moravians displayed an attitude of calmness, an assurance of peace, a serenity of spirit that amazed Wesley and aroused in him a hunger for the same tranquility.

These Christians for whom death held no threat later guided Mr. Wesley into a harbor of peace where death no longer intimidated as it had before.

Death had always terrorized men—until Jesus came. But in Christ *death has been defeated*. Men still die, and they face their fate with natural apprehension. But Christ has taken the sting out of death; He has stolen the victory away from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). When conducting a funeral in Birmingham, England, Dr. Rendell Harris said, "This cemetery is an empty place, the emptiest place in all Birmingham; there is no one in it."

Paul wrote, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). And only Christ could bring about death's defeat. Not until He had poured himself into human form, not until He had suffered death on a Roman cross, not until He had died and was raised to life again, did death die.

The angel who spoke to the mourning Marys that first Easter morning speaks words of inestimable



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comfort to every Christian today: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:5-6).

And His life gives us life. Because He lives, we shall live. No one knows just how His life becomes ours. The great apostle himself declared it a mystery (1 Corinthians 15:51). We are like my wife's five-year-old nephew who questioned her about a deceased relative. "Jan, can I ask you a question?" he said.

"Sure," Jan replied.

"Well, you know Uncle Ardell that died? You know they put him in a case? Then they put him in a hole? Jan, how's he going to get out when Jesus comes?"

We just don't know how a Christian can be raised to share in Christ's life. But we do know that "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye . . . the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:52-53, NIV).

The very evening of the day on which God raised Jesus from the dead, His disciples hovered behind locked doors for fear of their Lord's executioners. But "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'" (John 20:19, NIV).

With those words Jesus infused the traditional Jewish greeting with new meaning. Because Jesus has met and defeated the last enemy, no enemy remains. Because Jesus speaks, you and your loved ones may face the future with optimistic hope. Because Jesus lives, every contemporary Christian can face death realistically, triumphantly, victoriously.

Death is not a grim ending to earthly life, but a glorious beginning to eternal life.

Charles Wesley expressed the life-giving triumph of Jesus eloquently:

Love's redeeming work is done.

Fought the fight, the battle won.

Death in vain forbids Him rise.

Christ has opened paradise. □

PEN POINTS

ALL MY NEEDS!

—MABEL P. ADAMSON *Kansas City, Mo.*

In God's Word I find a precious promise that He will supply all my needs, according to HIS riches. When I read those words, I am reminded that these riches are unlimited. Sometimes, I admit, I question and doubt while struggling through a difficult experience. Then He patiently reminds me that what I see as needs are only "wants," that He knows what I need and He is in control of my life.

When then *do* I need? In trying to separate my needs from my wants, I discover that the answer depends partially on whether my eyes are turned earthward or heavenward. If my eyes are fixed on Jesus, I discover that my needs decrease as my need to please and serve Him increases. First and foremost, I need Jesus, and He delights in fulfilling that need.

However, I'm *in* this world, if not of it, and there must be other considerations. I live in a society with such affluence that the distinction between needs and wants become very blurred, and I need

His help in determining my priorities.

Basic needs for physical survival are shared by all, food, clothing and shelter. But man is a social and emotional creature as well, with social and emotional needs. As I think on each of these, as I see them, I find promise of sufficiency in His Word.

I need congenial friends and warm family relationships. I have children who are thoughtful and loving, but they have their own lives and I cannot depend too much on them. I have many friends but they are not always available for encouragement or sharing. But I read that God is my father, Christ is my elder brother, and is a friend that "sticketh closer than a brother," one who will *never* leave me.

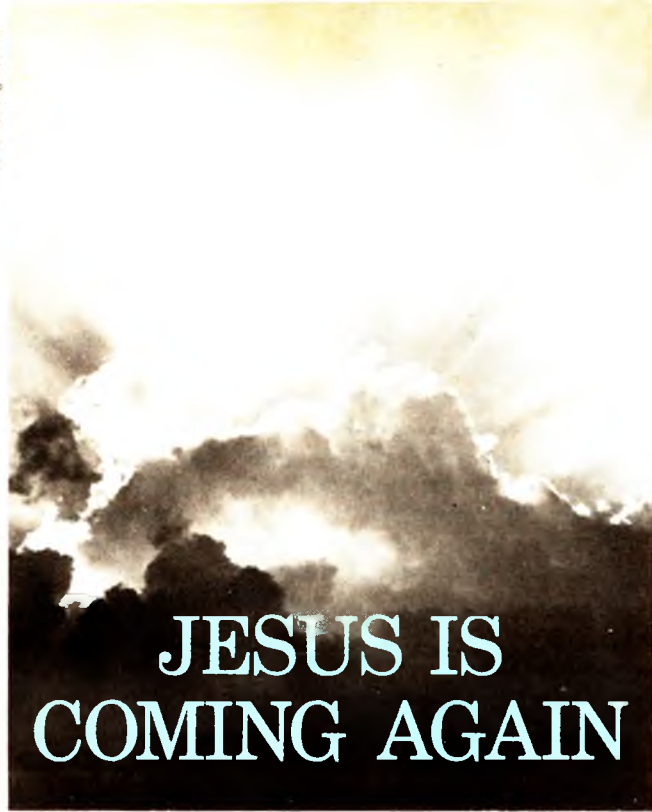
I long for and *need* love and affection. Some of this is provided by family and friends and I am grateful. But His Word tells me of a love beyond any human love—a Love that offered himself on Calvary for my sin. His love never fails.

I need quietness and solitude, relief from life's turmoil. And when I am most pressured by my circumstances, I hear His call, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." And when I enter into a place of prayer with Him, He brings peace and renewal to my spirit.

I need release from fear, that paralyzing emotion that makes me inadequate for the tasks I face. I read, "Fear not, for I am with you," and fears are allayed. Sometimes, to be sure, it may take me a little longer than some, but He understands. He knows that I—and you—live in a world with much legitimate cause for fear. But He faithfully reminds me that man can only destroy the body, and my soul is safe in His keeping.

Even when death stares me in the face, I need not fear. For my Savior shall take my hand and lead me through that dark valley into the blessed fellowship of God and all the saints.

Thanks be to God who gives unstintingly of HIS riches to meet *all* my needs! □



JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

by E. O. T.

JESUS CHRIST is coming again.

Angels said that He would come again, and these angels would neither lie nor deceive. To the disciples who watched the risen Savior disappear into the sky, angels said, "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11, NIV).

Apostles said that He would come again, and these apostles would neither lie nor deceive. Paul wrote, "The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, NIV). With this glorious promise the other apostles agree (Hebrews 9:26-28; James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:4; 2 Peter 3:3-10; 1 John 3:1-3; Revelation 1:4-8; 22:12-20).

And if it could be argued that angels and apostles could be mistaken, we have also the promise of *Jesus Christ himself*. He said, "I will come back and take you with me" (John 14:1-3, NIV). He cannot be deceived and He will not deceive. He is "the truth" and we can count on His word. Skeptics and scorners notwithstanding, *Jesus is coming again*.

Just when He will come no one knows except God (Mark 13:32), and He has not told. Some foolish, misguided fanatics have claimed to know. Dates have been set and duped followers of false prophets have prepared to hail Jesus on the predicted dates, only to be disappointed—like Linus in the pumpkin patch. These sad failures have served to make some people even more cynical and unbelieving. Nevertheless, the Bible plainly and repeatedly tells us that

Jesus is coming again, and you can bank on those promises.

The uncertainty of the date is a summons to constant spiritual vigilance. The coming of Jesus is an incentive to holy living: "Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:3, NIV; see also Matthew 24:36—25:13; James 5:8-11; 2 Peter 3:11-14). The Lord's people are to live as those who would be willing to have their plans and activities interrupted by His return. They are to hold the things of this world very loosely, for their hope is in Him.

While we do not know precisely when He is coming, we are told *why* He is coming again.

Jesus is coming to *raise the dead*. The Bible says, "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:28-29, NIV; see also 1 Corinthians 15:22-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Jesus is coming to *judge all people*. "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12; see also Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; James 5:8-9). Before this Judge, who cannot be mistaken, deceived, or bribed, the destinies of all persons will be fixed forever (Revelation 20:11-15). Human history has its terminus at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ (Romans 14:9-12).

Jesus is coming to *complete our redemption, and to take His people to himself forever*. In a precious promise that has supported His followers in death throughout the passing centuries, Jesus said, In my Father's house are many rooms . . . I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3, NIV; see also 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Yes, Jesus is coming again. The Bible tells us so! Sin will be removed forever. And those who have believed in and followed after Jesus will be at home with Him eternally, where pain, tears, and death will never again be part of human experience.

Jesus is the Lord of history. He is the Judge of mankind. And He is the Savior of all who will turn

"The Bible Tells Me So."

from their sins and trust in His forgiving, renewing love. For those who do, His coming again is "the blessed hope"—and there is no other hope. His coming will bring joy or despair (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 6:12-17).

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:13-16, NIV). □

HEAVEN IS HOME

by LOLA M. WILLIAMS St. David, Ill.

TO BELIEVE in heaven is not to run away from life; it is to run toward it," said Joseph D. Blinco.

A little girl who came from a family used to plain food was asking her pastor about heaven. "Pastor, when I get to heaven will I be eating beans and taters?"

The shocked minister replied, "Oh, no, child. Heaven is a land flowing with milk and honey."

The little girl couldn't keep the disappointment from her voice. "If I can't eat beans and taters in heaven, I ain't going!"

We smile at the child's idea of heaven, but are we any different? Countless words have been written, sung, and spoken about heaven by both the Christians and non-Christians. Most of what the world says about heaven brings it down to the mud level of earth. Even Christians often have only a dim view of what heaven will be like.

A lady who had stubborn, unmanageable hair remarked that when she got to heaven she expected to have beautiful hair. Another, tired of the continual moving required by her husband's occupation, said when she got to heaven she would stand up and sing the old hymn, "I Shall Not Be Moved."

On a blustery cold Sunday with the snow piled high, only a few brave souls ventured out to church. The song leader asked the congregation to sing "This Is Like Heaven to Me." He commented that it could be just a little like heaven right then and there. Someone said under his breath, "I hope heaven will be a lot warmer than this."

Jesus promised the Christians a home in heaven. He said, "I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3, NIV). We don't know exactly what that place will be like, but we do know it will be more wonderful than anything our human minds can comprehend.

Our boys always enjoyed bringing their friends home. I like to think it was because home was such a pleasant place to them that they wanted to share its joys with their friends. (I suspect it was, in part, those dozens and dozens of cookies I baked that their friends were interested in sharing.)

Heaven is home for the Christian. While we do not know in detail what it will be like, we do know it will be worth all our effort to get there. Just as we enjoy taking our friends to our earthly homes, so we need

to work unceasingly to take our friends to our heavenly home with us. C. S. Lewis put it this way. "A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next."

Heaven is home for the Christian because of what will *not* be there. It is not a happy experience to have something we have worked hard for stolen or destroyed. In heaven, there will be none of that. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:20, NIV).

Benjamin Franklin once said, "In this world nothing is sure but death and taxes." Yet in heaven, neither of those things will be present. There will be no disappointments, no wars, and no corruption of any kind. The 21st chapter of Revelation tells us there will be no tears, no sickness, no pain, and no night.

Heaven is home for the Christian because of what *will* be there. The story is told of a little Swedish girl who was walking with her father one night under the starry sky. They were enjoying the glories of heaven together. Finally, looking up at the sky she said, "Father, I have been thinking that if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what will the right side be?"

After the awfulness of the judgment is over and the unbelievers have been sentenced to eternal punishment, God gives us just a fleeting look at what is in store for the believers. In Revelation 21:10—22:5 we are told a little of the incredible beauties of heaven that await us.

We will need no sun because the glory of God will give us light. The river of life will flow down from the throne of God. The walls of the Holy City will be like that of jasper, a very precious jewel. The foundations of the walls will be decorated with every kind of precious stone. The gates will be of pearl, and the streets of pure gold.

Ralph Terhune had gotten saved late in life. He had little of value by the standards of this world. He lived in a shack next to a dirt road, with few of the amenities most of us consider so necessary. The only way he had of earning a few dollars was by selling the produce from his garden. But he loved Jesus!

Often he would testify with shining face, "Some day, I'm going to walk right off this highway of holiness onto those streets of gold." That's just what he did. At his funeral there were many tears but they were not tears of sorrow. Everyone there was confident that Ralph was at home in heaven with his Lord.

Heaven is home for the Christian because of *who* will be there. Acts 7:55 tells us, "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Jesus is there now, waiting to welcome us home. Esther Kerr Rusthoi summed it up for the Christians in the first line of the chorus: "It will be worth it all—When we see Jesus." □



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by WILMA G. SHAW
Concord, Calif.

LANFORD BLACK'S checkup was supposed to be routine. He arrived at Mount Diablo Medical Center, Concord, Calif., and sat in the waiting room listening for his name to be called. He had been in the cardiac section so many times that this was a common



DeWys

Peace *with God*

procedure for him. He had learned to live with his pacemaker. In fact, he couldn't live without it.

Although Lanford was nearing his 83rd birthday, he got in his car, left his daughter's house where he lives, drove the 30 miles to the hospital, and arrived in time for his appointment. To his surprise, after the examination, he was met with the words, "Your heartbeat is only 60. You will need surgery immediately. We will open into the heart muscles to make the correction."

Without hesitation Lanford slipped into a hospital gown and was readied for the ordeal. An orderly quickly wheeled him down the corridor into an elevator and then into the operating room. He was informed that the doctors would need to keep him semiconscious during this operation.

Lanford had been a Christian for many years and he looked for opportunities daily to give his witness for His Lord. So as the procedure began, he seized his chance. "Doctor," he said, "if I do come through this surgery, that's great; but if I don't come through, I want you to know I'm going to a better place. I have made my peace with God, and I am totally ready to die. My life belongs to Him, and He can do with it as He pleases."

The surgical nurse heard Lanford's words and asked, "Do you really believe that?"

Lanford answered with assurance, "Oh, yes, I truly believe I am ready to meet my God. In fact, sometimes I long to be with Him. I have no fear."

Then she searchingly asked, "Can I know that peace?"

He said, "Yes, yes; tonight go home and read First John in your Bible. God so loved you that He gave His Son, Jesus, to be your Savior. He will save anyone who comes to Him."

The nurse was awed by Lanford's words. She turned and said to the others in the room, "This man is a saint; we are in the presence of wisdom. He is a wise man."

The operation was over and Mr. Black was recovering in his hospital room. The next morning his two daughters came in to visit him. The surgical nurse, dressed again in her operating garb, was up on the floor near his room, and she overheard someone speaking about Mr. Black. Immediately she turned, talking loudly across the hall to his daughters. She related the incident of the day before. Then she added, "Mr. Black is a wise man, this is true wisdom. I did as he suggested. Last night I went home and read the Bible and I must tell you I am a different woman today. At age 83 Mr. Black may often wonder why he has been able to remain alive after so many near-death operation experiences. Well, tell him God spared him to touch my life. I shall never be the same and I shall ever be grateful." □

**"By ALL MEANS...
Save Some"**

"JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO."

THESE SIMPLE WORDS from a familiar children's hymn convey some very profound and important truths.

The Bible tells me what I most need to know.

I can learn many truths from other sources. But only the Bible tells me how to be saved from sin and united to God forever.

Only the Bible tells me that "God is love."

Nature cannot tell me this. Some argue that it can, pointing to sun-drenched days, the splendor of mountains, the beauty of flowers. But what of earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods which destroy property and lives?

History cannot assure me that God is love. History is a record of human carnage, of crime, riot, disease, and war. Its pages are spattered with the blood of millions brutally slain.

But the Bible tells me that God loves us despite our sins and violence.

In love He comes to us in Jesus Christ, wearing our flesh and enduring our lot.

In love He gets involved with our fallen race, involved to the point of a lonely death on a cruel cross.



In love He triumphs over sin and death, raising the Victim of that cross to eternal life and power and glory.

In love the victory of God in Jesus Christ is shared with us when we repent of our sins and believe on His name.

Yes, only the Bible tells me that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"The Bible tells me so"—

that God is love
that sin brings death
that Jesus saves sinners
that we can be holy
that life has meaning
that people matter most
that death has been defeated
that Jesus is coming again
that heaven is home!

These are the all-important truths, without which all other knowledge is ultimately wasted.

W. E. McCUMBER