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MIDWEEK SERVICES
June 1969--June 1975

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ANGELS

Robert Spradling

March 1970

The Bible teaches the existence of angels. Over one-half of the books of the Bible affirm this doctrine. Our Lord Himself had contact and was associated with angels in their ministry to earth. Angels predicted His birth and appeared to the shepherds. An angel warned Joseph regarding the cruelty of Herod. Angels ministered to Christ at the Temptation and in Gethsemane. Angels rolled away the stone at Jesus' tomb and at His ascension they told the disciples of Christ's Second Coming.

The word angel, which literally means "messenger", appears no less than 250 times in the Bible. In addition to this word, there are other terms used in Scripture to refer to angels. They are called (1) sons of God - Job 1:6; 38:7 (2) watchers - Daniel 4:13 (3) Holy Ones - Psalm 89:7, ASV (4) ministering spirits - Hebrews 1:14 (5) princes - Daniel 10:13 (6) men - Genesis 18:2 (7) principalities and powers - Ephesians 1:21; 6:12.

Apart from the teachings of Scripture, we would know little or nothing about angels. Persons who do not study the Bible on this subject are prone to classify such a doctrine as pure myth.

1. Colossians 1:15-17

These verses tell where angels came from, namely from the hand of the Creator. Every angel is a direct creation of God. They do not reproduce or procreate and were in existence at the time of the creation of the earth. Psalm 148:5; Matthew 22:28-30; Job 38:6-7. Angels did not evolve, nor were they ever a form of mankind. The fact that they are called "sons of God" (Job 1:6) implies direct creation for the word "sons" in Scripture indicates such action. The persons to whom this term refers were always the direct creations of God. (cf. Adam, Christ, Angels, Believers.)

2. Matthew 25:31 & 41

The Bible teaches there are two major classes of angels:

A. Evil Angels

These angels were associated with Satan in his fall. He is the wicked commander of an angelic army of willing subjects. Satan was the first of this order. (cf. Ezekiel 28:14-16). God did not create the Devil, He created an angel named Lucifer who in self-will sinned against God and became the Devil. Revelation 12:7 speaks of "the dragon ...and his angels." The dragon is clearly identified as Satan in V.9!

The primary passages which deal with these angels are: 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6-7.

B. Good Angels

The term applied to this group is "elect" or "holy" angels. (I Timothy 5:21; Mark 8:38).

It would appear that the decision of the evil angels to follow Lucifer was permanent in its consequences. Also, it would seem that the holy angels were confirmed in their loyalty to God. There is no indication in Scripture that the evil angels could or would ever return to God.

3. Hebrews 1:14

Angels are spiritual beings in nature. They bear the marks of personality in that they are intelligent, speak, think, understand, and praise God. This verse suggests that angels do service to God and man. Angels hasten to carry out the commands of God. (Psalm 103:20). Some stand in His presence ready to carry messages to men. (Luke 1:19; 2:8-14). This was especially true in the Old Testament; however, the New Testament relates several occasions where angels ministered to men. (Matthew 28:5-8; Acts 8:26; 10:1-8.)

The existence of angelic beings in God's vast universe helps us to know something of life forms unlike our own existing elsewhere in God's great creation.

ANGELS
(Part II)

Robert Spradling

March 1970

Men are interested in angels. The following are several areas of special interest.

1. What Do Angels Look Like?

Generally, angels are not visible to men since they are spirit beings. However, on occasions when they have appeared to men, they resemble men in appearance. (cf. Genesis 18:2 & 22; 19:1 & 5). (Angels are referred to in the masculine gender and the names given to them are masculine names - Michael, Gabriel.) In addition to looking like men, angels are young looking. (cf. Mark 16:5. These angels were created thousands of years before but still were youthful in appearance!) Often the appearance of angels is described as being bright and dazzling. (Matthew 28:3-5; Luke 24:4). Artists' pictures usually depict angels as having wings. This inference comes from verses such as Revelation 14:6 which attaches the word "fly" to their movement. Also, the angelic like beings called seraphim and cherubim have wings. (Isaiah 6:2). The emphasis of Scripture is that they are swift and powerful. Whether all angels have wings or not, one cannot say with finality.

2. How Many Angels Are There?

One of the theological speculations of the medieval scholastics had to do with the idea of how many angels could stand on the head of a pin!

In the Old Testament the word "hosts" is used regarding the Lord's name and refers to the angelic armies under His control. Our Lord could have called 12 legions of angels to His assistance. (A Roman legion= 6,000 men, plus some auxiliary troops. Thus, Jesus referred to at least 72,000 angels in Matthew 26:53.) Some have used Matthew 18:10 as a comparison of good angels with the total human population of all human history. This would reach into the billions in number.

Revelation 5:11 taken literally would suggest a minimum of over 100 million angels. The reason for such an expression is there is no number for "million" in Biblical language.

Hebrews 12:22 uses the word ^{myriads} "innumerable" regarding the angels. These figures would fit easily into the vastness of the universe, even as we know it today.

3. What Are Angels Able to Do?

Angels are spoken of as being very powerful. (Matthew 28:2). The Book of Revelation suggests their ability over the elements of nature. (Revelation 7:1-3; 16:8-9). According to Daniel 9:21, angels are capable of incredible swiftness. All of the Biblical descriptions go far beyond the popular idea that angels "play harps" in heaven and that is about all they do!

On various occasions God has used angels to suppress wickedness in the world.

- (a) Genesis 18:22-19:1--Sodom & Gomorrah
- (b) Acts 12:23--Herod
- (c) II Kings 19:35--Assyrians

It is difficult to speak with accuracy regarding angelic ministry today. In the New Testament there are references to their work in behalf of believers. This writer knows of no verse or verses to indicate that their ministry has ceased. However, in our age of faith, it would seem that angels no longer appear to men and any such ministry is a veiled ministry. (cf. I Corinthians 11:10).

ASPECTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY

Robert Spradling

Failure to properly understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit often leads people to extremes in doctrine and practical Christian living. Second Blessing type of holiness, speaking in tongues, falling from grace, and many other ideas that lead to spiritual abnormalities, are all built on an improper understanding of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. This study will deal with four aspects of the Spirit's ministry.

I. THE SPIRIT'S INVITATION-Revelation 22:17.

The last invitation of the Bible is "come". The Spirit of God prompts men to come to Christ. The Spirit is the Person who is active in the regeneration of sinners. (Notice the phrase "born of the Spirit" in John 3:5-8.)

In Titus 3:5 we are told how men are saved.

1. Not by works, according to God's mercy.
2. It is a washing of regeneration.
(A spiritual cleansing that is internal and not just an outward ritual or ceremony.)
3. It is the Spirit who renews the believing sinner. This same experience is described in II Corinthians 5:17. The Spirit of God does not just patch up our old sinful lives, He gives new life.

II. THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING-I Corinthians 6:19.

(See II Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13-14.)

The Spirit's indwelling is spoken of in a two-fold manner in the Bible.

- A. Indwelling the church as a body.
I Corinthians 3:16-17.
- B. Indwelling each believer.
I Corinthians 6:19.

In the Old Testament there was a sacredness attached to the Temple, it was the dwelling place of God. The Shekinah Glory denoted His presence. We who know Christ still respect the house of God (I Timothy 3:15), but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit adds a new dimension to the body of the believer. If the ancient temple was considered sacred, how much more our bodies.

III. THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION-Romans 8:26-27.

C. H. Dodd once said, "Prayer is the Divine in us appealing to the Divine above us."

If the believer was unaided by the Holy Spirit, prayer would be a powerless and dull exercise. It is the Spirit who helps our handicaps in prayer. At our best, we are inept in prayer. The coldness of our hearts; cares, carnality and lack of ability to see and understand spiritual realities, leaves us "hanging on the ropes" of spiritual conflict. It is here that the Holy Spirit's ministry comes to bear upon our lives. He enables our petitions to be made correctly.

"We know not...as we ought". Even the most spiritually aware believers do not "know" in this area of prayer. We cannot know the future even five minutes ahead of time. We cannot know, often, what is in our best interest. But God the Spirit knows. "In the last analysis, all that we can bring to God is an inarticulate sigh which the Spirit will translate to God for us." (Barclay) Everything about the Christian experience is of God, even our praying!

BIBLE "ALLS"

Our vision and tastes for the things of God are too limited. God has lavished his blessings upon us through Christ. A brief examination of some of the great verses in the Bible dealing with the word "all" should convince us of the greatness of God's hand in our lives.

I. THE "ALL" OF PRAYER - Matthew 21:22

Other religions make no such promises to their constituents. They keep their subjects in fear and bondage. The God of the Bible bids His servants to grasp the promises He has given and claim them for His glory. This verse is so staggering in its dimension that we usually try to explain it away. The direct and simple teaching of this verse is overpowering. It says what God means and means what He says!

II. THE "ALL" OF GOD'S PLAN - Romans 8:28

No circumstance in the life of a believer is beyond the realm of God's ability to work it out for good purposes. When every detail of the believer's life is committed to Christ, he can walk through life without worry knowing that the God of the Bible will work out His plan for our lives. (Proverbs 3:5-6) Knowing that our hand is in His and our plan for life is truly His plan adds real purpose and meaning to life.

III. THE "ALL" OF GOD'S POWER - Philippians 4:13

The world knows nothing of the source of this power. This power enabled Paul to invade the heathen darkness of Satan's domain and plant there the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. God does not leave us to our own power source in order to accomplish His will and work on earth. His power is available, all we have to do is claim it in working for Him.

IV. THE "ALL" OF GOD'S PEACE - I Peter 5:7

God invites the believer to share or commit his burdens to Him. He cares for us. Nothing is too large or too small to bring to God for His solution. God has not agreed to deal with parts of our problems, but rather He will take all of our burdens if we will cast them upon Him!

V. THE "ALL" OF GOD'S PROVISION - Philippians 4:19

The Christian is not responsible for providing his equipment in the warfare against Satan. God will supply our every need. The God who is concerned with sparrows is far more concerned about His people and their well-being. We can trust Him to provide all of our needs; whether those needs are large or small, God will provide.

VI. THE "ALL" OF GOD'S PROGRAM - Mark 16:15

The responsibility of the church is to get the gospel out to men all over the world. The need is great and the time is short. We have "all" of God's resources to do the job, let us get on with the task!

BIBLE DOCTRINE

Robert Spradling

July 1970

For the past several months, a different doctrine of the Bible has been featured in the Mid-week service. This sheet was prepared to see how much you can remember about our studies. You may use your Bible.

1. What books in the New Testament are commonly called the Pastoral Epistles?
1 & 2 Timothy T.T.V.S
2. List two passages in the Bible which deal with the subject of Satan.
Ezek. 28 Isa. 14
3. Demons are referred to by other terms in the New Testament. List one. unclean / evil spirit
4. Where in the Bible does one learn of the origin of man? Genesis 1
5. List two verses which speak of Christ's substitutionary death for sinners.
2 Cor. 5:21 1 Pet. 3:18 2:24
6. What do we mean by the deity of Christ? Indicate a verse which teaches this doctrine. Christ = GOD
John 1:1 - Rom. 9:5 9:6
7. Do you believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ? Yes. Do you know the location of a verse in the Bible on this subject? lsa. 7:14
8. Locate a verse in your Bible dealing with the Inspiration of Scripture. 1 Tim 3:16
2 Pet 1:21
9. Define the word justification. Just as I of never sinners (help)
Justified act of God declares sinner righteous, result of believing in Christ.
10. Indicate a verse that deals with the subject of sanctification. Heb. 10:10
1 John 17:17
11. List what you believe to be one of the conclusive verses on the subject of the security of the believer. John 10:28 - Phil. 1:6, Rom. 8:38-39
12. What is another term for the word regeneration? Born-again
SAVED
13. Where in the Bible can you find a verse on the doctrine of faith? Heb. 11:6
14. According to the Bible, there are two general classifications of angels. What are they? good
evil
elect
15. In one paragraph, give a definition of God.

God is that infinite Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and eternal dwelling.

BIBLE GIFTS

One reason Christmas is so popular is because it is a time of exchanging gifts. The wise men supposedly established this principle at Christmas time by the gifts they gave the Savior. However, notice their gifts were to Christ and not to one another. Much of our gift exchange today is more in harmony in what a friend of mine called "The Devil's Christmas" in Revelation 11:10. The Bible has a great deal to say about gifts. God is the great and supreme giver. He delights to give good gifts to men. Our study will involve some of the gifts mentioned in the Bible.

I. THE UNACCEPTABLE GIFT - Matthew 5:23-24

The Pharisees believed that murder was against the law, but as long as they did not kill anyone and observed the externals of the law, they were perfect before God. They had forgotten the true meaning of sacrifice. The proper sacrifice was an indication of guilt and an acknowledgment of such and an acceptance of God's cleansing. Jesus pointed out the fact that we are no more right with God than we are our fellowman. God is not interested in our gifts, he is interested in our heart relationship to Him and our fellowman. (Compare Isaiah 1:11 ff) ***There is an old Persian fable concerning a man who owned a priceless jewel and desired to give it to one of his three sons for the greatest act of nobility. He asked them the following question: "During the past year, what is the greatest deed you have done?" The first son told of a certain journey which he had taken at the request of a merchant. He had carried for this merchant several valuable jewels and he could have kept some of them but did not. Instead, he delivered them all to their proper destination. The father's reply was that his son had done well in being honest but he could not have been anything else without great shame. The second son told of how he had been watching a child play by a lake. When the youngster fell in he plunged in and saved his life. The father's reply was that his son had done a brave deed but that he could never have let the child drown. The third son told of how he was crossing a mountain and saw on the road a man who hated him and had done him much harm. The man was asleep near the edge of a great cliff. With one push he could have been shoved over the edge; but said the son, "I awakened him gently and told him of his danger and he cursed me for it." The father replied, "My son, the pearl is yours. You did right without the hope of reward to one who had done you wrong." God does not want our gifts if our attitude is incorrect.

II. THE UNSELFISH GIFT - Luke 21:1-4

This is the familiar story of the widow's mite. The mite was the smallest of all coins. It was about 1/16th of a penny. In this story, we learn that God is interested in how and how much we give to Him. Someone has said God is not as much interested in how much we give Him but rather in how much is left after we give. At this season of the year, this passage is a timely reminder of God's desire that His people be unselfish in their gifts to Him and to others. Many of us would say we would gladly give the Lord 1/10th of a million dollars if we had it. However, to give Him 1/10th of the 100 we have is not quite so easy.

III. THE UNTARNISHED GIFT - James 1:17

Most of us have been the recipient of a lovely gift at one time or another. Last Christmas, most of us received gifts that have already worn out and we are ready for more gifts this year. The whole world of commerce operates on the principle that what we purchase this year will wear out before next Christmas. God's gifts to man do not tarnish or wear out. Think of His many wonderful gifts to us: Love, mercy, faith, grace, health, family and friends, the Bible, to mention but a few.

THE BIBLE AND MISSIONS

Robert Spradling

July 1972

In many churches, missions is something which four or five ladies do once each quarter when they meet to roll bandages or to collect clothing to be sent to missionaries on the foreign field. Once each year the denomination receives a check from the church and this is the extent of missionary work. It is based upon the philosophy that "charity begins at home" and is in effect a kind of protestant isolationism as far as people across the seas are concerned. Robert Glover in his book entitled The Bible Basis of Missions has said: "The missionary enterprise is no human conception or undertaking, no modern scheme or invention, no mere philanthropy even of the finest kind. It did not originate in the brain or heart of any man, not even of William Carey, or the Apostle Paul. It's source was in the heart of God Himself. Jesus Christ, God's great missionary to a lost world, was the supreme revelation of His heart and the expression of His love." (John 3:16)

Bible missions is not a kind of "spiritual rabbit's foot" which if engaged in with blind optimism will cure all the ills of the church. However, this program is so vital to the ongoing of the local church that where it has been neglected the churches have a tendency to dry up spiritually. The success of the local church depends upon how many New Testament principles not the least of which is effective evangelism and Bible preaching missions. Many churches can testify to the fact that when missions became a vital part of the ministry of the church it suddenly began to move forward and prosper in many other areas. Missions is indeed the heart and soul of a church and without it the church will become a dead shell. In the Gospel of Matthew there are three clear commands to the Lord's people concerning missions:

I. PRAY (Matthew 9:38)

There is something very sad about this picture. Jesus saw the sad spiritual condition of people who were bewildered by the religious situation of the day with no real direction and purpose in life. He saw man's primary need as a spiritual need and sought to correct the problem first of all by prayer. Prayer is not an optional or unimportant part of foreign missions. The Bible pictures prayer as service to God. God moves when His people pray. The success of a missionary on the field depends in large measure on the faithfulness of His prayer partners! Question: How many of us have glibly said to a missionary when he visited in our church, "I'll pray for you and your work". However, in reality when the service was over the missionary and his work were soon forgotten as was our promise to pray. The nature of the obstacles on the foreign field are foreign to most Americans. We cannot imagine the power of spiritual darkness in many mission fields. Missionaries have attested to the fact that you can feel the resistance of Satan whenever and wherever the Gospel was preached. Satan certainly opposes any entrance of the Gospel of Light upon a field which he has dominated for centuries. Only prayer and hard work on the part of the missionary can give victory in such places. Jonathan Goforth once said: "When I came to England I met a certain saint of God. We talked about the revival in China and she gave me certain dates when God specifically pressed her to pray. I was almost startled on looking up these dates to find that they were the very dates when God was doing His mightiest work in Manchuria and China." It was said of Hudson Taylor that "he prayed up the walls of hospitals, he prayed mission stations into being and missionaries into faith." One of the unusual policies of the China Inland Mission was to make their needs known to God alone. This mission became one of the most successful faith missions in the history of missions. It is an established fact that the great missionary movements in history have come out of great sweeping prayer meetings by the church of God.

BIBLE NOTES

Robert Spradling

The notes that believers place in the flyleaf of their Bible ^{is} very interesting. It is said that the familiar saying: "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible", was found in the flyleaf of D. L. Moody's Bible. One of my favorite ways of "snooping" is to browse through Bibles which have been left at the church. A great deal of information may be obtained, and a great deal of insight gained, by browsing through another Christian's Bible. The following quotations are a number of such sayings which I have accumulated over the years. I trust they will be a blessing to other Christians:

1. "They who know what is meant by faith in a promise, a physician, a remedy, an advocate, a friend - should know what is meant by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."
-Donald G. Barnhouse.
2. "It takes two to make a quarrel; never be one. A soft answer will turn away wrath, and where it does not, yield before the wrong-doer. Give place to wrath, let it expend itself unhindered by your resistance; it will soon have vented itself to be succeeded by shame, penitence and regret....Our cause is more God's than it is our own. It is for Him to vindicate us; and He will."-F. B. Meyer.
3. "There are two paths to reality, one is the path of investigation, such a path has no end. The other is the path of experience. In the realm of salvation, this leads to satisfaction. Taste and see that the Lord is good."-Alva J. McClain.
4. "A specialist is one who knows more and more about less and less until finally he knows everything about nothing." Also, "The more you know you know you know you know you know the less."
5. "The rule that governs my life is this: Anything that dims my vision for Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I as a Christian, turn away from it."-J. Wilbur Chapman.
6. "Self is the main cause of unhappiness in the life."-D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.
7. "The new way may not be God's way."
8. "The teacher does not often mend his own farthing candle of illumination; he offers them the light and truth of God."-William Barclay.
9. "Be content with a holy ministry which does not dazzle by its fireworks, but sheds a steady sunshine on the sacred page."-F. B. Meyer.
10. "Apply thyself wholly to the text; apply the text wholly to thyself."-J. A. Bengel.
11. "It is comparatively easy to shine on great occasions and to meet special emergencies. It is not so easy to shine in ordinary duties and to meet the momentary requirements of daily living. We need, it is true, our great experiences to "mount up with wings as eagles". Nor must we be without power for times of exceptional pressure, to "run and not be weary." But far above all we need grace for the little things of life to "walk and not faint."-W. H. Griffith Thomas.
12. "What we weave in time, we wear in eternity."-Bishop Ryle.

13. "If you are successful, don't crow; if defeated, don't croak."-Samuel Chadwick.
14. "From the desire of being great, good Lord, deliver us."-A Moravian prayer.
15. "George Mueller's rule of life in church order, public and private life was this: 'What does the Bible say?'"
16. "Love is the secret of contentment."-George H. Morrison.
17. "Be satisfied with what you have...but never be satisfied with what you are." "The pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty." "Happiness does not depend on what we have, for if this were so those who have the most would be the happiest. Happiness comes to him who is thankful for what he has." "Sudden reversals come to us all - to wean us from confidence in men and things; to stay us from building our nest on any earth-grown tree, to force us to root ourselves in God alone."-F. B. Meyer.
18. "Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell."-C. T. Studd.
19. "For some people their religion is like a 'dull habit' while for others it is like an 'acute fever'."-William James.
20. "The business of the true expositor is to give the meaning of the language before him, not to alter its terms; but to explain the passage and not explain it away."-William Taylor.
21. "The solitude of this small study is more to my poor soul than all my social intercourse with humanity. It is here that I am transported to the summit peaks where eternal verities blaze and glow with unfading splendor...what strange strength I derive in this solitary nook."-A statement found among a minister's papers regarding the importance of his study.
22. "I am proof that a man may throw his whole life into the hands of God and want for nothing."-R. A. Torrey
23. "To pray well is to study well."-Martin Luther.
24. "He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day."
-John Bunyan.
25. "Quitters never win and winners never quit."-Author unknown.
26. "There are some prayers concerning the answers to which we cannot be sure, for they deal with matters which are outside the promises of God. But whenever we claim for ourselves or others, things which God has offered us in Christ, we may be sure that to ask is to have."-F. B. Meyer.
27. "When God beckons you forward, He is always responsible for the transportation."
-F. B. Meyer.
28. "The will of God will never lead you, where the grace of God will not keep you."

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

Robert
Spradling

Craftsmen recognize the necessity of good tools in order to do quality work. Believers need a few basic tools in order to get the most from their study of the Bible.

I. Bible

Every believer needs his own personal Bible. It should not be too large nor too small. The print should be easy to read. The Scofield Reference Bible is an excellent buy. The cost should be in the \$20-\$30 range. A well constructed Bible will last 10-15 years with continuous use, so don't be afraid to purchase a well made one. When marking your Bible, do not use a regular ball point pen, it will "soak through" the paper. Use a specially made pen for this purpose, or a soft lead pencil. There is an India ink pen, called a "Rapidograph", available at most office supply companies.

The Scofield Reference Bible contains many aids to study, such as:

1. Footnotes--wealth of doctrinal material.
2. Marginal cross references.
3. Supplementary material in the introduction and between the Testaments.
4. Book headings, outlines, divisions.
5. Concordance
6. Maps
7. Index

II. Concordance

There are three generally accepted concordances:

1. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
James Strong
2. Young's
3. Crudens

III. Dictionary

The Bible student needs TWO dictionaries: An English dictionary, such as Webster's New Collegiate, and a Bible Dictionary, such as Unger's Bible Dictionary by Dr. Merrill Unger. There are several other well known and excellent Bible dictionaries which are readily available from various book dealers.

IV. Modern Translations

A modern is not meant to be a substitute for the Authorized Version. However, some of these modern versions, with their idiomatic usage of everyday contemporary language, can be helpful. The following are a few suggestions:

1. Williams Translation
2. Weymouth Translation
3. Way Translation (Pauline Epistles only)
4. Amplified Bible (Old Testament & New Testament)

V. Commentaries

A. One Volume

1. The Christian Worker's Commentary
James M. Gray
2. Wycliffe Bible Commentary
3. The New Testament for English Readers
Alfred (New Testament only)

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Calif. shifting opinions

Phone call - question

Rabin
Oct. 1973

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT —

Robert Spradling

May 1971

a shift

The word capital as used in this context refers to the head, and has reference to the forfeiture of the head or life as punishment for a crime. The mood of our country seems to favor the abolition of capital punishment. It is described as unfair, barbaric and a regression to primitive means of vengeance. One of the greatest outcries against capital punishment has to do with the idea that under such a system the poor suffer and the wealthy go unpunished for similar crimes. However, in our consideration it must be remembered that we are establishing a Biblical principle. The fact that capital punishment has been abused in our system of jurisprudence does not nullify the fact that this principle is taught in the Word of God. To throw out this principle because of abuses would be like throwing out the institution of marriage simply because some people abuse their marriage vows. One must readily admit that even poorly enforced marriage laws are better than none at all. As a matter of fact, man abuses most of his privileges and responsibilities before God. Society should be more concerned about correcting the abuses of capital punishment than abolishing the principle! (Point)

Any consideration of the Biblical principle of capital punishment must center around Genesis 9:6. In the context of this chapter, God put governmental authority into the hands of men. The maximum penalty of human government according to this verse is to punish wrong doers absolutely. Without this authority, the ability of government to protect the life of all its people is inadequate and weak. Before the Flood, there was no divine authorization for the institution of human government. After the Flood, God established this institution for the protection and improvement of human life. God knew that evil men need certain restrictions and these restrictions are to be executed in the fear of governmental punishment for crime. In this verse, God establishes the sacredness of human life and establishes government for the protection of human life. The attitude of Cain and Lamech in the Book of Genesis ought to firmly establish this need in the minds of men! (Genesis 4:8,23,24)

Some persons have suggested that one of the Ten Commandments forbids the taking of life. However, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" has to do with murder or personal vengeance and does not refer to men in the collective or governmental sense.

One reason why capital punishment is so important has to do with the fact that man was made in God's moral image. The man who takes another man's life has committed a crime against mankind and God and therefore forfeits his own right to life. The following statement by Leupold should be studied carefully: "Capital punishment is divinely ordained. For the proper safeguarding of the human race this basic ordinance is laid down. When lawgivers attempt to tamper with this divine regulation, they are trying to be wiser than the Divine Lawgiver and overthrow the pillars of safety that He Himself provided for the welfare of mankind."

Dr. Alva McClain has made some accurate and wise observations about this subject. He has pointed out that God instituted human government to set up some form of control upon the lawless impulses of men. Genesis 9:6 is very simple and clearly stated, and is the basic principle of all human law and government. In this historic text several things should be noted:

(1) The decree recognizes that fallen man at his best, as exemplified by righteous Noah and his family, still has within his heart unmeasured potentialities for evil which must be curbed.

- (2) These evil inclinations are now to be restrained by the fear of governmental punishment; and in the case of murder the punishment would be capital.
- (3) The penalty upon evil doers would be inflicted by "man" in the collective or governmental sense; not according to the principle of personal vengeance as some have supposed.
- (4) The moral justification for the institution of human government, and also its power of capital punishment, is based squarely upon the very argument often used against the latter namely, the sacredness of human life in the sight of God. Genesis 9:6, therefore, becomes one of the most important landmarks in all of human history, for here God not only decrees the beginning of human government in a sinful world, but also lays down the moral and social functions of all such government.

In spite of modern ideas and theories, the right of government has not been changed in New Testament times. The Apostle Paul said to Festus: "If I am a wrong doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die." (Acts 25:11) In Romans 13:1-4 Paul establishes this same principle mentioned in Genesis 9:6.

Since 1930 the Federal Government has been keeping records of executions: and 1968 was the first year on record when not a single criminal was executed in the United States. Yet, this very year was the year of assassinations. Men seem to feel free to kill political enemies or anyone else they care to but the law cannot slay the enemies of society. Many (if not most) of the states have abolished capital punishment and in so doing have acted in direct opposition to a Biblical principle. The result has been that too many innocent people have become the victims of crime, including our policemen. This is not meant to be an oversimplification of the problem of crime but it is foundational to the solution to the problem. Obviously, every aspect of capital punishment cannot be considered in such a brief study. However, an unbiased person must admit that this principle is clearly in the Bible.

From the practical side of the subject, this writer believes that most law enforcement officers realize the value of capital punishment in society, and fully support the fair and just administration of such a policy.

CARE IN GIVING
Luke 12:42

This week, a call came to the Church office requesting the use of our young people in soliciting funds for a charity. In the past few years, we have received repeated inquiries about using our Church buses and facilities for community charity work. Most of the organizations that have made such requests are well meaning groups but they are not designed to do the primary work of a local church, that is, reaching men and women, boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ. This writer could be busy 24 hours a day involved in multiple charity works and never get at preaching the Gospel and winning souls for Christ! Bible prudence would necessitate that God's people stay on the main track as clearly laid out in the Word of God. There are multiplied thousands of unsaved people who are able, willing and ready to do charitable work, but the number of born-again Christians who are involved in reaching the lost for Christ is very limited! It is amazing the number of people who want to involve churches in their favorite cause. (I have a lady who regularly calls, requesting assistance from our Church in championing her latest charitable interest. She does not attend church anywhere but looks upon the Bible Center as her church because she listens to the radio program.)

This paper is not designed to question the motives of people or charitable groups. However, a word of caution is in order to our Church family about supporting and contributing to every group that calls itself "Christian." Not all so-called Christian groups are careful managers of the Lord's funds, and not all live up to their claims. The Lord's people should pray and think about contributions made to any organization, religious or otherwise.

A recent article in Eternity Magazine was aimed at warning Christians about contributions to groups they know little about outside the advertising they promote. The article mentions one prominent foundation that is under investigation because of administrative weakness in allowing 73% of a \$900,000 annual income to be gobbled up in administrative overhead. The article also points out that we well-known Catholic charity has a net worth of over \$200,000,000 and yet has many sympathetic contributors because it deals primarily with wayward boys. The article also points out the fact that some Christian organizations disguise their true administrative fund raising costs by calling large portions of administrative allowances "missionary ministry," or hiding postage and promotional costs under the broad term "literature outreach." The writer says "Let's face it, is a slick magazine with a few pages of factual reporting, some heart-rendering stories of human suffering and spiritual need, and a gift and a few gift forms, ministry or promotion?" Sometimes Christian agencies that claim to send a high percentage of their designated gifts to the field are simply majoring on a particular kind of bookkeeping. We may rest assured that somebody is paying for salaries, staff members, postage, travel, advertising and any other expenses involved in organizational management. They may choose to hide it through clever bookkeeping procedures, but the fact still remains. The Lord's people would be wise to send their funds to established and reliable Christian organizations.

CHANGE
II Cor. 5:17

The one word which characterizes the person who has received Christ as Saviour is change. The man who has been genuinely born again is usually so drastically changed that people cannot help but notice the vast difference in his life. The outward evidences of a new nature should be evident to the man who is in Christ. However, the Bible speaks of some changes which take place for the new believer that are not obvious but are none the less real.

I. JUSTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF STATE, A NEW STANDING BEFORE GOD --
Romans 5:1

Justification is the judicial act of God whereby he declares the believing sinner not guilty. This declaration on the part of God guarantees the believer that he will never stand before the judgment bar of God with reference to his sins. Judicially, we have been forgiven the penalty of our sins. The impact of this great work of God can be partially appreciated when one reads Revelation 20:11-15. The believer will never appear at the Great White Throne judgment - justification guarantees this truth.

II. REPENTANCE: A CHANGE OF MIND, A NEW MIND ABOUT CHRIST -- Acts. 20:21

The general idea of repentance is that of tears or a feeling of remorse or regret. To be sure, this may be involved in the act of repentance. However, the primary word in the Bible means "to change the mind." Men are sometimes willing to feel sorry for their sins and themselves but this is not necessarily true repentance. True repentance involves a genuine change of the mind regarding Christ.

III. REGENERATION: A CHANGE OF NATURE, A NEW HEART BEFORE GOD --
John 3:1-10

Regeneration is the divine side of that change of heart which, viewed from the human side, is called conversion. The word regeneration occurs only twice in the New Testament: Matthew 19:28 where the word is used to describe society that will be changed and under the control of the Messiah during his reign on earth. Titus 3:5 where the word refers to the change accomplished in a person who receives Christ as Saviour.

IV. CONVERSION: A CHANGE OF LIFE, A NEW LIFE FROM GOD -- Acts. 3:19

Conversion focuses attention on the human side of that spiritual change in man which, seen from God's side, is called regeneration. Conversion is simply turning away from sin and turning to God. The word is used to describe two kinds of experiences in life. (1) The experience of a sinner being saved -- Acts 3:19. (2) The experience of a son returning to the Lord -- Luke 22:31-32. Generally speaking, however, conversion is used today to refer to the experience of being born again and not with reference to restoration to fellowship.

(over)

CHRIST IN ISAIAH

Robert Spradling

December 1971

700 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah revealed some interesting facts about the coming Messiah.

I. His Virgin Birth - 7:14

This verse has been the basis of much theological controversy in recent years. Several translations have tried to weaken the force of the word "virgin", translating it "young woman". However, Matthew 1:22-23 gives the Scriptural interpretation of the meaning of Isaiah's prophecy.

The virgin birth of Christ has been a difficult doctrine for some because they say it is not very scientific to believe such a birth was possible. Whether men do or do not accept certain doctrines of the Bible has nothing to do with their validity. The Bible teaches that such a birth took place. If the Scripture is inaccurate at this point, how can we be sure it is correct in other doctrines?

There are several problems which arise if one refuses the truth of the virgin birth: (1) That Mary lied - Luke 1:34 (2) The attitude of Mary concerning the birth - Luke 1:46 (3) The place the Christmas story has among men. (We tell this story to our children. It has brought joy and blessing to millions. No out of wedlock situation could bring such help.)

II. His Vicarious Suffering - 53:1-12

Few passages in the Bible speak so forcefully of the death of Christ as this chapter, even though it was written several hundred years before Jesus was born. Notice the emphasis of the text on what He did for us:

V.4 - He hath borne our griefs

V.5 - He was wounded for our transgressions, our iniquities...our peace...
by His stripes we are healed.

V.6 - we like sheep...astray...laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

These verses point to the fact that Christ died for sinners. He took our place on the Cross that one day we might have a place in Glory.

III. His Day of Vengeance - 61:1-2, 63:1-4

Isaiah reminds his readers that our blessed Lord will not always suffer men to trample His redemptive work beneath their feet. The day is coming when God will vindicate His Son before the eyes of the world. This day of vengeance is connected with the Second Coming of Christ. Revelation 19:11-21 is the key New Testament passage on this subject.

IV. His Victorious Rule - 9:6

In a single verse, Isaiah pictures Christ in both of His comings to earth. The first part of the verse depicts Christ's first advent and speaks of His two natures. The government is yet to be upon His shoulder. This will occur at His second coming and involves the Millennial reign of Christ. One day He will indeed reign on earth as Prince of Peace.

QUESTIONS ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Robert Spradling

April 1972

Every time a Christian decides on the rightness or wrongness of a situation, he is dealing with the subject of ethics. Whenever a believer is required to explain why he does not smoke, drink or play cards, he is touching the realm of Christian ethics. Throughout one's entire Christian experience, he will be dealing with ethical problems which are often most difficult and baffling. The big question in ethics is: "Is it right or is it wrong?" For the Christian, the answer must come from the Word of God. In every questionable situation, the believer should ask the following questions: (1) How will it affect my life? (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:1-2; Philippians 3:7-14) (2) How does it affect others? (Romans 14:7-13 & 21) (3) How does it affect my fellowship with and service for Christ? (Colossians 3:17) Christian ethics, then, has to do with our moral conduct. The following questions have to do with questions which have been most frequently asked by believers in the area of ethics.

1. Is it wrong to smoke?

Smoking has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation. It may, however, have a great deal to do with sanctification. In our society, smoking has become one of the major health problems. The fact that cigarette commercials are not permitted on T. V. speaks for itself. The use of tobacco is a wasteful habit, but most of all, for a believer, it can become a hindrance to Christian growth and maturity, especially in the area of personal evangelism. (I Corinthians 6:19).

(Story about man came from Holland - wealthy American Christian - ran down ages into my house.)

2. What about drinking?

Most people would agree that excess in drinking of alcoholic beverages is wrong. Even the drunkard would agree with this principle even though he does not practice it. The unhappiness, divorce, death and sorrow that follow in the wake of heavy drinking does not leave much room for its acceptance. (Proverbs 20:1 & 23:29 ff.) However, the question is most frequently asked regarding "social drinking". Is it possible to drink moderately without having these problems. The big question is: "Will the moderate drinker remain a moderate drinker?" Of the 5-9 million alcoholics in America, most of them started as social drinkers! The danger with alcoholic beverages lies in the first drink. This, all too often, leads to something stronger. The man who drinks at all, encourages others to do so by his example. The only way to have a clear-cut testimony for Christ is to abstain from drinking in all forms. I Timothy 5:23 has been used by some as justification for moderate indulgence. However, a study of this passage puts it in the area of a medical suggestion and not as a beverage. The professing Christian who drinks is considered by saint and sinner alike to be inconsistent and ineffective in his profession. His testimony is without meaning and weight.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS
(Part 2)

Robert Spradling

April 1972

The Christian life is not meant to be one of negatives. We do not measure spirituality by the number of sins we do not commit. However, the very nature of the subject of ethics often casts a negative element into the picture. The purpose of this study is to deal with some of these problem areas in order to help Christians arrive at some Biblical conclusions. The first phase of this study dealt with four particular areas of difficulty. This study will touch some other problem areas.

1. Should A Christian go into debt?

Some have seen Romans 13:8 as a restriction from purchasing anything on credit. All transactions, in their judgment, must be on a cash basis. Most would agree that the "cash and carry" principle is a safe one, and would keep many people out of perils of credit buying. However, there are some areas where necessary purchases would be impossible on such a basis, not the last of which would be the purchase of a home. When a person purchases a home on an installment basis, he is paying interest for the use of money and as such is meeting an honest obligation. In order to borrow any money, he must secure the amount of the loan. The Biblical prohibition to a believer would be in the area of incurring indebtedness beyond that which one has the ability to repay. God intends for us to live moderately and within our means. Failure to do so, produces problems in the home and affects the testimony in the community. Also, our ability to give generously to the Lord's work can be greatly restricted if the believer is not wise and careful in these matters.

2. What about secret societies?

Too often these groups are joined by unbelievers as a basis for working their way to heaven. The society becomes his hope of heaven. The members of these groups are often bound together by oaths which are unbecoming to a born-again Christian. As a pastor, this winter I have observed certain societies conducting religious rituals, performed by unbelievers, that were contrary to Scripture and a mockery of New Testament Christianity. At the "committal services" the deceased was declared to be in the grand lodge on high with no reference made to faith in Jesus Christ as God's only way of salvation. Usually membership in these societies keeps believers from being aggressive Christians in their own local church and in no way strengthens their Christian faith. In this writer's judgment, 2 Corinthians 6:14 would be a strong Scripture basis for not being associated with such organizations.

3. What should be the Christian's attitude toward war?

War is part of the problem of evil on the earth. As long as mankind attempts to live on earth without God, there will be conflict between nations. However, there is a clear distinction between personal vengeance, resulting in murder, and the responsibility of human government to protect society from aggression for the purpose of order among the nations of the world. Exodus 20:13 is often used as a basis for opposition to war, but usually the person who flees to this verse pays little attention to any of the other nine commandments!

The principles of Romans 13:1-7 would require a believer to submit to the authority of government even in time of war. If that government is of such nature that it is contrary to all a Christian believes, such as Nazi Germany or some Communist nations, then a believer in refusing to participate in their wars must be willing to pay the penalty involved in disobedience. We can be grateful to God for a country like America which permits special assignments for persons who object to the principle of war yet desire to serve their country but not in a combative role. Romans 8:28 applies to a believer's life even in wartime. We can trust God to care for us.

Questions:

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Robert K. Spradling

June, 1970

A recent article in one of the local papers described a proposed program for an ordination service to be held in one of the churches in our city. The program is a radical departure from accepted standards for the Gospel ministry. It is nauseous to any person who loves Jesus Christ and is concerned for the ministry of the Gospel. The question that comes to the mind of a believer is: "Why do people do such ridiculous things in the name of Christ, and where do we look for acceptable standards for the ministry?" Men who turn from the Bible have no correct standards for the Christian ministry, and therefore every man does that which is right in his own eyes. Thus, the Lord's people are shocked at the nonsense that goes on under the guise of Christianity. The Apostle Paul wrote two epistles, I & II Timothy, specifically designed to give instructions to ministers and to churches regarding proper behavior in the Lord's work.

I. I Timothy 1:2.

The phrase "own son in the faith" suggests that the first qualification of a Christian worker is new birth. The word "son" is the Greek word "teknon" which refers to nature and birth, i. e., Timothy was a genuinely born again man. He was no counterfeit, but truly in the faith! Every ordination service which this writer has attended has opened with the candidate giving his personal testimony concerning his conversion to Jesus Christ. Any person who is not sure of this experience should never enter the ministry. How can a minister tell sinners about salvation in Christ if he himself has not experienced the same?

II. I Timothy 4:12.

The second question asked of a candidate in a Biblical ordination service has to do with his call to the ministry. Paul did not attend the proper schools and then decide that the ministry would be a good place to serve his fellowman. Every believer has the right and the responsibility to disseminate the Gospel. The office of a bishop, and the relationship it bears to God and a local church, must be by divine appointment! The fact that some men are not called of God is evident by the fruitless ministries and faltering churches of our land. Spurgeon's advice to any aspiring young minister was as follows: "Do not enter the ministry if you can help it...If any student...could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth, let him go his way; he is not the man in whom dwells the Spirit of God in its fulness....The fascination of the preacher's office is very great to weak minds but it is not the place for them!" However, if there is that growing burden over a prolonged period of time that is slow to wane, indicating God's hand upon a man, let him prepare for the most noble work available to human-kind, namely the Christian ministry. (The chapter entitled "The Call to the Ministry" in Spurgeon's Lectures to My Students is excellent on this subject.)

God put Paul into the ministry. Paul's reaction to this divine appointment was expressed in I Corinthians 9:16.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SEPARATION

Romans 12:1-2

March, 1975

Robert K. Spradling

A recent article in the Grit paper had to do with a man in Amsterdam, Holland who could squeeze himself into a box 19"x19". He is 6 feet tall and weighs 170 pounds. He is known as the "Cubic Man." The clipping reminded me of the Phillips Translation of our text: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity."

Few subjects are more hotly debated and sensitive to believers than the subject of separation. The two major divisions of the subject are: (1) Ecclesiastical separation and (2) Personal separation.

Ecclesiastical separation -- The large majority of fundamental Bible preaching, teaching churches in America came into existence because of the belief that the Bible requires believers to separate themselves from apostate religious groups. Old line denominations were abandoned by some Christians when many such denominations forsook the Bible as the sole basis of faith and practice. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was substituted with a social gospel. Our own church had its beginning out of the deep convictions of a few believers that separation from apostate religious groups was absolutely mandatory. Your pastor left the denomination in which he was saved in order to obey the Scriptural injunctions concerning separation from apostate organizations. Some folk seek to defend their policy of staying in liberal churches. They rationalize that there are many Christians in these groups to whom they may minister. A friend of mine seeks to defend his position in this regard by saying or referring to himself as a "missionary" to his church. On the surface, this sounds spiritual. However, on one occasion I asked him how many converts he had won in his missionary endeavor but he couldn't remember a single person he had led to Christ. All of his excuses for staying in an apostate denomination were meaningless. As a matter of fact, in the meantime his family has moved far from God. One reason for this decline could be their failure in being exposed to the Word of God. I do not sanction some of the pettiness that goes on under the flag of separation, but in my judgment, to stay in a liberal church is a waste of time, finances, and personal effort. It is simply a matter of time until all financial giving winds up in the coffers of organizations which deny the very doctrines New Testament Christians seek to defend. (Comment regarding Dr. McClain's conversation with Dr. Barnhouse.)

Personal separation -- (II Cor. 6:14-18) Christian separation from evil is not just a bundle of negatives. However, there are some Scriptural negatives to which we should adhere. (I John 2:15-17) "Worldliness is the self-indulgent attitude of the heart

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONSII Timothy 4:13

As we approach the Christmas season, the following suggestions have to do with items which might be of special help and blessing to believers in the way of gifts. You will notice that the primary emphasis is upon good Christian literature. This list is by no means exhaustive and is meant simply to help in selection of good material. Some of our Church people are new believers and need guidance so they will not waste their money on less than the best in books and materials.

I. The Bible on Record

The American Bible Society produces the entire New Testament on records at the total cost of \$6.75. The address is: American Bible Society, Central Region, 310 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60601. Specify King James Version read by Alexander Scourby. These records are at 16-2/3 speed. Cassettes, New Testament only, \$1.95 each or \$35 for entire N.T. and Psalms. In writing this company, request a catalog. Hardback editions of the Bible may be secured for \$1.00 each. Pocket-size New Testaments may be secured at a very reasonable rate. Extra large print New Testaments and Psalms may be secured for approximately \$2.00. Film strips are available from this company on various subjects. One word of instruction is necessary concerning orders: Checks or money orders must be sent with the order. This is the most economical outlet for purchasing Bible records.

II. Bibles

Every believer needs his own personal copy of the Word of God. Size is important. It should not be too large or too small. The print should be easy to read. The Scofield Reference Bible is a favorite among born-again people. The cost of this edition of the Bible is between \$20 and \$30. Above the \$20 mark, the paper is the same, the extra cost is in the binding. One of the most economical buys in Bibles is the Cambridge Bible. Modern translations should not be used as a substitute for the authorized version. However, they are helpful in Bible study. The Williams, Weymouth, Way are helpful translations.

III. Bible Concordance and Bible Dictionary

Every Christian should own a good concordance and a good Bible dictionary. The three best known concordances are Strong's, Young's, and Cruden's. Dr. Merrill Unger's Bible dictionary would make an excellent gift for Christmas. These are the basic tools that every believer needs before purchasing other books.

IV. Commentaries

There is no single volume or set of commentaries which meets every need. The following are all limited in certain areas but will be helpful in Bible study; The Christian Worker's Commentary by James M. Gray, Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible by C. J. Ellicott, Wycliff Bible Commentary and The New Testament for English Readers by Alford. All of these are one volume commentaries with the exception of Ellicott's. Since sets of commentaries do not meet every need, it might be wise to purchase the best book on a book of the Bible in a single volume. The following are a list of writers whose works are generally reliable: H. A. Ironside - Ironside's books are doctrinally correct,

THE CHURCH

Robert Spradling

January 1971

Introduction:

Every doctrine of Scripture is endangered by extreme interpretation. The doctrine of the Church is not immune from such problems. On the one hand, there are the ecumenical advocates who are working for a super-church composed of all religious groups without regard for Bible doctrine. The other extreme is that of groups, and many are evangelical in nature, which seek to work outside the local church without the restraint and discipline which a New Testament church exerts upon its members in the areas of doctrine and conduct. Every generation brings forth some new groups which claim to be doing the work which the Church has failed to do. However, if the New Testament is our guide, we cannot improve upon the means which our Lord established and sustained in reaching the lost for Christ, namely, through the spread of the Gospel and establishing of local churches according to the design of Scripture. There is no greater organization in the world than the Church which Jesus Christ sent into the world to preach His blessed Gospel. s

The word "church" is used in a variety of ways, but the most common usage is not Biblical in origin. A denomination or a building is often called a church, but in the New Testament, the word church refers to the universal body of believers or to a local congregation of believers. There is one Church, the Body of Christ, but there are many local congregations of believers. To call a denomination a church is not in keeping with Biblical distinctives.

The word "church" occurs 113 times in the New Testament and comes from the Greek word "ekklesia" which means "to call out from", that is a church is a called out group of people who have experienced salvation by grace and to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord. On a local level, they have united in fellowship for the purpose of worship, instruction and evangelism. They have structured this local church according to the design of the New Testament, with proper officers and administration of the ordinances laid down in the Word of God.

The Bible teaches that the universal Church is a spiritual organism made up of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. This Church manifests itself on earth in local, historical churches which are visible organizations in structure.

The first mention of the Church in the New Testament is in Matthew 16:18. From this verse we learn the following facts: (1) The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. He will build it and nothing will defeat its ministry in the world. (2) The Church was yet future when our Lord spoke for He said, "I will build..." Further on in Matthew 18:17, our Lord spoke of the disciplinary measures which are involved in the administering of the affairs of His Church. However, the "building" of the Church began on the Day of Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit on that day initiated the forming of a spiritual body known as the Body of Christ. (Cf. I Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:22, where the Spirit's ministry is associated with "building" the Church.) The Spirit accomplishes this ministry through the members of the Body whom He uses to win men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ is being built today by the gathering of a people from out of the nations of the world. The completion of this work will be at the Second Coming of Christ. (Acts 15:14-15) The Church is a special body of saved people who will be bought to Christ within a limited period of time, that period is commonly called the Church Age. The moment for which every believer of that Body looks is the union of the holy Bride with the heavenly Bridegroom. (Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:6-9) The practical effects of this doctrine has to do with the matter of association. The responsibility of every born-again believer is to be in fellowship with a local church in which the head of the church is recognized and obeyed. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and it is the duty and responsibility of every local church to seek to do His will as it is recorded in Scripture. Any local church that does not preach Christ, seek to win men at home and abroad, and adhere to the principles of the Word of God for Christian living and doctrine is not worthy of the support of a saved person.

CHURCH PROGRAMS

Several months ago, a person asked this writer why we do not have special meetings anymore at our church? It was pointed out that we had just concluded a Bible conference with one of the foremost Bible teachers in America. This lady's problem was obvious - she did not attend church often enough to know what was being offered for her spiritual edification. There are many people like this in every church. Hours of planning and preparation are put into the church schedule to provide a well balanced program with you and your family in mind.

Regular services include an expositional approach to Bible instruction. Any believer may grow in grace if he will attend services regularly. Wednesday evening is a special time of prayer and fellowship, but also, mimeographed study material is distributed almost every week. Special services such as Bible conferences, Missionary conferences, Evangelistic meetings, Bible-Science conferences, sacred artist concerts, retreats, and special days with special programs are planned into the church calendar. Add to these, features such as Bible Training Institute, Youth ministry, Sunday School class activities, and a dozen other group activities and one begins to see how church programming is a vital part of our local assembly.

There is one way to avoid all of these benefits - stay home or come to church once a week. The result of such practice will be spiritual immaturity and unrest. Without trying to overwork the word "involve", let me encourage every believer in our church to avail himself of the advantages which are open to him.

Our new church facilities will heighten the opportunity for service.

The coming weeks offer a well balanced program. For example:

1. D. V. B. S. - August 19-23
Something for every age, including parents.
2. B. T. I. - September 24
A Sunday School teachers "golden opportunity" to upgrade abilities. A wonderful place for new believers to grow in grace.
3. Sunday School - September 6 - October 6-27
A contest to reach out to recruit others for Sunday School. You can help.
4. Bible Science Conferences - November 10-13
Dr. Lehman Strauss - an outstanding Bible teacher.

Opportunities are provided for our church family. Remember the proverb "you can lead a horse to water but.....". The spiritual table is set from week to week. Your personal benefit of these programs depends upon your spiritual appetite. Please don't blame the church staff if you are not spiritually hungry - that is your responsibility.

COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Mark 15:30

These words and events bring us to the closing scenes of Jesus' earthly life. The agonies of the Garden have been felt; the treachery of Judas has been acted out; the sham of His trial was over. The council had condemned Him. The disciples had forsaken Him. The soldiers have mocked and shamed Him. A thorny crown was placed on His head, a robe of mockery put around His body, and His back felt the brutality of the scourge. The governor had given Him over to the crowd. Wounded, bleeding and faint Jesus appeared at Calvary. It is here the bitter end would be acted out. On the cross, the central person of all history has been hung. He is God of creation and His creatures mocked and shamed Him. Mankind has not changed in its attitudes toward Christ. (Comment regarding Ali's remarks on the Virgin Birth.) Men still labor under the wrong ideas about the Cross and the work of Christ. There are still men in this world who say "come down from the cross", or namely, "the cross of Christ is unnecessary". (Matt. 16:21 - 23) This is the cry of ignorance. Even Peter did not understand the significance of Christ's death. Peter along with the other disciples, was looking for an earthly Kingdom and the idea of a Savior on a cross was unthinkable. Another attitude concerning the cross is that it is nonsense. (1 Cor. 1:18) The Bible does not say that the cross is foolishness, it is foolishness only in the thinking of the lost. The reason men adopt this philosophy concerning the cross is because it pronounces mankind a helpless failure before God. The man who acknowledges his own sinnership must turn to Christ and the cross for salvation. This galls the natural man! Another attitude concerning the cross is that there is no saving value in it. (2 Pet. 2:1) There are in this world, people for whom Christ died who deny that He bought their redemption. The fact that men deny this truth does not change their need for redemption. Another attitude is that of indifference. (Phil. 3:18 - 19) Some people live for gratification of the flesh and nothing else. The desires and lusts of the body are the supreme goals of life. These people indulge in sensual sins and yet profess to know God. Paul labels them as enemies of the cross. The persons who cried for Jesus to come down from the cross did not understand what they were saying. I, for one, am glad He stayed on the cross in order that sinners might go to heaven.

CONVERSION

Robert Spradling

March 1970

When a person receives Christ as Saviour, we speak of the experience as conversion, and refer to that person as a new convert. A. H. Strong defines conversion as: "that voluntary change in the mind of the sinner, in which he turns on the one hand, from sin, and on the other hand, to Christ." Conversion focuses attention on the human side of that spiritual change in man which, seen from God's side, is called regeneration. An examination of the words in the New Testament referring to conversion suggests that the basic idea in this action is that of turning. Conversion is turning away from sin and turning to God. (Both aspects of the term can be seen in Acts 14:15. cf. I Thessalonians 1:9 where the order is reversed.) Like many other great doctrines of the Bible, conversion must be seen from two sides: man's side and God's side. In the Scripture, man is told to turn from his wicked ways. cf. Ezekiel 33:11. However, the Bible also says that God turns men from their sins. cf. Jeremiah 31:18-19.

The word conversion is used to describe two kinds of experience in a person's life. (1) The experience of the sinner being saved. cf. Acts 3:19. (2) The experience of the wayward son who returns to his Lord. Luke 22:31-32. The first experience is a once for all matter, the second may be repeated. Generally speaking, when conversion is used today the primary reference is to the experience of being born-again and not to restoration of fellowship.

1. Acts 3:19, 3:26, 11:21, 26:18.

There is one simple theme in each of these verses pertaining to conversion - the person who is converted turns from his sins! In Acts 11:21 the Godward aspect is emphasized.

2. Luke 22:31-32.

This is probably the best known occurrence of the term "converted" in all of Scripture. The reference to Peter's need in this passage is similar to the reference in John 13:10. Regeneration is a once for all fact - daily and repeated cleansing is a much needed and required work of the Lord in our behalf. Spurgeon said he believed in regeneration but not in re-regeneration! Every believer who has wandered away from the path of close fellowship with the Lord knows the meaning of being "turned again" to the Lord Himself in obedience and faith.

3. James 5:19-20.

The word "convert" is used in an unusual way in these verses. The usage of the term "brethren" and "among you" would seem to point to a saved man. The verse speaks of a brother who may become entangled in error. God does not redeem men to live in error, so the turning of this one from the error of his way may indeed save him from physical death. The restoration of such a one does indeed "hide" a multitude of sins. The correction and chastisement of the Lord do sometimes bring prolonged life. (Hebrews 12:9) Or in some cases, premature death. cf. I Corinthians 11:27-30.

This interpretation of this passage does not answer all of the problems, but it does present fewer problems than the other suggestion that a sinner being born-again is in view.

From personal experience, every saved individual knows the joy of being turned from a life of sin and spiritual darkness to joy and peace in the Saviour.

DEACONS AND DISCIPLINE

Robert Spradling

February 1971

This lesson will conclude our studies on the doctrine of the church. The last two areas of consideration have to do with the office of the deacon and the matter of discipline in the local church.

The word deacon literally means "one who serves". Some writers have suggested that the word means "to raise dust by hastening", suggesting that the deacon is one who serves in various capacities in the local church. The first seven men to serve in this capacity, in Acts 6:1-6, were chosen to administer aid to the poor. This would suggest the handling of funds. Their primary responsibility was to relieve the spiritual leaders of the church of the responsibility of having to minister in temporal things to the exclusion of the spiritual. They were to be assistants to the pastors of local churches, to relieve them of the burden of administration. Every local church is indeed fortunate to have men who will assume this responsibility as unto the Lord.

The qualifications of the deacon are similar to those of an elder. (Cf. I Tim. 3:8-13) In general qualifications, the deacon must be of good character (v. 8), a man of faith (v. 9), that is he must know the faith and adhere to his doctrine. He must be a man of excellent family life (v. 12) and other qualifications mentioned in this passage. Comparing this passage with Acts 6 we would notice that a deacon must be a man of excellent reputation, good judgment, and above all else, a man who is filled with the Spirit or a man of deep spirituality. The handling of church funds and other matters of administration requires men who walk with God. One of the heartbreaking attitudes in many churches, concerning the selection of deacons, has to do with the fact that men are often chosen because they are successful in business or are popular in the church, but their spiritual qualifications are seldom considered.

The term of office is not specified in the New Testament. I see absolutely no reason why a deacon should have an indefinite term of office. There is no more reason for a local church to elect a deacon for lifetime than to elect an elder or a pastor for lifetime! The most workable arrangement is to elect deacons for a definite term of office. This enables the church to avoid placing unworthy men in a very responsible office. Failure to elect men on this basis could involve many unpleasantities in attempting to relieve an unworthy deacon of his responsibilities. Someone has also said that an election for a definite term will prompt the person to better service. When a deacon is not willing to serve, he has forfeited his right to his office, for the name literally implies, "to serve".

Many churches have neglected to discipline their members because it is a difficult and distasteful task. In following the line of least resistance churches have increased their problems. The New Testament teaches that a local church has a solemn responsibility to discipline its members. (Cf. I Cor. 5:1-13; II Thes. 6 through 15; I Tim. 5:19-24) These verses suggest that disciplinary offenses arise concerning difficulties between members, disorderly conduct on the part of church members, and gross sins. The manner of discipline seems to have been (1) Private exhortation (I Tim. 5:14). (2) Public discipline (I Tim. 5:20). The context of this verse applies to an elder but should not be limited to him. (3) Removal from the church fellowship. (I Tim. 5:1-13). This passage means complete removal from the church roll. The sinning person is to be put away from the fellowship of the local church.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Robert Spradling

September 1969

God's hatred for sin was revealed at Calvary. In dealing with man's sin, God's Son willingly gave Himself that men might be saved. (*Parable of the Drawbridge)

Even a casual reading of Scripture reveals the vital and central position of this subject. The Old Testament abounds with prophecy in this regard: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22. The heart of the New Testament is focused at Calvary: John 1:29, John 3:14ff., John 6, I Corinthians 15:1-3, Galatians 1. In all of the Scriptures the death of Christ is the very "hub" around which related doctrines are built. The Scriptures reveal some interesting and unusual aspects of our Lord's death.

1. The Death of Christ is An Eternal Reminder of God's Love for Mankind.

In the eternal state, when our Lord could be referred to by any number of terms, it is the "Lamb" whom John sees! Notice Revelation 21:9,14,22,23,27; 22:1,3. An eternal reminder to men of the importance and significance of Christ's work at Calvary is thus declared.

2. The Death of Christ Was of Interest to Old Testament Saints and Angels.

- a. Luke 9:30-31.
- b. I Peter 1:11-12.

3. The Death of Christ Was A Substitutionary Sacrifice.

The idea of substitution is taught in the Old Testament and is typical of Christ's death for sinners. Leviticus 16, Isaiah 53, Hebrews 10:1-14. One of the most revealing passages on this subject is Matthew 27:46.

QUESTIONS: Why would God forsake His Son? Does God forsake good men in death? Does He delight in punishing innocent persons?

The answer has to be that Jesus Christ was taking our place. He was bearing our sins. He was dealing with the penalty of our sins! See Isaiah 53:6, II Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13, I Peter 2:24.

Our infinite Saviour bore the infinite penalty of our sins in a moment of time in order for saved men to enjoy the pleasures of heaven for eternity.

The responsibility of believers today is to proclaim the gospel of Christ, which tells sinners the good news of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

DEMONS

Omit
April 1970

Robert Spradling

The Bible teaches that personal beings called demons actually exist. They are referred to as devils, unclean spirits and evil spirits. Jesus in His public ministry dealt with many who were demon possessed. (Mark 1:34) There is a great deal about this subject that speaks more of man's imagination than of Biblical revelation. The Bible deals with this subject with great restraint and caution. The exaggerated and fanciful notions of medieval art and theology do not have their foundation in Scripture.

For the student who is more than casually interested in the subject, the book entitled Biblical Demonology by Merrill F. Unger would be very helpful.

One of the most difficult questions to answer regarding the doctrine of demons is that of their origin. The speculation is generally in the following major views:

1. Demons are the spirits of dead, evil men. Josephus held this view.
 2. Demons are the spirits of a pre-Adamic race. Larkin, Barnhouse, Pember held this view.
 3. Demons are the spirits of the "sons of God" mentioned in Genesis 6. This view held by Alford, W. Kelley, Gaebeline, James Gray, Ryrie, Wuest, Unger.
 4. Demons are fallen angels. This view held by A. H. Strong, Chas. Hodge, L. S. Chafer.
- The problem concerning the origin of demons is that the Bible simply does not clearly reveal the answer to this question. Therefore, it would be wise not to be too dogmatic about any one of these particular views. If numbers were the basis for adopting a view, #3 would seem to be the most widely accepted among conservative scholars.

1. Matthew 8:29

The demons of New Testament times knew ^{Jesus' identity.} ~~who Jesus was.~~ They acknowledged His deity and also the fact that their destiny was in His power. (cf. Luke 8:31). It is important to notice that Jesus prohibited any testimony from demonic sources. (cf. Mark 3:11-12). Our Lord wanted no confession from demons as a basis of honor to Himself. Christ was interested in testimony from the right kind of persons.

2. Matthew 12:25-28

✓ Demons are in league with Satan and as such a part of his kingdom. They, like him, are evil in character. There are no good demons. It is of interest to note that there seems to have been special demonic activity at the first coming of Christ. This will also characterize His second coming. Cf. I Timothy 4:1-3; Revelation 9:20, 13:15, 16:13-14, 18:2.

3. Mark 5:7-12

Demons are disembodied spirits and seem to greatly desire to inhabit any kind of body. To be cast out of a body brought torment and distress.

The believer should recognize there is a doctrine of demons to be understood from the Bible. This should provide a warning not to meddle with the cultic groups that dabble in demonic practices. However, the Lord's people should be very careful about their opinions and pronouncements on demon possession. ~~(This aspect of the subject will be covered in a separate study.)~~

Find interesting that the burning of candles in pagan religions was a rite for keeping evil spirits in check by fire - to dispel the powers of darkness.

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DEMONS
(Part II)

Robert Spradling

May 1970

Demon possession refers to a demon or demons occupying a person's body and exerting control over the person. Such activity often creates mental and physical problems. Any person could be the victim of demonic influence but no believer can be demon possessed since it is not possible to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and demons at the same time.

The Bible accounts of demon possession suggest that it was possible to be possessed by more than one demon. (Luke 8:2). There was a close psychological identification between demon and person. (Mark 1:23-26). Demons did not voluntarily leave their victims, but only under divine insistence. (Mark 9:26).

1. Matthew 4:24 (cf. Matthew 8:16 ff. & 10:1)

There are several very interesting inferences in this verse. There is a clear distinction between demon possession and mental disorders. Mental disease is not necessarily the result of contact with demons. As a matter of fact, this verse shows that persons who were demon possessed in the days of Christ were treated with the same kind of sympathy and care afforded any persons who were sick. This is the very opposite of the kind of treatment persons were given in the Old Testament who were possessed with a familiar spirit. Such persons were punishable, under the law, by death. (Leviticus 20:27). There was a close connection between familiar spirits and idolatry and paganism.

2. I John 4:1-6

Every believer should recognize the fact of demon possession. Bible references should act as a warning not to meddle in these areas. Christians have no cause to seek out by first hand experience spiritism activities. Also, we as believers should be careful in making assumptions and a diagnosis regarding persons with reference to entire doctrine of demonism. In years gone by, too many false judgments have been made in attributing certain forms of mental illness to demonism. Very few of the Lord's people are qualified to make any kind of statement along these lines.

3. Revelation 16:13 & Revelation 20:10

It would appear that some demons are imprisoned even now. (Luke 8:31; Revelation 9:1-11). However, we may safely assume that the final fate of the Satanic Trinity also awaits the demons, since demons are always spoken of in an evil way.

There are many reasons why as believers we should rejoice in being saved from eternal punishment. One of the striking features has to do with those who are going to occupy that final and eternal prison. Such associates should make Hell a very undesirable place for anyone!

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DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FROM ISAIAH

The Book of Isaiah has been a rich source of inspirational material for the Lord's people. There are many devotional ideas in the book that encourage, comfort and challenge the saints. Our study will consider several well known verses.

Verse 8:20 - Isaiah's day was a time of great political turmoil. Because the land was filled with fear, the leaders in Israel sought to make alliances with Assyria and other nations for protection. The superstitious in the land turned to "spiritualism" as a source of comfort. Isaiah's voice rang out in the land for the people to return to the Lord and His Word as the only place of safety. The natural man seeks every avenue of help except that which comes from God. God was the only hope for Israel.

Verse 22:22 - 23 - The Son of God is the person in view. It is the Lord who opens and closes doors of Christian work. When He opens a door it remains open until He permits it to be closed. This verse is helpful concerning some of the closed doors on the mission field.

Verse 26:3 - The "mind" or "imagination" is often the source of disturbance for the Christian. We jump to conclusion where no facts exist. We think all kinds of false and destructive thoughts simply because our minds are not upon the Lord. Peace is available and possible for God's people. Trust is the key.

Verse 26:10 - This verse is God's answer to those who say that a better environment will make better people. The nature of man is man's basic problem. When God changes the man, he will change his surroundings for the better.

Verse 31:1 - 3 - Israel's protection was in God and God alone. All efforts to secure other help were futile. Egypt was a "broken crutch" to Israel. Israel's primary needs were spiritual rather than physical.

Verse 41:10 - The Lord was the final answer to the problem of fear for Israel. He was their strength and security.

Verse 42:3 - The Lord is concerned with the weak and weary. Our inability may be substituted for His ability.

Verse 42:8 - The Lord will not share His glory with another. It is not His glory we need but rather His blessing.

Verse 43:2 - This verse has been so encouraging to those who have gone through deep trial. The path of sorrow is never easy, but the believer does not need to walk alone.

Verse 49:2 - Most believers complain about the petty irritations which tend to keep us off balance spiritually. The friction these create in our lives keeps us "polished" from the rust of self confidence and fleshly ability.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

Robert Spradling

March 1972

There are some important distinctions to make in the Word of God in order to properly understand the Scriptures. This study will make some of these basic distinctions.

I. The Difference Between Creatures and Children of God - Acts 17:29.

All men are the offspring of God in the creative sense. This refers to natural or physical life. However, only those who have been born again are children or sons of God. (John 1:12). Failure to see this difference has resulted in the popular doctrine of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. To be sure, all men are bound together as members of the race and receive physical life ultimately from the same original source. However, this is far short of the doctrine that is being promulgated. Men are not born Christians, they become children of God through the new birth. God is the God of all men but He is the spiritual Father only of men who are saved. He is the Creator of all but only spiritually related to those who have received His Son, Jesus Christ. (cf. Galatians 3:26).

II. The Difference Between A Possessor and A Professor - Matthew 7:21-23.

There is a vast difference between being born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as opposed to mere lip service to Christ. A person must possess the life of God before he can live the Christian life. Jesus made the distinction between mere profession and real possession in Matthew 7:21-23. The persons referred to by Jesus were people who had done mighty works in our Lord's name but in reality did not possess the life of God which comes by receiving Christ. The person who really possesses Christ will live a different kind of life and this possession be manifested in his character.

III. The Difference Between Faith and Works - Ephesians 2:8-10.

There is a scriptural order to these terms. First, faith to save and then works as evidence of that faith. Any faith that professes to be genuine but does not manifest Biblical works is a phony or false faith. Without faith, one is not a believer and without works, there is no evidence that the profession is genuine. All men come to know Jesus Christ through faith. (cf. Romans 10:17). After salvation, faith is an integral part of the Christian life. (cf. James 2:14-20). These two terms separate the salvation of the Bible and other man-made religions. Man's religion requires works in order to gain salvation. Christ said salvation is by believing God alone or taking Him at His Word. No amount of works is sufficient to merit eternal life, this is by grace through faith. (cf. Titus 3:5, Romans 3:20, Romans 5:1).

IV. The Difference between A Believer's Position and Practice - Ephesians 1:6.

There are many verses in the Bible which speak of the believer's position or standing in the sight of God. As far as the believer's standing is concerned, it is absolutely perfect in Christ. There is nothing can be added or taken away from this perfect position. The believer's standing in Christ is unchangeable and permanent, depending on Christ's finished work in the believer's behalf. Positionally, we are saints in Christ, but practically, we are not always very saintly. Many times the Christian's position and practice do not measure up. Positionally, there is no difference between believers but practically there is a great difference between the way different Christians behave. It is possible to be perfect in our position and poor in our condition. Throughout the Word of God, the believer is admonished to walk in close fellowship with the Lord in order that our position and practice may be similar.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT

Robert Spradling

September 1970

The Bible does not speak of a general judgment of all people at one mass meeting in a kind of doomsday atmosphere sometime and somewhere in the future. There are at least 6 judgments mentioned in the Bible.

There is a great deal of popular opinion today which glibly states that the idea of judgment for sins is purely an old superstition of our forefathers which this enlightened generation has cast off like an old garment. (The idea of judgment for sins, some say, is as out of date as the model T Ford!) All of this wishful thinking on the part of sinful men does not change the fact that judgment is a must for all men. The reasons why judgment is necessary:

1. The Bible says so. (2 Timothy 4:1 - a simple, clear declaration that God will judge the living and the dead at the Second Coming to earth. 2 Peter 3:7 - a future judgment for ungodly men.

2. History reveals other judgments.

a. Broad scale - Genesis 6:13.

b. Limited scale - Genesis 19:13.

There is a Biblical principle stated in Galatians 6:7.

3. Man's conscience and sense of inequality in this life requires a judgment.

a. Romans 2:15-16.

b. Luke 16:25 - Psalm 73 "their end"

The purpose of God's final judgment of man is not to determine whether the person is worthy of eternal bliss, but rather, to reveal the nature and character of the judged and reward them according to their works. For the unsaved, his works determine the degree of punishment. For the saved, his works determine the degree of reward.

One of the interesting features about this subject is that this particular function toward man has been given to the Son of God. John 5:22-27 - These verses teach that Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to judge men because He knows and understands men, for He became a man! He is qualified from the divine side because He is fully God, indeed, the God-man. As God, He has complete knowledge and is able to correctly judge all men.

I. The Judgment of the Cross

The Bible declares that Christ was judged for us on Calvary. (Isaiah 53:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13) The Cross therefore separates all men into two groups - those who accept and those who reject Christ's work.

(John 3:18)

Because of Calvary, sin has been dealt with, John 1:29. Satan has been defeated, John 12:31. The believer is not condemned, Romans 8:1.

Robert Spradling

October 1970

II. The Judgment Seat of Christ

The Bible teaches that the believer is saved by grace. However, God rewards His own for faithful service and our works will be the basis of this judgment.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:10

The believer is not condemned. (Romans 8:1) But Paul brings to mind the "bema" seat where athletes were awarded crowns for achievement in the Olympic games. (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27) The word "appear" means "to be made manifest." It means to be revealed, to turn inside out, to put on public display, to turn the revealing light of God upon life and motives.

2. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Paul uses another word picture to suggest the believer's responsibility to the Lord. In this passage the image is that of a builder. God is the Great Builder and we are His workmen, building on the right or wrong foundation and with the right or wrong kind of material. The admonition in this passage is to guard against having only "ashes" left after our works have been tested by the Lord in judgment.

The individual capability of believers is different. However, God does not base His judgment on how big our gifts but rather how faithful in the exercise and the reasons for service. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

According to Scripture, this judgment will take place after the Rapture of the Church and will be conducted in heaven. (Revelation 19:1, 7-8) The glorious Church will then accompany her heavenly Bridegroom to earth for His mediatorial reign.

III. The Judgment of Angels

Many premillennial scholars believe that at least one third of the angels fell with Satan during his rebellion against God. This idea is based on Revelation 12:3-4. Some of these angels were imprisoned until the day of their judgment. (Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4) According to the Revelation passages, others were left at large under Satan's command. Sometime after the reign of Christ, Satan and his angels will be judged and cast into the lake of fire. In some way, believers will be used in this judgment of the angels. (1 Corinthians 6:3, Revelation 20:10)

One observation should be made regarding the continuous decline of Satan. He was cast out of heaven originally and will finally be cast into the abyss. However, he never has changed in one aspect - his hatred for God and his desire to be God. An illustration of an intelligent, selfish, personal being who is "incorrigible and determined to rule or suffer ruin." (Hoyt)

Over and over the Bible states an important principle; namely, God will and must punish wrong doing. Our generation has been exposed to the thinking of modern man on this subject to the point that most of the ideas are totally inaccurate. There has been a breakdown in the thinking of men on the subject of judgment. The abandonment of the Bible and the current apostasy in Christendom has contributed to the dilemma.

The Church needs to awaken to the solemn character of this doctrine. If men are lost, - and they are, we need to reach them with the gospel throughout the world. If we believers are going to be judged for faithfulness in service, then the glory of God should be our primary goal in life.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT (Part III)

Robert Spradling

October 1970

IV. The Judgment of Israel

The Bible teaches that Israel will be gathered back to her land under God's leading before, during and at the end of the 70th Week of Daniel. (Ezekiel 37:12-14) However, before they enter the land, there will be a judgment conducted in the wilderness. (Ezekiel 20:33 ff.) God will take out the rebels in preparing the nation for the land of their fathers. This passage suggests a similarity in the establishment of the Old Testament kingdom and the beginning of Messiah's future kingdom.

V. The Judgment of the Gentile Nations

There are many places in the Scripture which speak of a judgment to come on the Gentile nations at the end of the Great Tribulation. The two most familiar Scriptures will be considered:

1. Joel 3

These nations are the living nations left on earth after the divine judgment of the Great Tribulation Period. The judgment of the nations will take place in the very place where our Lord was denied by the peoples of the world. The reason for the judgment is listed as the scattering of Israel and the plundering of the Holy Land. For the crime of wrong doing against this nation, judgment is forthcoming. Isaiah 2:4 indicates that the judgment will include wrong treatment of nation against nation as well as Israel. McClain has well stated the nature of the judgment. "...it must be observed that this is not a general judgment of all men, but only of living Gentile nations on earth at the beginning of the Mediatorial Kingdom. There is no resurrection of the dead, as would be required in any such an alleged general judgment. But for the living men involved, as well as for existing governments, it will be a final judgment. At the inauguration of the Kingdom on earth the judgment of God will make an absolute and final separation between the righteous and the unrighteous, between those who rebel and those who submit to the King. Rebellious governments will be abolished; rebellious men will be destroyed." (The Greatness of the Kingdom pg. 205)

2. Matthew 25:31-46

The basis of the judgment is the treatment of Christ's "brethren" the Jews. It is a judgment on earth at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. The unconverted goats will be punished but the sheep are the Gentiles who are saved and are permitted to enter the Kingdom of Messiah.

VI. The Judgment of the Wicked Dead

At the close of the Millennium, Satan's last rebellion will be crushed. (Revelation 20:9) All unsaved dead will be raised from the dead. This is called the final resurrection and also the resurrection of the unjust. (Acts 24:15; John 5:29) The scene is recorded in Revelation 20:11 ff. The fate of the subjects is settled, the judgment is to determine the degree of punishment. The absence of their names from the book of life confirms their lost condition. The other books are records of deeds done in the body, evidence of every sin and crime before the court of God. The results of the judgment: permanent separation from God.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Robert Spradling

June 1969

Some people believe that man is nothing more than an advanced form of animal life. They believe mankind to be the end product of billions of years of the evolutionary process. This might partially explain why life is regarded so cheaply among many men today. If man is simply a high form of animal life, then loss of that life is of no great consequence. Their value of human life depends upon the skill and ability of the person and his contribution to society. However, if a person believes that man came from God by a special creative act, and that all men bear His moral image and are responsible to God for their actions, this gives new worth to man and new meaning to life.

I. Where Did Man Originate? Genesis 1:26-27.

The story is told of a person who visited Isaac Newton once while Newton was working on a small scale, miniature universe. The friend was impressed with all of the work involved and asked: "Where did you get this?" To which Newton replied: "Oh, it just happened!" *Needless to say, this is the type of logic which dominates the thinking of people who refuse to accept the Biblical record regarding origins.

The Bible declares clearly that the first man came directly from the hand of God who made Adam in His own moral likeness. There is absolutely no indication of an evolutionary process in the Genesis account. God formed man from the dust of the ground and not from some other lower form of life. Our Lord referred to the Genesis record as fact in Matthew 19:4.

The Bible teaches that the first woman, and ultimately the entire human race, came from this beginning. Acts 17:26-This verse shows that all men have a natural relationship to God. They are dependent upon Him for their very existence.

Sometimes believers feel that because of their lack of training in science they cannot speak with authority regarding origins. However, the God who is Creator is also the Author of Scripture - the two do not conflict. This writer just does not accept, as final, every new theory of science if it does not agree with the facts of Scripture.

In a world which is moving more rapidly than ever toward atheism, with all of its various tentacles, it is more difficult than ever to teach the Biblical truth of the origin of man. Man wants to throw off every hint of the fact that he is the result of a creative act of God and is, therefore, responsible to God. (Psalm 2).

II. What Is Man Like? James 3:9

Man resembles his Creator. This resemblance means that man is a person and also a moral being. It does not refer to physical resemblance. It does not mean that the natural man can have fellowship with God. It does mean that God has a "handle" on every man in the fact that all men have a "capacity for God" by virtue of creation. The animals of the field are not concerned about moral values. The animals are not interested in worshiping God - this is true only of man.

The Bible teaches that man is a three part being. I Thessalonians 5:23 (Cf the 3 types of men in I Corinthians 2 & 3)

1. Body - that part of man which enables him to be conscious of the things of his environment, i. e. world conscious.
2. Soul - that part of man's person which makes him self-conscious.
3. Spirit-that part of man which makes him God conscious.

*Newton went on to show his friend the folly of evolution, ultimately leading him to faith in Christ.

DRUGS

Robert Spradling

June 1971

Dr. Stanley Yolles, a former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, suggested recently that more than 20 million Americans have used marijuana. By the time a student reaches college age, 25 to 40 percent have tried pot and 10% become chronic users of marijuana, LSD and other drugs. The rate of drug use increase on campuses is at a rapid but undefined rate. Estimates range from 90% on some campuses to 15% of all students on United States college campuses. Drugs have replaced drinking as the primary source of "kicks" on many college campuses. Colleges are desperate in their attempts to deal with the problem. Discipline is almost non-existent and law enforcement is lax in this area. Where health centers have been established to help set up anti-drug information programs, their efforts often have been met with apathy among students because so many believe that marijuana is neither harmful nor addictive.

One of the most frightening aspects of the drug problem has to do with the decreasing age level of drug users. Five years ago, college seniors were virtually the only users of "pot" on campus. Now the problem has moved down through college and high school to junior high schools.

The current issue of "U. S. News & World Report" (July 5, 1971) points to the fact that the drug problem is by no means limited to the United States: "The drug-abuse problem, a prime concern in the U. S., is now hitting Europe with a bang. In West Germany, for example, drug-related crimes - including possession and peddling - jumped 250 percent in the past year." This is understandable in the light of the fact that Turkey is the primary source, and France the primary refiner of the heroin coming into the United States. Some of the trade is bound to spill over into neighboring countries.

What are some of the reasons given for taking a drug like heroin?

1. Desire for a new experience. Having used other lesser drugs, heroin is the top, the ultimate experience.
2. Psychological problems, such as depression and self-destructive feelings.
3. The instinct to run the risk and beat the percentages.
4. Group pressure - others are doing it.
5. Protest against the establishment and the general mess in society.
6. Feeling - Any risk is worth being able to sit and stare at your shoes for a long period of time and not care about anything.
7. Students feel they have the right to do as they please, even if they choose to ruin their health.

The statistics and material on this general subject are staggering. But the question which needs answering is why do people get involved with drugs. Ignorance alone cannot be the answer, for one of the leading advocates in the drug sub-culture was once a professor at Harvard University.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

I Kings 17

Robert Spradling

July 1972

Introduction

"Today, almost half the world is under the tyrannical rule of men who deny God. The sickness of secularism permeates large areas of our society. The ten commandments are ignored; the teachings of Christ dismissed. As moral disciplines decline, citizens become more willing to condone what may appear to be minor illegalities but which actually feed and keep alive the hydra-headed monster of organized crime. Illegal gambling may appear to be relatively harmless, but it together with prostitution, the sale of narcotics and obscene material and a variety of rackets supports an empire of crime." These are not the words of a preacher. They were written over ten years ago by J. Edgar Hoover as he commented on the problems confronting America today. Elijah came into prominence at a time in Israel's history when it was dark indeed. It looked as if the entire nation would sink under the weight of moral decay. The worship of Baal had become the state religion. Temple immorality was practiced everywhere. The obscene symbols of Phoenician idols could be seen throughout the land. Religious persecution had instituted a reign of terror in Israel. Into this dark picture of apostasy and moral decay God dropped a fearless man from a mountain village in Gilead. Throughout Israel's history, God had a man who was available in times of national difficulty.

I. ELIJAH'S COURAGE IN STANDING BEFORE THE KING - v. 1

Observe that Elijah sought out Ahab to denounce the moral decline of the nation. Elijah knew the source of Israel's apostasy. There are few men like Elijah who will tell men in places of authority what they need to hear. There is a tendency to fear politically powerful men, but not so with Elijah. Ahab was at fault for the gross sin in the land and he needed to be put on the spot. (John the Baptist had a similar experience.) The word "liveth" in verse one is highly significant. The religion of Baal was a dead religion. It was a matter of form and ritual but had no moral control over the people. The God Is Dead Movement was very prevalent in the religious schools of that day. The teachers of religion were men with ideas about but with no experience with God. Elijah's voice thundered throughout the land that God lives! The God of the Bible is a living God. (Job 19:25, I Sam. 17:26, Psa. 42:2, Matt. 16:16) The second observation in v. 1 is the phrase "Before whom I stand". Elijah recognized his responsibility was primarily to God. He was conscious of someone of authority far greater than Ahab. The false prophets were men whom Ahab controlled. They said what he wanted to hear and they did his bidding. They were noted for speaking a message that was flattering containing soothing predictions of good days ahead. Elijah asked nothing from Ahab and certainly was not interested in pleasing Ahab's itching ears. (II Tim. 4:3, Jer. 5:31) Elijah knew that his function in Israel was to speak the truth. Ahab was uneasy around Elijah. The very interesting observation in v. 1 is "there shall not be dew or rain these years." Dr. James McGinley used to say that Elijah was the author of the song, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More." This was God's way of showing His disapproval of the moral condition of Israel. God was very patient with men, but there came a time when He demonstrated that even His patience has an end.

II. ELIJAH'S PATIENCE TO SIT BESIDE THE BROOK - v. 2-7

God told Elijah to "hide thyself" as the fury of Jezebel began to fill the land. God also knew the benefits of a life of solitude for the prophet of God. Men like Elijah don't run in flocks, they are rugged individualists. The "hiding life"

ETERNAL RETRIBUTION

Robert Spradling

July 1970

Punishment for wrong doing is on the decline and reformation is taking its place. Preachers who dare to preach on the subject of eternal punishment for sins are considered to be crude, uncultured and behind the times. To be sure, this is not a pleasant subject but neither is cancer, stroke and heart disease. However, we do not get angry with doctors when they diagnose such diseases. Preachers did not invent the doctrine of punishment for sins, but their responsibility before God is to warn men of the dangers involved in sinning against God.

Jesus had a great deal to say about this subject. Our consideration for this study will be limited to the Gospel of Matthew.

1. Matthew 5:22

There are 4 basic terms translated "hell" in the A. V. of the Scriptures.

- a. Sheol - Old Testament place of the dead.
- b. Hades - New Testament equivalent to Old Testament Sheol. The unseen world of the dead.
- c. Tartarus - Place of confinement of evil angels (2 Peter 2:4).
- d. Gehenna - A reference to the Valley of Hinnom outside the city of Jerusalem where the "city dump" was kept burning continually. Bodies of dead animals and criminals were cast in this area for burning. Thus, this place became a symbol of the place of eternal torment.

It is to gehenna that Jesus refers in v.22. The man who uses terms of contempt against his fellowman is playing with a sin that leads to other more deadly sins. The ultimate end of all such anger and hatred will be gehenna fire.

2. Matthew 7:13

There are two ways in life for all to choose.

- a. The Narrow Way - This leads to life and is characterized by living to please God. It is a restricted way with specifications and divine requirements.
- b. The Broad Way - This way leads to the place of no return. There are many traveling this way because there are no restrictions. They have failed to consider that this road leads to destruction!

3. Matthew 8:11,12 & 29

It was commonly believed by the Jews that when Messiah came, a redeemed Israel would gather to a great feast with all of the fathers and children of the Jews religion in attendance. Gentiles would be excluded. "children of the kingdom" refers to physical descendants born during the Millennium, not saved persons. Outer darkness" refers to the darkened streets outside the lighted banquet hall. It represented the place of hopelessness and endless night. "weeping... gnashing of teeth"-a phrase used in the Bible to describe a situation of utter despair.

EXORCISM

Mark 1:34

This word, exorcism, is very much in the news today. It has to do with the act of casting out evil spirits or demons. A modern film has won prominence because of its emphasis on this subject. The movie, according to some of the reviews, is vulgar, profane and filthy in such a way as to offend morals of Protestants and Catholics alike. However, it is grossing multiplied thousands of dollars because of the cultic interest in demons. Several years ago, we studied the subject of demons and demon possession on Wednesday evening. At that time, the subject was not popular and was not viewed with a great deal of interest by many. Now the situation has changed. This week, on the 6 o'clock news, there was a feature on the casting out of demons in a building in Hong Kong. This was done with government approval and the sanction of the business world. Several years ago, the Illinois Supreme Court was faced with a decision concerning an appeal for a young Negro basketball star who killed a Chicago policeman. His attorney appealed the case on the basis of his supposed demon possession, that is, he was acting under demon influence and, therefore, was not responsible for his action. This was one of the first times in the legal profession that such a defense had been made. In ancient times, people were so concerned about the spirit world that the burning of candles in pagan religions was a rite initiated for keeping evil spirits in check by fire.

The Bible has a great deal to say about demons. They are referred to as unclean or evil spirits. During Jesus' public ministry he dealt with this very sensitive area. However, our approach to the subject should be the same as the Bible approach, that is, with great restraint and caution. Much of what is believed and taught about demons stems from the fanciful notions of medieval art and theology and do not have their foundation in the Word of God. The Christian should be warned from the Bible not to meddle with cultic groups that dabble in demonic practices. Believers should be very careful about their opinions and announcements on demon possession. Such pronouncements are very difficult to prove. The Bible makes a clear distinction between demon possession and mental disorders. Mental disease is not necessarily the result of demon possession (compare Matthew 4:24, 8:16 and 10:1). These verses indicate that persons who were demon possessed were treated with a kind and sympathetic care as persons who were sick. In the case of demon possession, there was a close psychological identification between the demon and the person whom he indwelt (Mark 1:23-26).

There is some confusion among believers as to whether or not a born-again Christian can be demon possessed. In this writer's opinion, it is possible for a believer to be influenced by demons. There are verses in the Bible which warn believers not to meddle in this area. (I John 4:1-6) The born-again Christian should have little interest

(over)

FAITH

Robert Spradling

February 1970

The words faith and believe are closely related in the New Testament. Faith has been defined as the "unlimited willingness to let God do all the saving." As a matter of fact, the Bible clearly makes this the starting point in man's response to God - Hebrews 11:6. The basic usages of faith in the Bible are:

1. A Body of doctrine to be believed - Jude 3.
2. An act of believing - Acts 16:31.

In the Bible, there are many references to acts which appear to be acts of faith, but are in reality only acts of intellectual assent, falling short of saving faith. (cf. James 2:19).

One common religious saying is: "You must have faith," or "I have faith." However, in the Scripture, faith must have the proper object. (cf. Ephesians 1:15). Faith is not some magical substance that generates itself in the vacuum of the human soul. It would be entirely possible for people to have honest faith in the wrong person or cause. For example, a drowning man might have a rope in his hand, but in order for it to do him any good, it must be attached to something or someone other than himself! So faith for faith's sake does not save - it must be in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Romans 10:17

Faith is not the result of human reason or effort; it is rather man's response to the Word of God under the ministry and operation of the Holy Spirit. How one hears the Word is of grave importance. John 5:25 suggests two kinds of hearing. The problem with those who hear the gospel and do not heed it is primarily a problem of the will. They choose not to believe God! They are willing to believe men about almost any subject, but God's truth they refuse to obey. (cf. John 5:20)

2. Ephesians 2:8-9

Faith has been called "the hand of the heart." Saving faith is a single act of a whole soul's commitment to Jesus Christ. This act is done through the divine power and enabling of the Holy Spirit. Someone has said there are 3 necessary ingredients in evangelism:

1. Preach the Word.
2. Pray for the Spirit to use the Word.
3. Prevail or call upon men to believe.

3. Hebrews 11:1-6 ff.

This chapter shows how faith answers some of life's great questions:

1. What about things we can't see? Answer V. 1
2. What about origins? Answer V. 3
3. Is there a God? Answer V. 6
4. What about death? Answer V. 5

Faith enabled Enoch to please God. Faith enabled Noah to prepare for coming judgment. V. 7. Faith enabled Abraham to be a pilgrim in a foreign land. V. 8 ff.

In each of these historical references, God honored faith. It was the faith of these men that reserved for them a place in God's honor roll!

The heart of this doctrine centers around three elements as it pertains to personal salvation:

1. Assent - "I believe" the facts about Christ. (I Corinthians 15:1-5)
2. Appropriation - "I take or receive" Christ into my life. (John 1:12)
3. Abandonment - "I commit or entrust my all to Him." (2 Timothy 1:12)

These 3 elements are present in every genuine act of saving faith.

THE FINAL STATE OF THE LOST

Robert Spradling

October 1970

The conclusion to the study of the general subject of judgment centers around the fate of the unsaved. It might be well to remember the significance of such a theme - men outside of Christ are without hope. Subconsciously, there is a feeling by some, that God will sweep all people into the bliss of heaven without spiritual requirements. Such a philosophy would utterly destroy the character of God and render the work of Christ on Calvary worthless, and a mistake in history!

The Bible teaches that there is a place of eternal punishment. Jesus Christ had more to say about this place than any other person in Scripture. A term like the Valley of Hinnom was used to remind people of that horrible place of final punishment. The lake of fire was also used to refer to the final estate of the lost.

The words used to refer to the duration of the punishment are "eternal" and "everlasting". (Matthew 25:41 & 46) The usage of these words have caused some to object to the doctrine. (A few are listed)

1. If everlasting punishment is the penalty for sin, how could Christ pay the penalty of our sins apart from suffering forever?

Answer: This would be a valid objection if Christ were just a mere man. However, He is an infinite being. There are two ways of paying the penalty of sin, which is infinite in its demerit against God. The penalty must be infinite in duration or in force. The sinner who is a finite creature cannot endure punishment that is infinite in force, hence the duration penalty. However, the infinite Christ suffered infinite punishment for our sins in a moment of time. (A. J. McClain)

2. If earthly fathers do not punish so severely, why should God?

Answer: The standard is not the same. What God does, He does in absolute love and righteousness. Men who refuse God's cure for sin are incurable. (*Illus. of mad dog)

3. Some folk say they would not be happy in heaven knowing that somewhere men were being punished.

Answer: Even today, there is death, crime, sickness, prisons but we manage to have a measure of happiness.

4. What about parents whose children did not get to Heaven, how could they be satisfied without them?

Answer: The Bible says there are no tears in Heaven. The problems of earth will be fully resolved there.

5. Punishment appeals to fear as a motive in repentance.

Answer: Whatever the motivation, such a doctrine does cause men to receive Christ.

6. It would not be fair for God to punish men eternally for the sins of a single life-time.

Answer: This kind of thinking is based on a false assumption. This idea suggests that the length of punishment for a crime depends on how long it took to commit the crime. The nature of the crime is the question involved. The punishment should be for as long as the sinner keeps on sinning. Sinners will never cease sinning apart from God's grace. A sinner forever means there must be punishment of the same quality. Hard on the heels of this objection comes the idea that men ought to be given the opportunity to repent in Hell. The Bible says now is the time. To ignore God now suggests little concern for eternity. (Cf. Rev. 16:9)

With all of the questions and concern about the subject, the child of God can be comforted to know he is not destined for such a place and this should prompt him to try to keep others from going there. However, we may be assured that no person will ever be in Hell who does not deserve to be there, and we may rest on the fact that there will be no injustice in God's dealings with men.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

September 1970

Robert Spradling

This phrase comes from Galatians 5:22, which is a key passage on the subject of the two natures of the believer. Verses 19-21 indicate the activities of the old nature, called "the flesh". Verses 22-23 indicate the activities of the new nature under the control of the Spirit of God. This manifestation is the outward demonstration of the inward work and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian.
(Wagon - 2 directions. Sp. tug of war Pig)

1. Love
There are at least 4 different words for love in the New Testament. This word is the highest kind of love. It seeks always the highest good for another. This kind of love will produce a practical expression in the life. It is a common thing to preach the need of love and still live a loveless life.
2. Joy
A cheerful behavior toward others (John 15:11). It is the opposite of having a worried approach to life. Whereas worry saddens and destroys, joy strengthens. The New Testament is a Book of Joy: (Philippians 4:4). Believing is followed by joy. In the New Testament, joy and affliction walked together (Acts 13:52; Colossians 1:24). Someone once asked a believer if he thought Jesus ever laughed. "I don't know, but he certainly fixed me up so I can!"
3. Peace
The cry and search of the ancient world for peace was as extensive as in our times. This word suggests everything that goes together to make life worthwhile. Peace begins for us when = a right relationship with God (Romans 5:1). Peace is a part of the believer's legacy.- John 14:27. Peace = a present experience. Phil. 4:7.
4. Longsuffering
Longsuffering = "to suffer long". Comes from "long/temper". That attitude that does not lose patience and hope with others. It never admits defeat. It means patience toward people. A serene temper or temperament that is not just a grim acceptance of a given situation but a refusal to abandon hope. This virtue is the most difficult and least known to men today. (2 Peter 3:9)
5. Gentleness
("Next to bread, the greatest longing of the human heart is for kindness.") Be kind to God's children. Thoughtful consideration, courteous and kind action, the delicate expression of kindness to others. (Ephesians 4:32-"treating others the way God has treated us.") Latin word = benign. A sweetness of temper that puts others at ease, and shrinks from giving pain.

Kindness, the virtue that makes good men. Caring for others. To be kind = good. To be good = kind. This word used in Luke 5:29 of wine that had grown old and me
6. Goodness
This word carries the idea of generosity. A man who gives with open handedness and open-heartedness. The opposite of stingy and grasping. (K. Marshal's father
7. Faith
Faithfulness = reliability. That which does not give up or in easily. (I Cor. The virtue upon which one may completely lean, can depend on! (I Cor. 10:13)

This word describes a man on whose faithful word and service we can rely. He is loyal, his word we can completely accept. (I Chron. 12) He is unswerving and

utterly dependable to God and man.

8. Meekness

Meek does not mean weak, spineless, spiritless, lack of strength. A person who has soothing qualities - ointment to a wound. A man who does not create friction - a self-controlled person, can rebuke without bitterness, be gentle but not weak. Moses / Jesus. The power is available to do harm - but control. (Pup to dog. Cat to Dandy)

9. Temperance

Control every desire. The ability to live in a sinful world and yet not be caught up in its spirit. The desire for and pursuit of this world not in his interest.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

Robert Spradling

We live in a knowledgeable world. People know more today than any other time in history. However, this explosion of knowledge in the secular world does not necessarily have a parallel in the spiritual realm. Some professing Christians know more about automobiles, baseball, golf and fishing than they do about the eternal God whom they claim to love and serve. This study is designed to help believers know more about their God. The Bible has a great deal to say about the nature and characteristics of God.

I. Our God Is A Living God-Deuteronomy 5:26.

This fact about God is a cure for idolatry. We serve a living God who can meet the needs of living men. The God of the Bible is more than a mere influence, force or figment of man's mind. He is a living person. Idols cannot satisfy the needs of the human heart, only a Living God can do this. It is noteworthy to see how much we can learn about God in just a few chapters in Deuteronomy:

4:24 - a jealous God--that is, He wants no idol in the lives of His subjects.

4:31 - a merciful God.

4:32 - He created man.

4:35 - He is One God (6:4) (There is no other God.)

There are many verses in the Bible which refer to the attributes of God.

II. Our God Is An Intelligent God-Romans 11:33-36.

God possesses all the marks of the highest intelligence. He has all knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

To possess Knowledge refers to the perception of facts as they are.

Understanding refers to the ability of knowing the meaning of the facts.

Wisdom concerns the ability to place the facts in proper relation to other facts and use them for good ends.

To say that God is intelligent seems a bit trite. However, to listen to current ideas re God, one would get the picture of a nice old grandfather who is passively concerned about earth but unable to do much about the situation. This truth of God's intelligence should serve as a warning to men - they cannot fool God regarding their sin.

III. Our God Is A God of Purpose-Ephesians 3:11

God lives and moves according to His own eternal design and plan. Men do not frustrate His plan by their actions on earth. Animals do not possess the power of reflective thinking and respond primarily to their immediate environment. Man, because of his relationship to a purposive God, can know something of eternal goals in life. God has a purpose for everything in the Universe.

Just as the builder of a great sky-scraper has detailed plans for his building, so God has detailed plans for earth and the entire course of human history.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE
PART II

Robert Spradling

I. Our God is Spirit (John 4:24)

The fact that God is invisible to the physical eye does not mean God is not real. God is a spirit being, possessing all the marks of life and personality.

Questions:

1. If God is invisible, how do you explain verses like Exodus 24:10-11?

Ans. The invisible God may manifest Himself in a visible form if He so desires.

2. If God has no physical body, why does the Bible speak of His eyes, feet, hands, etc.?

Ans. God uses the language men understand when describing His relationships to men.

3. If God cannot be seen, how do we know He exists?

Ans. There are many things in the universe one cannot see with the human eye; however, their effects upon the world can be understood.

Examples: an atom, wind, etc.

II. Our God is Self-existent (John 5:26)

God's existence does not depend on anything or anyone outside of Himself. In Psalm 36:9 God is said to possess "the fountain of life". When a person comes to God by faith in Jesus Christ, he comes to the very source of spiritual life. Men are not like this. Our physical and spiritual well being are dependent upon sources outside of self. God is the "First Cause". When He said to Moses, "I am", He was speaking of His eternal existence which is forever an eternal present tense--God is! This idea is carried in all of the great definitions of God: "God is that infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and eternal destiny." (Strong). Or, as one of the great Confessions of Faith suggests: "God is that Spirit infinite, eternal and unchangeable in being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth".

III. Our God is Omniscient (I John 3:20)

The word "omniscient" means God has all knowledge. His knowledge is perfect and complete. There is nothing He does not know and no event has taken, nor ever will take, Him by surprise. His knowledge includes the (1) number of the stars-Psa. 147:4, (2) hairs of our head-Matthew 10:29-30, (3) small details of life.

Questions:

1. How do you explain Deuteronomy 8:2?

Ans. God knows what men will do, but gives them opportunity to demonstrate their actions.

2. How can God know evil as mentioned in Proverbs 15:3?

Ans. There are at least two ways of knowing things:

1. By descriptive knowledge, such as knowledge gained by reading a book.

2. The other is experiential knowledge, which means to learn by doing.

In Eden--an example of both kinds.

IV. Our God is Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10)

God is in His universe everywhere present. He is greater than the world which He created and men cannot escape from Him.

V. Our God is Omnipotent (Revelation 19:6)

God is all powerful. God is never weary from the use of His power. He is able to do all things consistent with His nature and being.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE
PART III

Robert Spradling

Faithfulness is a characteristic of God. Because He is faithful in what He is, He is consistent in His dealings with men. God does not promise one thing and do another. He always keeps His word. (Deuteronomy 7:9). In the light of this idea, there are several interesting points in the Scriptures regarding - THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

I. The Faithfulness of God Assures Us of His Promises. (Hebrews 10:23).

Men are prone to make promises which they have neither the interest nor ability to keep. We live in a world in which we expect people not to keep their promises! Examples: politics/marriage/advertising. The Bible teaches that God keeps all of His promises - He has never failed to do so.

II. The Faithfulness of God Secures the Believer's Salvation. (I Corinthians 1:9).

God is faithful to His Son and this guarantees salvation to all who come to Him. John 6:37. If salvation depended on the believer's faithfulness to "hold on" to God, he would be a failure before he started! The believer is "in Christ" and the destiny of all who are in this glorious position is eternally secured. THIS SECURITY is anchored in the faithfulness of God.

III. The Faithfulness of God Sustains the Believer in Times of Temptation. (I Corinthians 10:13).

Do we dare believe that God was not vitally interested in Joseph during the time of his temptation? (Genesis 39:9 & 21). Do we think God does not know what it is to be tested? (Matthew 4). We may count on God to make a way of escape from every temptation. Our concern should be that we really want to escape! (Cf. David & Joseph).

IV. The Faithfulness of God Protects the Believer from Evil and the Evil One. (II Thessalonians 3:3).

Only eternity will reveal the many times when God has protected us from the evil schemes of Satan directed against the believer. Satan wants believers to fail in the Christian life - God's faithfulness to His own is our great protection.

V. The Faithfulness of God Provides Forgiveness and Cleansing (I John 1:9).

If one person asks another person for forgiveness for a personal offense, he is not absolutely sure he will be forgiven, even if the offended party says all is forgiven. There are instances on the human level when one person has refused to forgive another regardless of the circumstances and apology. With God, however, there is instant cleansing and forgiveness with confession of sin. God is ready, willing, and wanting the believer to seek such a relationship with Him.

VI. The Faithfulness of God May Bring Difficult Experiences into the Believer's Life. (Psalm 119:75).

God gives us what we need and sometimes our needs are for affliction! "It isn't God's anger that brings affliction upon us, it is His faithfulness." (Alva J. McClain).

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

Part IV

Robert Spradling

June 1969

Every generation seems to question the existence of God. The agnostic says there may be a god, but man can't know him. The materialist says it is not important to speak of God's existence, for in a world of increasing things we don't really need God. Today, the newest form of atheism is that philosophy which suggests that God is dead. The trend in many circles is to divorce any concept of God from the thinking of modern man. However, what unregenerate men think and surmise about God is of little importance to the true Christian. The theories of men are like the shifting sands of the desert. Last year's ideas must give way to this year's newest guesses. The believer's ideas about God must be derived from the Scriptures.

I. Our God Is Love-I John 4:8

There is a common misunderstanding that the God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath as opposed to the God of the New Testament who is a God of love. This is not true. Throughout the Old Testament God in love and mercy was dealing with men. This love was manifested especially to Israel in God's effort to bring salvation to all men through his preservation of these people. Such verses as Isaiah 63:9 and Jonah 4:6ff indicate the extent of God's love for men in the context of the Old Covenant.

The Bible speaks of God's love as being (1.) Everlasting - Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." This is the kind of love which does not change with the changing moods of men. (2.) Righteous - Psalm 11:7, "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness..." God's love is of such quality that it does not sanction sin. This kind of love makes it possible for God to love the world (John 3:16) and to love us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8) and still hate sin and evil. (Psalm 45:7) The reason God loves sinners is because they are persons bearing His own moral image. The reason He hates their sins is because true love hates that which harms the people one loves!

Problem: What about Malachi 1:1-3?

It would appear that God can both love and hate at the same time. God loved Esau as a man but hated the evil in Esau which hurt others. Also, sometimes the word hate in Scripture does not carry the full moral connotation we imply with its usage. For example, in Luke 14:26 where hatred of parents is mentioned as a prerequisite for discipleship. Scofield has correctly stated in this connection: "Natural affection is to be, as compared with the Christian's devotedness to Christ, as if it were hate." The point of our Lord is that the tendency of human nature is to prevent us from serving the Lord fully. Obviously the Lord did not encourage people to violate one of the Ten Commandments which admonishes men to "...honor thy father and thy mother..." (Exodus 20:12). When one must choose between parents who oppose Christ, and Christ, there should be no question. Love and service for Christ should take precedence over everything else in life.

(3.) Unmerited and Unselfish - Romans 5:8; Deuteronomy 7:7 & 8. God's love for mankind is certainly not because mankind is worthy of such love. God loves us, and for this reason we, too, should love Him. (I John 4:19)

GREAT EXPERIENCES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

David was a great man. He was great in his achievements for God and he was great in his failures. From the life of David, we may learn many valuable lessons for Christian living.

I. A GREAT FEAT - I Samuel 17:50

Early in David's life, he learned to trust God in difficult circumstances. There was no other person who thought David would be victorious over Goliath apart from David himself. His unwavering faith in God was demonstrated on the occasion and David continued to trust God for many more years of his life. Do you have any impossible situations in life? God hasn't changed. He will help if we seek His assistance.

II. A GREAT FRIEND - I Samuel 18:1ff

David and Jonathan were "soul brothers" in the truest sense of the word. There was a bond of love and loyalty between these men that was unique. Jonathan was willing to risk the wrath of his father Saul to protect David. David never forgot his friend Jonathan even though their paths did not cross after David was forced to leave Saul's house. One of life's greatest treasures is friendship. Christian friendship should be valued and cultivated.

III. A GREAT FAULT - II Samuel 11:1

David's affair with Bathsheba was not hidden by the Lord to protect one of His choice servants. The entire matter was made public knowledge. David was practicing what all heathen kings did - but they were not men who served the true God. The man who has great success for God must be prepared to pay the price of failure. Out of this experience, David has been a great help to others who have fallen into similar situations.

IV. A GREAT FAILURE - II Samuel 18:33

Absalom was David's favorite son. He was handsome and adventurous like David had been in his youth. And yet, Absalom was cunning and cruel when it came to seeking his father's kingdom. David's indecision concerning the Tamar affair prompted Absalom to rebel against his father. There is no area of failure in life so painful as that of failure with our families. No other accomplishments can compensate for the loss of our children.

V. A GREAT FAVOR - II Samuel 9:7

The usual practice of a new king was to destroy the family and friends of the previous king as a safety feature for his reign. However, David showed special favor to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. Few passages in the Old Testament so beautifully illustrate the doctrine of Grace as does this story.

David's life was filled with great experiences. God made the difference in his life. Apart from God, David would have been just another man.

RKS:bcm

THE TERM SUPPER HAS BEEN USED TO DESCRIBE EVENTS IN THE BIBLE BOTH OF GREAT BLESSING AND OF GREAT DESPAIR.

I. THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOSPEL INVITATION -- LUKE 14:16-24

THIS SUPPER SUGGESTS THE EXTENT OF THE GOSPEL INVITATION. GOD'S INVITATION FOR SALVATION IN CHRIST IS EXTENDED TO ALL. (MATTHEW 11:28). IN THIS PARABLE, THOSE WHO WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE INVITATION BEGAN TO MAKE EXCUSE. AN EXCUSE IS AN ACT WHICH SEEKS TO JUSTIFY A FAULT. A REASON IS BASED UPON FACT, BUT AN EXCUSE HAS NO SUCH BASIS. THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF AN EXCUSE IS THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO WANTED TO BORROW ANOTHER MAN'S AXE. THE OWNER OF THE AXE DECLINED TO LEND ~~THE AXE~~ ^{it} BECAUSE HE ~~NEEDED~~ ^{it} TO CUT VEGETABLES TO GO IN HIS SOUP. WHEN THE FIRST MAN REMINDED HIM HOW SILLY WAS HIS REPLY, THE SECOND MAN SAID "ANY EXCUSE WILL DO WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO LEND YOUR AXE." IN VERSE 18, THE LOVE AND CARE OF REAL ESTATE KEPT A MAN FROM THE GOSPEL INVITATION. THE SECOND EXCUSE IN VERSE 19 HAD TO DO WITH OXEN OR POSSESSIONS. IN BOTH CASES, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY THAT IMMEDIATE ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO THE MATTERS GIVEN AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT ATTENDING THE SUPPER. IN BOTH CASES, THINGS SEEMED MORE IMPORTANT THAN ETERNAL MATTERS. THE THIRD EXCUSE IN VERSE 20 HAD TO DO WITH HOME LIFE. THESE THREE EXCUSES REMIND US OF THE MANY ~~THINGS SAID OR~~ EXCUSES GIVEN FOR NOT RECEIVING OR ACCEPTING GOD'S INVITATION TO BE SAVED. EVERY PASTOR HAS HEARD JUST ABOUT EVERY EXCUSE AVAILABLE CONCERNING NEGLECT OF SALVATION. SOME FOLKS SAY THEY ARE TOO YOUNG, OTHERS ARE TOO OLD; SOME WANT TO WAIT UNTIL THEY FEEL LIKE GETTING SAVED, OTHERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HYPOCRITES; SOME SAY THEY CANNOT BE A CHRISTIAN WHERE THEY WORK, SOME SAY IT IS NOT THE RIGHT TIME. HOWEVER,

IF SATAN CAN GET A MAN TO WAIT JUST ONE MORE DAY, THEN SOMEDAY HE WILL HAVE WAITED ONE DAY TOO LONG. A SCULPTOR SHOWED A VISITOR INTO HIS STUDIO. ONE FIGURE WAS MADE OF MARBLE AND WAS VERY CURIOUS IN APPEARANCE. THE FACE WAS CONCEALED WITH HAIR AND THERE WERE WINGS ON HIS FEET. THE VISITOR ASKED, "WHAT IS HIS NAME?" "OPPORTUNITY, " WAS THE REPLY. "WHY IS HIS FACE HIDDEN?" "BECAUSE MEN SELDOM SEE AND KNOW HIM WHEN HE COMES TO THEM." "WHY ARE THERE WINGS ON HIS FEET?" "BECAUSE HE IS SO SOON GONE AND ONCE HE IS GONE HE CAN NEVER BE OVERTAKEN." IF MEN REFUSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE CHRIST, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO BE SAVED AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SALVATION IS ALWAYS ~~LISTED AS~~ TODAY.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER -- 1 COR. 11:20-31

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GAVE TWO ORDINANCES TO HIS CHURCH. THE FIRST IS BAPTISM, THE OTHER IS THE LORD'S TABLE. THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS SUPPER BY THE LORD'S PEOPLE IS A LIVING REMINDER OF CHRIST'S DEATH AT CALVARY AND OF HIS ^{imminent} ~~EMINENT~~ RETURN FOR THE CHURCH. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT ONE END OF THE COMMUNION TABLE RESTS ON THE CROSS AND THE OTHER ON THE THRONE. ALTHOUGH THIS CHURCH ORDINANCE DOES NOT BESTOW GRACE UPON THE PARTICIPANT, IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS OWN TO PARTAKE OF THIS TABLE AS A REMINDER OF CALVARY AND OF HIS SECOND COMING.

III. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB -- REVELATION 19:7-9

SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED THIS GLORIOUS EVENT AS THE BANQUET AT WHICH TIME THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH, WILL BE INTRODUCED TO THE FRIENDS OF THE BRIDEGROOM. THE CHURCH IS INDEED THE BRIDE OF CHRIST AND CHRIST IS THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH WILL OCCUR WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM COMES FOR HIS BRIDE. IN REVELATION 19, WE SEE THE BRIDEGROOM

COMING BACK TO EARTH WITH HIS BRIDE FOR A 1,000 YEAR "HONEYMOON". ONE PURPOSE FOR CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL REIGN IS TO LET THE WORLD SEE THE GLORY OF HIS CHURCH. (COMPARE EPHESIANS 2:7, 5:27 & PSALM 25.)

IV. THE SUPPER OF THE GREAT GOD -- REVELATION 19:17

THE 19TH CHAPTER OF REVELATION DESCRIBES TWO GREAT SUPPERS. ONE HAS TO DO WITH THE BRIDE OF CHRIST AND THE BLESSINGS TO THE SAINTS. THE OTHER HAS TO DO WITH JUDGMENT IN WHICH GOD WILL VINDICATE THE NAME OF CHRIST. SOME PEOPLE SCOFF AND LAUGH AT THE IDEA OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT. THERE IS NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT THE SCENE RECORDED IN THIS CHAPTER. MEN WHO WILL NOT HAVE CHRIST TO REIGN OVER THEM AS LORD AND SAVIOR WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT TO HIS AUTHORITY AS SOVEREIGN JUDGE. WE MAY TAKE OUR CHOICE OF EITHER KNOWING HIM AS SAVIOR OR AS JUDGE.

GREAT SUPPERS OF THE BIBLE

The term supper has been used to describe events of great blessing and of great despair. Our study will look at four suppers covering both of these ideas.

I. THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOSPEL INVITATION - Luke 14:16-24

This supper suggests the extent of the Gospel invitation. God's invitation for salvation is extended to all (Matthew 11:28). In this parable, those who would not accept the invitation began to make excuse. An excuse is an act which seeks to justify a fault. A reason is based upon fact but an excuse has no such basis. The classic example of an excuse is that of a man who wanted to borrow another man's ax. The man declined because he needed it to cut vegetables to go in his soup. When he was reminded of the silliness of such a thing, his reply was: "Any excuse will do when you don't want to lend your ax." In verse 18, the love and care of real estate kept this man from the Gospel invitation. Jesus had talked about a farmer who lost his eternal soul for such action (Luke 12). The second excuse in verse 19 had to do with oxen or possessions. In both of these cases, it was not necessary that immediate attention be given to these items. There are some things more important than possessions and our eternal well-being is one of them! The third excuse in verse 20 had to do with a wife. If this man had been marrying the right kind of wife, she would have joined him in the invitation. These three excuses remind us of the many which are given by the unsaved for not being saved. Some folk say they are too young, others say they are too old. Some want to wait until they feel like getting saved. Others are concerned about hypocrites. Some declare they cannot be a Christian where they work. Some say the time is not right - not today, but someday. However, if Satan can get a man to wait just one more day, one day he will have waited one day too long. A sculptor showed a visitor into his studio. One figure made of marble was very curious in appearance. The face was concealed with hair and there were wings on its feet. The visitor asked, "What is his name?" "Opportunity," was the reply. "Why is his face hidden?" "Because men seldom see and know him when he comes to them." "Why are the wings on his feet?" "Because he is soon gone, and once he is gone he can never be overtaken." If men refuse the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is no other way to be saved and their opportunity for salvation is today.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER OF MEMORIAL AND PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE - I Cor. 11:20-31

The Lord left two ordinances for His church. The first is baptism and the other is the Lord's table. The observance of this supper by the Lord's people is a living reminder of His death at Calvary and of His imminent return for the church. Someone has said that one end of this table rests on the cross, the other on the throne. Although this church ordinance has no way of bestowing grace upon the participant, it is important because the Lord Jesus encouraged us to partake of this table for the two reasons already mentioned.

III. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB - Revelation 19:7-9

Someone has described this glorious event as the banquet at which time the bride of Christ is introduced to His friends. The church is the bride of Christ and He is the heavenly bridegroom. The rapture of the church will occur when the bridegroom comes for His bride. In Revelation 19, we see the bridegroom coming back to earth with His bride for a 1,000 year "honeymoon." One purpose for His mediatorial reign is to let the world see the glory of His bride, comprised of all the redeemed from the Day of Pentecost till the Rapture of the Church. (Compare Ephesians 5:27 and Psalm 45)

(Over)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Robert Spradling

August 1970

Any in-depth study of the Holy Spirit must eventually consider several key passages in the Gospel of John.

1. John 1:32-33.

At Jesus' baptism the Spirit of God's presence was manifested in a tangible form. The beginning of Jesus' public ministry was in the Spirit's power.

2. John 3:6-8.

It is from John that we learn about the Spirit's work in regeneration. This passage is very familiar to most believers and has been the basis for much personal soul winning.

3. John 7:37-39.

These verses teach that Jesus is able to quench the thirst of the human soul. The feast was the Feast of Tabernacles, a time of joy at the harvest season. Historians refer to an act of the High Priest at the festival, of taking a silver pitcher from the Temple to the Pool of Siloam. It was filled with water and carried back to the Temple as the joyful crowds chanted Isaiah 12:3, "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The water was poured out on the altar in sacrifice. As the crowd dreamed of a future day of Messiah's glory, Jesus spoke of living water which could satisfy now. The presence of the indwelling Spirit is the source of refreshing and blessing.

4. John 14:16-20 and 26.

The word "Comforter" has been variously translated to mean, "helper, advocate, counsellor, someone to stand by, or come to one's side". In some ancient literature it was used of a military court martial where a person stood to defend a man who was on trial and thus became the prisoner's helper and friend. Such usage helps us understand the unique word. In a very real way, the Holy Spirit aids the believer in life's sorrows and burdens. He gives wisdom, strength and courage to deal with the problems of life.

"Spirit of Truth" - v. 17

It is the Holy Spirit who brings us to the truth. The greatest thinking in the world will not bring men to the truth about God, the Spirit of God does this.

"Remembrance" - v. 26

There may be many applications of this verse, but the primary reference is to the Spirit's ministry in the writing of Scripture. (2 Peter 1:19-20).

5. John 15:26.

The ministry of the Spirit is to make Christ known to men. (Cf. light on a masterpiece).

HOW CAN I BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN MY PRAYER LIFE?

"It is not strange that in spite of our conviction of its privilege and necessity, we are all plagued with a subtle aversion to praying. We do not naturally delight in drawing near to God. We pay lip-service to its value and potency and yet so often fail to pray." (J. Oswald Sanders)

Prayer is the area of the average believer's greatest failure. We need discipline and desire to sustain our prayer life more than any other aspect of Christian experience. The problem is not lack of time to pray, but rather the matter of priorities. Our Christian life and work will be weak and ineffective unless it is saturated with Bible praying.

I. HAVE A SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE TO PRAY - Mark 1:35

The Bible teaches that the Christian should be in an attitude of prayer at all times. (I Thessalonians 5:17) However, the Bible also teaches the importance of definite times for prayer. (Daniel 6:10, Psalm 5:3) The believer needs to reserve a part of his day for nothing but prayer. We need a place where we can shut out the sights and sounds of the world in order to be alone with God. (Matthew 6:6) What is true of the individual Christian is also true for a church. The Prayer Meeting is reserved for this purpose. It is not meant to be a Bible study or testimony meeting as the foremost thrust of the meeting, it is exactly what the term implies - a Prayer Meeting. However, it is difficult to get even the most spiritually minded Christians to accept this kind of midweek service! It is difficult to imagine an individual believer being a prayer warrior who finds little or no interest in the midweek service.

II. KEEP A PRAYER LIST - II Kings 19:14

The memory of most believer's is very short. Unless we list the names of unsaved people for whom we are praying, missionaries, current spiritual interests and needs, we are apt to forget them. Also, it is thrilling to write down beside the name of our request the exact date when God answered the prayer. A prayer list will keep the mind from wandering and give greater variety and interest to praying. It is interesting and edifying to check back over a prayer list that is several years old and see what God has done in answering prayer.

III. PRAY ALOUD - John 17:1

Silent praying is an accepted form of prayer but it is very difficult to sustain. Praying aloud will keep the mind centered on the matter at hand. This kind of praying will help young believers in their attempt at public prayer. Sometimes it is helpful to read the Psalms aloud and then incorporate what one reads into the prayer life.

IV. POSTURE IN PRAYER - Acts 9:40

The Bible speaks of people praying in various positions, such as, walking, sitting, kneeling or lying on a bed. The position of the body is not a primary consideration. However, when great concern is expressed in prayer often this concern is reflected in the posture of the body. Kneeling often denotes humility and concentration in prayer. The following books on prayer have been helpful and in some respects have changed my life. They are passed on for your consideration. How to Pray - R. A. Torrey, Power Through Prayer - E. M. Bounds, Effective Prayer - J. Oswald Sanders.