



Advocate of Truth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Word Keys That Unlock Truth 3
Our word this month is "stuff".

Love - The More Excellent Way 3-4
The value of love can not be estimated.

The Lord Is Our Helper 4-5
This is a look into the life of Hezekiah.

Rudeness 6
We would never be rude if we all followed the Golden Rule.

Should We Be Afraid Of What's Coming? 7
Jesus will be coming in two phases.

I Beseech You Brothers And Sisters! 8-12
The Lord does not want discord in His church.

A Lesson Study 13
We look at a pattern of growth provided by Christ.

Signs Of The Times 14-15
What about the meditation movement?

Questions And Answers 16-17
Does the Bible uphold the doctrine of reincarnation?

The Church Around The World 18-19
This month we look at the Caribbean.

The Children's Pages 20-23
Sabbath School Lessons
A Story - "The Empty Envelope"
Games and Puzzles

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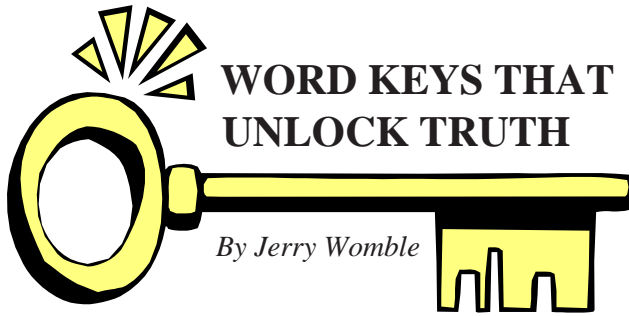
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WORD KEYS THAT UNLOCK TRUTH

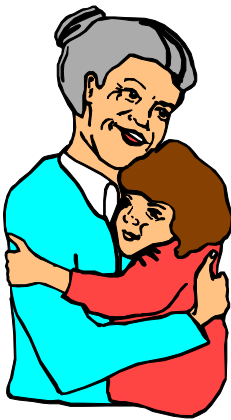
By Jerry Womble

STUFF

In our Scripture reading a few weeks back we read the word "stuff". A woman in our church spoke up and said, "I am glad they had stuff in the Bible times also because it seems that I have more stuff in my home every day". In that day and time, it referred to substance, property, goods or possessions. It still refers to the same today, but we usually

think of that thing as having little value, maybe even clutter and things that we could or even should do without.

In our spiritual life, we often times have clutter that keeps us from producing the best fruits for the Lord. It may be thoughts that the Devil brings to mind to distract us from the duties that we need to be doing for God or our fellow man. It may be things that we do to pass time when we know that there is a contact that needs to be made for the Lord, or that we should really be studying our Sabbath School lesson. This stuff may not be sinful but may clutter our life on the way to serving the Lord. As we would search our home for the stuff that we can put in a garage sale and free up our path through our home; we also need to search our lives and get rid of the clutter that could be a stumbling block in the spiritual path that we take looking for salvation.



LOVE - THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

The value of love cannot be estimated. Nothing in our lives, no gift, possession or pursuit, is profitable without it. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing. Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Corinthians 13:2,8). In these verses, Paul compares love to the gifts of knowledge and

prophecy, and concludes that love is far more important than either could ever be. "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3). Paul also concludes that having miraculous faith and doing sacrifices and good deeds pale in importance to having love.

Love is very valuable, and God's love enables us to do his work effectively. "Charity (love) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is

not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil: Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (I Corinthians 13:4-6). God is love, and the more like Him we become, the more love we will possess. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:9-10).

The virtues of love include kindness, humility, selflessness, patience, compassion and faith. "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:7). Many people try to have the virtues of love without the possession of love. That is impossible to do! "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God', for God is love" (I John 4:7-8).

We must possess the Spirit of Christ if we are to succeed in performing the work of Christ. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of this Spirit. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (I John 4:13, 16-17). Being filled with the Holy Spirit enables us to practice the virtues of love.

Victory is assured to those who are filled with God's love. "...If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (I John 4:12). Loved ones, friends, pleasures, and possessions often fail, but love never fails. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Corinthians 13:8).

Love is a necessity. "We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (I John 4:19-21). Everyone needs to love and to be loved. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Love casts our fear, and makes us brave. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement: because as he is, so are we in this world, There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:17-18).

Love is eternal; it will unfold in greater beauty and glory while endless ages roll. "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins" (Proverbs 10:12). May we continue to love others as God loves us, and to let God's love shine in our daily lives!

Contributed



THE LORD IS OUR HELPER

By Bond Tennant

"With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah,..." (II Chronicles 32:8).

The setting of our opening text is very revealing and encouraging. The time was during the reign of Hezekiah. We are informed that he "...wrought that which was good

and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered" (II Chronicles 31:20-21).

At the same time, we are informed that "...Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered unto Judah, and en-

camped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennachrib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? And he strengthened himself, and built up a the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them,..." (II Chronicles 32:1-6).

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, made many threats. For example, he said, "Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it? Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand? Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?" (vss. 11-14).

Sennacherib's threatening did not frighten Hezekiah. He and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. The Lord answered their prayer and delivered the Lord's people from the hand of these wicked aggressors.

Because Hezekiah knew that God was on their side, he said to the people, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is the arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the word of Hezekiah King of Judah" (II Chronicles 32:7-8). Yes, the people leaned upon the words of Hezekiah, and they believed that with his leadership they would be delivered from Sennacherib

and his army.

Hezekiah did what he could to defend the people against Sennacherib. However, he realized that they would be in the same unhappy position as all the other nations of the area unless their God came to their rescue. That is why he and the Prophet Isaiah prayed and cried to heaven. Their prayer received a remarkable answer from the Lord. Verses 21-23 tells us, "And the Lord sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of this own bowels slew him there with the sword. Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them of every side. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."

In II Corinthians 10:4, the Apostle Paul tell us of the child of God's spiritual battle. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)." The battle is against the deceptions of Satan in his effort to destroy the child of God as a new creature in Christ Jesus. Children of God can be just as certain as Hezekiah was when he said, "with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." The Lord has provided us with an armor. This armor is outlined in Ephesians six.

King Hezekiah expressed a vitally important fact to the people under his leadership when he said concerning Sennacherib and his army that "with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." As children of God, we are in a very vulnerable position before our adversaries if we overlook this vital fact that only by the Lord's strength can we be victorious. The arm of flesh will fail us! We can be victorious because our God is greater than anything which is against us.

Let us remember Hezekiah's words in every time of crisis and in every threatening situation. "With us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." Like God's ancient people, may we lean upon these words and trust in them as one of the reassuring promises of the Word of God.



RUDENESS

Let's treat others as we would like to be treated

"The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any," Fred Astaire observed years ago. Unfortunately, his observation is more true today, according to a new survey that found most Americans believe the nation is getting less civil and more rude.

"Lack of manners for Americans is not whether you confuse the salad fork for the dinner fork," said Debroah Wadsworth, president to the nonprofit organization Public Agenda, which conducts public opinion research for the New Charitable Trusts. "It's about the daily assault of selfish, inconsiderate behavior that gets under their skin on the highways, in the office, on TV, in stores and in the myriad other settings where they encounter fellow Americans."

Some older Houstonians say they can remember a time in this city when it was rare to hear angry honking on the streets, a time when sales personnel were more respectful and courteous to customers.

Warm nostalgia or not, 73 percent of the 2,013 adults polled around the nation by Public Agenda believe Americans did treat one another with greater respect in the past. Almost four out of five say today's lack of respect and courtesy in society should be regarded as a serious national problem.

When all is said and done, the aim is for everyone to have consideration for others. We would like to be treated as we treat others.

Everyone has experienced the aggressive drivers; the annoying cell phone conversations in public places; mindless parents with out-of-control children; salespeople uninterested in serving customers; thoughtless litterbugs who throw trash from car windows and refuse to pick up after

themselves; and the common use of curse words and foul language that once would have made most sailors blush.

Radio, television and movies are full of trashy vulgarities and rude comments that provide the wrong lessons for the young. Many people believe good manners and respect for others to be old-fashioned and out of place in today's world.

There's no national solution for the sorry state of our manners. The government can't do anything about the situation, although we are sure some in government would be willing to propose a multibillion-dollar program aimed at instilling in the public a greater respect of others and better manners - if they thought it would win them some votes.

No, the solution must come from within ourselves. We may be able to teach our children and grandchildren good manners, but not other people.

Individually, we should strive to be more considerate of others, give other drivers a break in bad traffic and practice using words and phrases such as please, thank you and pardon me. The point is to avoid annoying others with bad behavior.

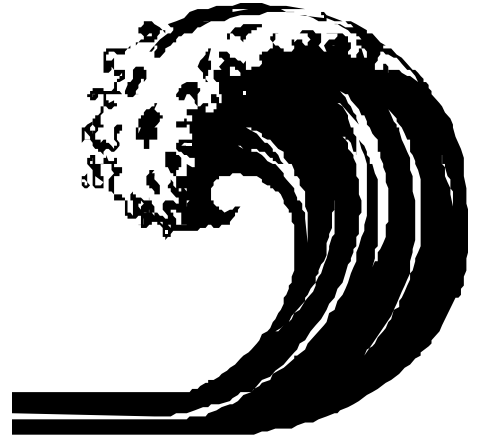
Good manners cost nothing, and they go a long way toward making people likable. Good manners show breeding, which may also be considered old-fashioned but which is a quality universally appreciated by those who recognize it in others. Good manners also show that a person is in control of his or her temper.

Most of all, good manners make our day-to-day lives more pleasant and rewarding.

Should We Be Afraid Of What's Coming?

Jesus Will Return In Two Phases

By Del DeLong



As children of God, we look forward to the second coming of Jesus. There are those who fear the future, because they do not know what will happen. We do not need to fear these things, because the Bible tells us plainly what the events are, who will escape, and who will not.

In the previous issue of the Advocate, we discussed the events of the sixth seal. At the time of these events, great turmoil will be found on the earth. Those who are left to endure those events will experience great fear and insecurity. They will try to hide from the face of God and His Son, Jesus.

We know that the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord at this time, and they will not have to endure the hardships of the sixth seal. The catching up of the saints will be just the first phase of Jesus's coming. Jesus will resurrect the dead saints at this time. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (I Corinthians 15:42-44). Then the living saints will be transformed from physical to spiritual beings. They will all be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This seems to be a mystery to many people. Paul says in I Corinthians 15:51-53, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." A further explanation of the resurrection occurs in I Thessalonians 4. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them

which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (verse. 13). Here Paul gives comfort to those who have lost a loved one. He refers to death as a sleep. He goes on to explain how those, who sleep in Jesus, will be brought back to life. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so (or in the same manner as Jesus) them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (verse 14). This is how they will be brought with Him, after they are resurrected, in the same manner that Jesus was resurrected. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep (resting in their graves). For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (verses 15-18). Notice that both the resurrected dead in Christ and the remaining saints who are alive at the time of the resurrection are both caught up at the same time.

These are the events that make up the first phase of Jesus's second coming. This phase is also called "the reaping phase", because the saints are reaped from the earth and will not be subjected to the terrible events yet to come.

When Jesus comes as a reaper, He will have one crown on His head, and He will be called "king of saints". "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And

another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:14-16). These saints were then caught up to the "Sea of Glass" which is the New Jerusalem. We will look at this in another article. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea

of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:2-3).

The second phase of Jesus's coming is called the "warring phase", and this happens as the seventh plague which will follow these events. We will look at this in the next article.

Do you need to fear what is about to come? Where will you be, on the earth or in the city of God?

I BESEECH YOU BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

By Carol Buechner



The Apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, and that there BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; but that YE BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT." Why is Paul writing this to the Corinthians? Verse eleven states that Paul has heard "that there are contentions among you." In this passage Paul is asking earnestly, imploring and begging the Corinthians to listen to him. Why does Paul feel that he must discuss this? Why should this matter be brought before the saints of today? There is one very important reason as stated in Proverbs 6:16 and 19: "These six things doth the Lord hate: . . he that soweth discord among brethren." **GOD HATES DISCORD!** A thorough study of this passage will give a clearer understanding as to why God hates discord, contention and divisions and why Christians should not be involved in such things.

A good place to start would be an in-depth study of

the words division and contention. As you study the words, you find more words that expand the understanding of what is really involved. DIVISION means a separation, disagreement, detachment, severance, disconnected, breaking down of communication, rending and tearing apart. A separation is a break or gap. Detachment is a state of indifference or unconcern. A severance is a split. From these words, it can be noted that a division would be a break down in communication among the brothers and sisters in the church which can lead to disagreements and a split or a breakdown of the progress of the whole group.

The word CONTENTION really expands in meaning as you study it. It means strife, struggles, controversy, disputes, quarrels, arguments, belligerency, animosity and discord. Studying these words separately is useful. Strife is competing or struggling with one another, often with an angry undercurrent. Controversy is a clashing of opinions or ideas. Disputes often concerns questioning the truth of something and implying doubt. Arguments are discussions

with disagreement. Disagreement is refusing to agree or comply with others and often involves hostility, tension, antagonism, disunity and dissent. Antagonism is being in a state of hostility or opposition with resistance and enmity.

Enmity is bitter attitudes or feelings against another. Hostility is ill will or unfriendliness. Bickering is useless and unproductive quarrels, squabbles or feuds. Feuds are bitter and long-continued quarrels. Quarrels are disagreements often with anger and resentment involved.

Discord is a lack of harmony, confusion and implies quarreling between persons. Belligerent is being hostile, uncooperative and showing a readiness to fight, argue or quarrel. Animosity is a feeling of strong dislike or can even be open hatred of another person. A summary of the words would be a state of discord, disunity or disharmony that involves attitudes and feelings that are bitter, negative and disagreeable thereby causing arguments, quarrels, resentments, squabbles.

How can any Christian group progress with such things going on among the members? These are all things that are of the flesh and not of the spirit. Paul encouraged the brethren to be "joined together in the same mind." In Romans 12: 16-18, more information is given concerning this concept.

As you read the verses from Romans twelve, you will notice that the things you are to do so that you will be able to be of one mind are numbered. There are twenty-three of them, and they are very important actions for you to incorporate into your Christian walk. "(1) BE OF THE SAME MIND ONE TOWARD ANOTHER. (2) Mind not high things, but (3) condescend to men of low estate. (4) Be not wise in your own conceits. (5) Recompense to no man evil for evil. (6) Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, (7) LIVE PEACEABLE WITH ALL MEN." Paul is stating that one must be humble and not think of himself as knowing it all, thus leaving out the opinions of others. When things are done to you that are evil and may stir up contentions, do not return the evil but do what is right and honest because others will see your actions. Paul implores you to be at peace with all people. There will be times when it is almost impossible to maintain your peace, but it is important to remember that God expects you to be an example to others. How can you do all this? The answer is found in the verses preceding the above passage. "(8) Let love be without dissimulation. (9) Abhor that which is

evil; (10) cleave to that which is good. (11) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; (12) in honour preferring one another, (13) Not slothful in business, (13) fervent in spirit; (14) serving the Lord; (15) Rejoicing in hope; (16) patient in tribulation; (17) continuing instant in prayer, (18) Distributing to the necessity of saints; (19) given to hospitality. (20) Bless them which persecute you: (21) bless, and curse not. (22) Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and (23) weep with them that weep" (Verses 9-15). Paul is telling you that a loving attitude must be a priority. You must be kind and loving no matter what the circumstance and you must always be ready to help others in time of need. When others turn on you, do not curse them with your words but bless them in word and deed. Remember that you are serving the Lord and not yourself. Do not forget that prayer is necessary and can bring you through the difficult times.

Now it is important to understand what can cause contentions, disunity and discord. Perhaps the most prominent cause for contention is NOT FORGIVING others. To forgive is to release from the heart resentment, anger, bitterness, etc., against someone and to give up the desire to punish them. It is to cancel or pardon someone by dismissing from the heart and mind the act involved. It is exonerating, releasing, excusing, clearing and freeing someone and not retaining the memory of the act. To not forgive is to refuse to release, forget or let go of something that was done in the past. Unforgiveness is like a cancer that grows in your body. It starts as a tiny cell and grows into a large tumor, bringing deathly sickness that may be incurable if not found in time and taken care of.

Forgiveness is not a choice you can make if you want to be a servant of God. It is a necessity. Jesus declared: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). This clearly tells you that if you refuse to forgive someone, God WILL NOT forgive you. Therefore, you lose contact with God! He no longer hears your prayers. In Matthew chapter eighteen, Jesus tells the story of unforgiveness that should be a lesson on the importance of forgiveness. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand

talents (millions of dollars). But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence (a few dollars): and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And HE WOULD NOT: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him” (Verses 23-34). Do you see yourself in this story? Do you want others to forgive you, but you are unwilling to forgive others? Do you want mercy for yourself but do not want to give it to others? This unforgiving servant was not of the same mind as the forgiving king. He had contention and strife in mind. If unforgiveness festers in your mind and heart, you will be like the unforgiving servant. You will end up causing strife and contention. The concluding verse to this incident is extremely important because it will help you realize the impact of forgiveness. “SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES” (Verse 35).

A second reason for contention and strife can be found in two passages of scriptures. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through

strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:2-3). Love is the common element in these two passages. Love is deep and affection feeling and sincerely caring for another person or persons. It is a feeling of brotherhood and good will toward one another connected with ties of good feelings. Love is devotion to and unwavering passion and affection for God coupled with a desire to do what is His will and please Him. This love is the foundation on which the Christian life should be based. It is the mainstay of the fruit of the Spirit (LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE). When love is weak, the other fruit can not develop adequately. As the ability to love Christ and others grows, all the fruit mature with it. It is absolutely vital to walk in love, and the reason is stated in I Corinthians 13:1-2: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I AM NOTHING!” Your gifts and talents may be many, but without the necessary attribute of true, genuine love, you are insignificant, unprofitable and not considered useful to God. Peter in his first epistle, chapter four, verses eight and nine makes a statement that needs to be emphasized. He advises: “And above all things HAVE FERVENT CHARITY (love) AMONG YOURSELVES: FOR CHARITY SHALL COVER THE MULTITUDE OF SINS. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” Fervent means to be intense or earnest. When you have this kind of love, sin is not prevalent. Love allows you to operate in a spirit of meekness that keeps pride out. When pride takes over, you begin walking in the works of the flesh (ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, LASCIVIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, WITCHCRAFT, HATRED, VARIANCE, EMULATIONS, WRATH, STRIFE, SEDITIONS, HERESIES, ENVYINGS, MURDERS, DRUNKENNESS, REVELLINGS). Proverbs 10:12 states the importance of love: “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but LOVE COVERETH ALL SIN.” It assists you in avoiding sin.

What causes you to falter in your love walk? This is the third possible cause of contention and discord. It is the lack of maturity in your Christian life. Maturity is being

fully developed and grounded in the word of God, becoming perfect and complete mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Immaturity is not complete, imperfect, lacking emotional, mental and spiritual security, being unstable, and easily persuaded to do what is wrong. When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, confessed your sins, were baptized and received the Holy Spirit, your love walk began. Your love walk was immature, and through studying God's word and gaining new knowledge, going to church, praying and other activities, you begin to change and understand more about what God expects you to do as a Christian. You discover God's will for your life. However, if you are the same person you were at the beginning of your Christian walk, you are not maturing. Paul explains this in I Corinthians 3:1-3: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **FOR YE ARE YET CARNAL, FOR WHEREAS THERE IS AMONG YOU ENVYING, AND STRIFE?"**

Think back to when you became a Christian. Did you have a bad temper, always fretting, filled with fear, impatient, outspoken without regard to other's feelings, unkind, self-centered, prideful? Over time, these personality traits should change as you mature. If they have not changed, you are not making an effort to mature. You may make excuses saying that you have always been that way and that is just your personality. Do you think God will accept this reasoning for remaining in the flesh? The answer is absolutely not!!! God does not want to hear excuses, He expects changes. You are not only affecting your salvation, but you are affecting the salvation of others with your actions.

Advice is given in Titus, chapter two, concerning Christian conduct. If this is the conduct that is displayed and encouraged, division, discord and disunity will be at a minimum. It will be easier for everyone to "be of one mind." This chapter divides the conduct instructions into categories. It begins with advice for everyone: "BUT SPEAK THE THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE."

Next, instruction is given for the AGED MEN (verse 2). This would be the older, hopefully more mature men that are truly rooted and grounded in the truth and are faithful servants. The AGED MEN are told to do six things:

1. **BE SOBER** - To be sober is to not be extreme or extravagant, to be serious, quiet, self-controlled, reasonable, of a sound mind, calm and steady. 2. **BE GRAVE** - To be grave is to be serious, solemn, deeply earnest, zealous and sincere. 3. **BE TEMPERATE** - To be temperate is to be moderate in actions and speech, restrained, not easily angered, not self-indulgent, avoiding excesses or extremes, gentle, not violent, humble. The next three characteristics instruct you to be **SOUND** in doing. This means to be solid, firm, stable, loyal, reliable. 4. **BE SOUND IN FAITH** — To be sound in faith is to be firm, unchanging and unquestioning in your belief of God without requiring proof or evidence in good time and bad times. 5. **BE SOUND IN CHARITY** - To be sound in charity is to be stable in your love walk, being affectionate, kind, caring and compassionate toward God and all mankind regardless of situations that happen. 6. **BE SOUND IN PATIENCE** - To be sound in patience is to be able to endure pain., trouble, trials, etc., without complaining or losing your self-control. It is refusing to be provoked or angered even when insulted or hurt emotionally. It is being calmly tolerant. This spells out what the job of the aged or elder men are to do. Elderly men, how do you measure up?

Titus, chapter two, continues with instructions for the **AGED WOMEN**. Verse three begins by saying, "THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE..." This is meaning that the **AGED WOMEN**, like the aged men are to 1. **BE SOBER** 2. **BE GRAVE** 3. **BE TEMPERATE** 4. **BE SOUND IN FAITH** 5. **BE SOUND IN CHARITY** 6. **BE SOUND IN PATIENCE**. The list does not end here for the aged women but continues through verse five. In addition, the **AGED WOMEN** are to 7. **BE IN BEHAVIOUR AS BECOMETH HOLINESS** — This is living a life devoted to God, being righteous in all situations, Holy, meek and humble. 8. **NOT FALSE ACCUSERS** — This is not being an informer, witness, advisor or gossip in an untruthful, deceiving, untrustworthy or deceptive manner. 9. **NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE** This is not partaking of intoxicating drinks or any substance that affects the ability to function properly. 10. **TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS** - The good things they are to teach to the young women are: (2) **TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS** (3) **TO LOVE THEIR CHILDREN** (4) **TO BE DISCREET** - This is being careful about what is said, keeping silent when it is

necessary and being wise in avoiding ungodly situations. 11. TO BE CHASTE - This is avoiding sexual indecency, being pure, being modest and restrained in behavior. TO BE KEEPERS AT HOME — This is being a good manager or caretaker of all things at home. (7) TO BE GOOD - This is being morally sound, virtuous, honest, respectable. just, reliable, devout, generous, dutiful and genuine. (8) TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS. This is quite a list of things that the elder women have to do to be examples to and teach to the younger women. Elderly women, how do you measure up?

The young men are next addressed in verses six and seven. The YOUNG MEN are to be 1. SOBER MINDED 2. IN ALL THINGS SHOWING A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS IN THESE AREAS: (1) DOCTRINE (2) SHOWING UNCORRUPTNESS (3) GRAVITY (4) SINCERITY (5) SOUND SPEECH THAT CAN NOT BE CONDEMNED. There is a very important statement that follows these instructions which cannot be overlooked. It says: THAT HE THAT IS OF THE CONTRARY PART MAY BE ASHAMED, HAVING NO EVIL THING TO SAY OF YOU” (verse 8). What this statement is saying is that if you are living by the instructions given in Titus, chapter two, you are going to be living in such a way that an unbeliever or someone that is looking for something to criticize you for, will have a difficult time doing so. The shame will be on the accuser not you because you are living a righteous life.

What can be done when there are divisions, discord and contentions among the church brothers and sisters? The most important thing that can be done is to PRAY. Pray that God will take such situations in His capable hands and bring about changes in people’s hearts and actions that will resolve matters. Seek others to pray with you because there is power in doing so. “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19-20).

Another thing that can be done to stop contentions and divisions is to form a study and prayer group to teach the foundational principles of maturity and why it is absolutely necessary to be in harmony and unity within the body of Christ.

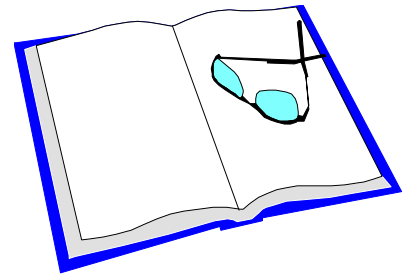
Perhaps the most effective method of dealing with serious divisions, contentions and discord is for the mature church leaders to confront the situations. “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, IN MEEKNESS INSTRUCTING THOSE THAT OPPOSE THEMSELVES; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; AND THAT THEY MAY RECOVER THEMSELVES OUT OF THE SNARE OF THE DEVIL, WHO ARE TAKEN CAPTIVE BY HIM AT HIS WILL” (2 Timothy 2:24-26). If someone does not handle the situation, those causing problems will remain in sin and in the snare or trap of Satan, losing their salvation and can even cause others to lose their salvation. Paul most certainly brought such matters before the people and implored them to stop! A number of Paul’s scriptures in this article prove that Paul did not shrink from his duty but confronted it when it arose.

The question is, “DO YOU WANT TO STRIVE OR THRIVE?” Compare the two. Strive is to be in conflict, struggles, disagreements, arguments, etc. Thrive is to prosper, flourish, be successful, improve, do well, achieve, advance, bear fruit, become prosperous. Do you enjoy causing strife? The Bible says that “. . . THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT STRIVE... !” (2 Timothy 2:24). if you are guilty of causing strife in the church, the church can NOT thrive. Strife is like an orchestra tuning up. During the tuning process, instruments are playing different tunes, notes, keys, chords, etc. It is a very noisy, unpleasant sound. This is what God hears when strife occurs. He hates it and turns away from hearing it. As soon as the orchestra begins playing in unison and harmony, beautiful music comes forth that is inspiring and uplifting. When God hears His saints working in unison, He is pleased. This enables the group to thrive because God is with them and blessing them.

Does Psalm 133:1 state: "BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN CONTENTION"? No, it says: “BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY.” The world is a place of strife. The church should be a place to thrive. Make it happen!

A LESSON STUDY

THE PATTERN FOR GROWTH PROVIDED BY CHRIST



"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Two texts especially seem to be appropriate to the title of our lesson. The first text is found in Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Our text tells us that the whole arrangement was planned by God, and it is His sure plan to bring many sons to glory. However, Jesus, who is their Captain, must be dealt with first. God, Jesus' Heavenly Father, supervised His experiences, and by being submissive and suffering under difficult and trying circumstances, Jesus was made perfect.

To fully understand this text, we must know what happened when Jesus indicated by water immersion the complete and unreserved consecration that had already taken place in His heart. Jesus realized that his chief mission at His first advent was to die. He provided the ransom price for Adam.

When Jesus was immersed, it pictured His willingness and determination to surrender His life as a sacrifice for Adam's sin. This sacrifice was completed on the cross. In order that Jesus might have an opportunity to live and be resurrected, it was necessary that He be begotten to a new life. The reality of Jesus's new life was indicated to John by the dove lighting upon the head of Jesus. When Jesus was brought up out of the water, it pictured his being raised to this newness of life.

From God's standpoint, the fleshly body of Jesus was dead, along with any earthly thoughts, aims or plans. Even any earthly possessions were to be surrendered as belonging to God from this point forward. God was interested in the spiritual mind of our Lord. All His experiences were permitted of God and designed to develop spiritual maturity, and to prove His loyalty under the most adverse circumstances.

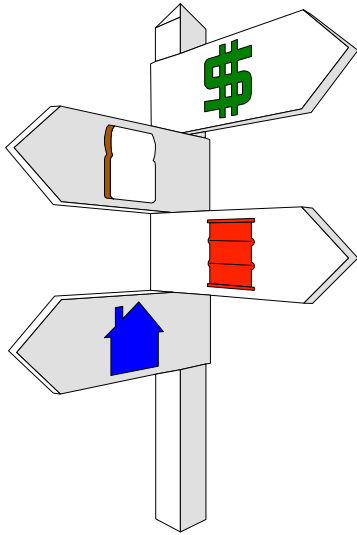
The second scripture that pertains especially to our

text is Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." When we speak of Jesus learning obedience and being made perfect, we must remember that the reference is being made to His spiritual development - the development of His spirit - begotten mind. We are informed by our text that Jesus was made perfect by his experiences, that He was completely submissive under them. Because of this, His Heavenly Father was able to resurrect Jesus and give Him all power. Jesus indicated to His disciples that they would have the same kind of experiences He was having if they walked faithfully in His footsteps.

In Matthew 10, Jesus goes into considerable detail preparing the disciples for their experiences they would encounter when He sent them forth to preach concerning the kingdom. In verses 24-25, we read, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

The Apostle Peter confirms our Lord's statement, saying, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you (I Peter 4:12). The point is that these trials and testings are permitted by the Heavenly Father for the purpose of developing in us a mind, or character, like that of our Lord. Jesus is our example in this school of development and testing! In I Peter 2:21-23, the Apostle Peter wrote, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: WHO DID NO SIN, NEITHER WAS GUILF FOUND IN HIS MOUTH: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Contributed



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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

The following article appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

MEDITATION MOVEMENT ATTRACTS PROFESSIONALS SEEKING INNER CALM

by Tara Dooley

Houston Chronicle Religion Writer

Pragna Desai's first experience with silent meditation was a laugh.

Literally.

"I was almost choking, like something had to come out," Desai said. "I used to go into the bathroom."

The experience occurred nearly two years ago at a 10-day retreat in Kaufman near Dallas.

Desai had attended the retreat to learn Vipassana, an ancient meditation technique. By the fourth or fifth day, she had figured out how to retreat into silence and create calm and relaxation.

A few months ago, she called on the skill when she lost her job - no laughing matter.

"I meditated every day. It was very hard. Negative thoughts were taking over my mind. But you know, on the path, there is light somewhere."

For Desai, the light came after two weeks when she found a job as a server at an upscale country club.

"I handled it so well," she said. "That was Vipassana."

Vipassana means to objectively observe reality, said S.N. Goenka, the leading teacher of the practice.

Practitioners trace the method back thousands of years to what they consider the original meditation teachings of the historical Buddha. The practice, they believe, has been handed down by an unbroken chain of teachers. Goenka, who is considered the current teacher in the

chain, will speak in Houston Friday.

"This type of technique is very essential to give peace in the world," Goenka said in a telephone interview. "This is a time when people need something which will help to keep their mind balanced and peaceful."

Goenka, 79, was born in Burma (now called Myanmar) and was a successful businessman. He learned the practice from a government official, and in 1969 moved to India to teach the meditation technique. In 1979, he began traveling to Western countries to teach.

Unlike other forms of meditation, Vipassana does not use mantra chanting or require practitioners to focus on symbols or deities to help them concentrate.

Instead, Goenka teaches meditators to concentrate on their breathing. Once focused, they attempt to observe and follow sensations that run through the body, from head to toe.

Followers of Goenka's teachings are required to participate in a 10-day silent retreat, in which the technique is taught, before starting their own practices.

In Texas, the only center is in Kaufman. The courses, room and board are free, although donations of time and money are accepted.

"The course is just a primer," said Anoop Agrawal, a medical resident, who practices Vipassana. "It is 10 days to get you familiar with the technique, and the rest of your life is spent trying to perfect it."

Those who have completed a 10-day course are welcome to join meditation groups such as the one that meets Mondays at Ramesh Bhutada's suburban home in southwest Houston.

On a recent Monday, 16 meditators gather in a sec-

ond-floor room. The blinds are drawn, and only the rose-tinted light of a setting sun seeps in.

Bhutada's wife, Kiran, starts a tape of Goenka chanting in Pali, an ancient India language. Switching to English, he tells the meditators to move the tension in their bodies from head to feet and feet to head, resting at particularly tense spots.

"See that you feel perfect equanimity," she slowly hums.

"He uses the chanting in the beginning to create the environment," Ramesh Bhutada later explained.

The serious meditation begins when the tape clicks off. Silence descends. The hum of the air conditioner is interrupted only by the lopsided tick of the ceiling fan. The most restless among the crowd lets out a periodic yawn.

"It seems so simple, like nothing," Agrawal said. "When you actually try to do it, the effects of that observation are like tidal waves."

At the end of the hour, Kiran Bhutada turns on the tape to hear Goenka as he chants in Pali again and finishes by calling on the group to generate love, goodwill, peace and harmony and to be liberated.

After finishing the meditation, "I feel sort of happy and kind of peaceful and like I have accomplished something," said Maya Putra, a freshman at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. The 15-year-old joined the meditators with her mother, Komalasari Sidarta. "I have a calm, happy feeling."

Although the practice of Vipassana stems from the teachings of the Buddha, it is not a Buddhist religion, Goenka said, but rather a nonsectarian technique.

The practice does not emphasize belief in any deity, nor does it require any initiating ritual, he said. It also does not call for any guru-type figure.

"The teacher is just showing the path," Goenka said.

Indeed practitioners often come from many religions, or none at all. Bhutada is Hindu, and his Vipassana practice has made his religious worship more purposeful, he said.

"When (meditation) becomes part of your life, it becomes part of your religion," he said.

Bhutada, president of Star Pipe Products, started Vipassana meditation in 1993 as a way to fight the chronic fatigue illness that had him bedridden some days, he said. But the point is not good health, he said.

"You should not go for taking care of your health," he

said. "That is just a side benefit."

The real benefit is a calm mind in a multistage world, he said.

For Bhutada, the technique has taught him to focus more clearly on tasks, improving his memory and productivity, he said. Bhutada is so impressed by the technique that he offers all 160 employees in his company time off with pay to attend the 10-day course.

"I'm more happy than I ever was in my life," he said. "I'm more healthy than I ever was in my life; I have more balance than I ever had in my life."

Ideally, the practice should be integrated into daily life. For Anita Kinra, that means waking by 5:30 a.m. And meditating for an hour. In the evening she meditates for another hour.

"I look forward to it," she said. "Now on weekends I do more than two hours a day."

Though practitioners insist that Vipassana is not a religion and Goenka not a guru, the method guides practitioners into a moral code that calls on people to condemn killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and intoxicants, said Nancy Pappas, executive assistant to the president of a credit union and a full-time master's degree student in business administration.

But mostly, the meditation allows practitioners to control anger and respond to others in more controlled and gentle ways.

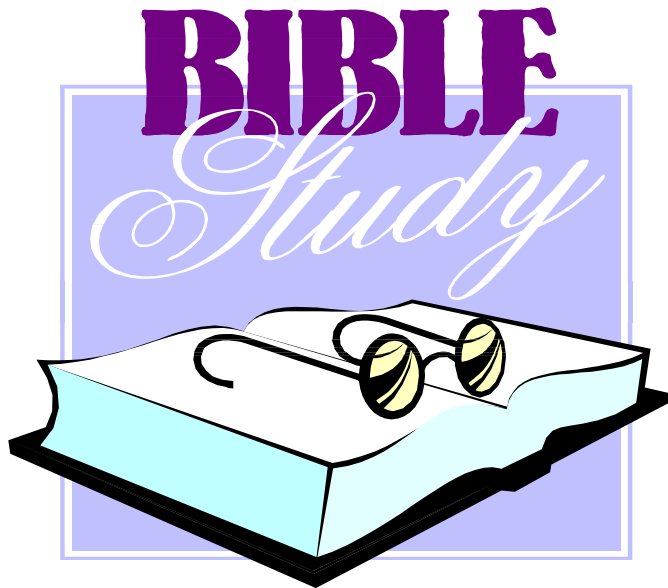
"If I have negativity or misery, I need to find a way to eliminate that negativity without passing it on to someone else," Pappas said. "During meditation, these negativists can come off so you don't pass it to someone else. It stops the cycle of negativity and misery."

"It sounds like a drop in the bucket when you say it that way, but you can see it in your life."

Comment

We wonder how many children of God are being led astray by taking part in Vipassana. First, the article reads that Vipassana does not use Mantra chanting. Later, it reads that Bhutada's wife, Kiran, plays a tape of Goenka chanting Pali to start a session. It is claimed that the beginning chanting is only to create the environment.

The article reads that the practice does not emphasize belief in any deity. It tells us that the teacher is just showing the path. Vipassana is not the path of the child of God. Jesus said, "...; I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).



Questions and Answers

Question: Does the Bible uphold the doctrine of reincarnation?

Answer: Various religious groups today maintain this theory which is, in simple terms, the belief that souls of the dead return to earth in another form or body. The theory (variously known as metempsychosis, transmigration of souls, and reincarnation) has no Scriptural backing whatsoever. It finds its origin in pagan religions. Let us give an example. Fundamental in the doctrine of Buddhists is the belief that in theory the soul should return in other forms of life. Evildoers return as animals or unfortunate humans. Good people return in progressively higher stages until they attain "Nirvana" (the perfect state, or heaven). This same belief is prominent in Hinduism, also in Lamaism (the religion of Tibet). Scriptural teaching is simple, direct and logical. God gives to every person one mortal life which is his or her sole opportunity to qualify for the physical change to immortality at Christ's return. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:20-21).

II Corinthians 6:2 tells us, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" If we reject God during this day of salvation, we forfeit all hope we have of

eternal life. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). There is no survival of the soul or chance of reincarnation mentioned here!

Some other texts used to support the theory of reincarnation are Job 12:10, Isaiah 42:5 and Zechariah 12:1. However, these texts all speak of the spirit, or breath, or life, as the word is elsewhere translated and which we, as creatures of God's creation, possess. Paul's preaching to the Athenians gives a better understand to this fact. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:24-26). God has set in motion certain laws of life, and by these we are formed and sustained. He gives us the breath vital to the sustaining of our life. When we die, He withdraws that breath of life.

Another text used to advance belief in reincarnation is Jeremiah 1:4-5. "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." This verse teaches God's foreknowledge! It does not give any suggestion of reincarnation. God knows what

will be in the future long before it happens. He knows also the type of men that shall be born, and whom He will be able to use. In the case of Jeremiah, God knew long before his mother conceived him the type of man Jeremiah would become. The opening part of the verse reads, "Before I formed thee." This shows that Jeremiah had no existence as yet.

Other such predictions should be remembered in this connection. Moses foretold the birth of Jesus and that He would speak the word of the Lord. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19). Jesus was to be raised up from among His brethren. In I Kings 13:1-3, a man of God cried against King Jeroboam and prophesied how Josiah would be born and some of the work he would accomplish in putting away idolatry. This was many years before Josiah's birth. "And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

We might compare the afore mentioned example of God's foreknowledge concerning Jeremiah to the words of the Lord which are recorded in Isaiah 46:9-10. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

God has the ability to foresee the future as clearly as men can see events which have already occurred.

Question: Will you please explain Matthew 16:19?

Answer: Let us quote the verse. "And I will give unto

thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Not the keys of the church, but of the kingdom of heaven is the scene on this occasion. It was given to the Apostle Peter to be the first one to open the eyes of the Gentiles to receive salvation on the day of Pentecost and to the Italian band of Cornelius. There is no assumption that Peter received the power to become Pope here. Peter said that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, to strangers scattered and sojourners of the world. Please compare I Peter 1 with the visitors at Pentecost. In Acts 2:9-12, Peter is giving these people the gospel message and the knowledge of how to remit their sins. Peter couldn't remit sins (Acts 8:20-23). Babylon teaches that this verse gives the authority to confess your sins to earthly leaders. On page 217 of the book, Father Smith instructs Jackson, Priest Smith is instructing Jackson. The priest says, "...you go to confession to a priest, to a bishop, to the pope, and acknowledge in detail the various ways in which you have offended God,..." Then the person who has confessed can receive absolution. Mr. Jackson then asks the priest, "what is absolution?" On page 220, the last three paragraphs, Priest Smith says: "After the penitent finishes his confession, and after the priest admonishes or advises him how best to improve his life, a formal pronouncement of forgiveness in the name of Christ is uttered by the priest, and this is called absolution: I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of...Amen." The priest takes his authority to absolve sins from Matthew 16:19.

To "remit sin" is to declare sin forgiven on the basis of faith in the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter in Acts 10:43 explained clearly to the household of Cornelius "that through his name (Jesus) whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Peter or Paul or any other minister forgave anyone's sins. The forgiveness of sins is something which belongs entirely to God and His only begotten Son, Jesus. This forgiveness of sins was never delegated to man. On the authority of the Word of God, every believer declare sins forgiven to one who receives Christ as his Savior according to John 1:12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Likewise, those who reject the gospel have their sins retained.



The Caribbean

The following report was sent in by our Caribbean overseer, Elder Septimus John.

Guyana: The Service celebrating the Lord's Supper, was conducted by Elder Eric Benn, who was assisted by Brother Andrew Glasgow. Elder Septimus John and two other brothers from Grenada accompanied us. During our visit, a baptism was accomplished, and a new member was added to the family of God. All members partook of the Lord's Supper.

Trinidad & Tobago: Elder Robert Green conducted the Lord's Supper Service on the Island of Trinidad. The brethren there kept themselves busy, distributing tracts and having house to house studies on Sundays which resulted in new members being added to the faith.

In Tobago (photos 3, 4, and 5) Elder Arnold Brown officiated at the Lord's Supper service, which took place in the newly dedicated church building. All members partook of the Lord's Supper, both in Trinidad and Tobago. Prayers are needed for the growth of the work there, as in all parts of the world.

Grenada: A beautiful church building was also dedicated in Carriacou (photos 1 and 2) to stimulate the growth of the work there. This building was the main attraction for the celebration of the Lord's Supper service, which was conducted by Elder Richardson Joseph. All members on the island and those brethren visiting from the mainland partook of the Lord's Supper.

In Grenada, Elder Hubert Matthew was the minister in charge of the celebration. He reported having a wonderful time with the saints, among whom the emblems of the body and blood of the Lord were shared. The many visitors present for the service left there with a proper understanding of what was done. Elder Matthew was very thorough in his explanation.

Missionary work is being carried out with two brothers in the field, throughout the week while available. Members of the congregation joined in doing house to house witnessing on Sundays. Souls were added to the faith and a general renovation was done on the church building at Seamoan (photos 6, 7, and 8).

St. Martin: In St. Martin, Elder Ferdie Augustus hosted the Lord's Supper. Reports are that the entire service went along as planned, with all prepared members partaking of the emblems. It was a very joyous and edifying experience for members and visitors alike. The church there continues to do a good job of sharing the message to the nation, resulting in members being added to the faith.

St. Croix: Elder Errol Noel was in St. Croix to observe and partake of the Lord's Supper.

Elder Alton Powell conducted the entire service. All the members present partook of the supper.

Elder Noel visited St. Martin to spend one Sabbath before returning to Grenada.



LESSON 1

CAIN AND ABEL

Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-13.

Golden Text: Genesis 4:13.

"And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear."

1. What were the names of Adam and Eve's sons, and what was their work? Genesis 4:1-2.
2. Why did Cain become jealous of his brother? Genesis 4:4-5.
3. What did God say to Cain about his offering? Genesis 4:6-7.
4. What did Cain do to Abel? Genesis 4:8.
5. What other sin did Cain commit? Genesis 4:9.
6. In what way did the Lord punish Cain? Genesis 4:11-12.
7. What was Cain's reply to this? Genesis 4:13.

LESSON II

WICKEDNESS OF MAN

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:5-14.

Golden Text: Genesis 6:8.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

1. What kind of people did God find on the earth in the time of Noah? Genesis 6:5,11-12.
2. How did God feel about it? Genesis 6:6.
3. What did God say that He was going to do about it? Genesis 6:7.

4. What kind of a man was Noah at this time? Genesis 6:8-9.

5. What did God tell Noah He was going to do with the earth? Genesis 6:13.

6. What did God tell Noah to do? Genesis 6:14.



LESSON III

NOAH BUILDS THE ARK

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:14-22.

Golden Text: Genesis 6:22.

"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

1. What did God tell Noah to build, and what was he to use in building it? Genesis 6:14.
2. What was the length of the ark that God told Noah to make? How wide and how high was it? Genesis 6:15.

NOTE: One cubit is about 18 inches long.

3. How many windows and doors were there to be in the

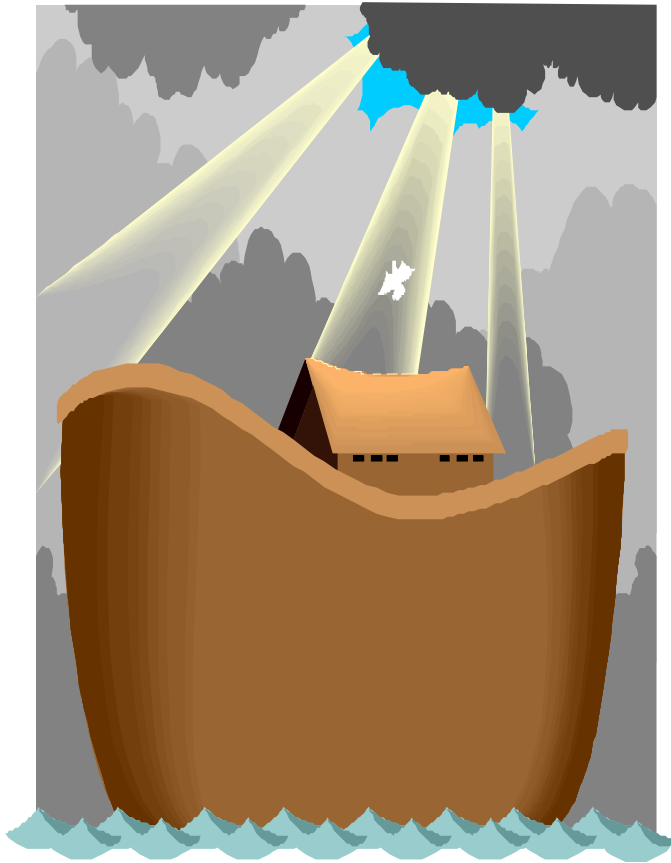
ark? How many stories were there? Genesis 6:16.

4. How was God going to destroy the people? Genesis 6:17.

5. Who was Noah to take into the ark? Genesis 6:18.

6. How many animals was Noah to take into the ark? Genesis 6:19-20.

7. What else did he take into the ark with him? Genesis 6:21.



Scripture Reading: Genesis 7:1-16.

Golden Text: Genesis 7:6.

"And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth."

1. How many of the clean beasts and fowls was he to take in to the ark? How many of the unclean? Genesis 7:2-3.

NOTE: The Lord created the animals clean and unclean from the very beginning. Noah knew which animals were clean, and which were unclean.

2. How long did God say it would rain? Genesis 7:4,7.

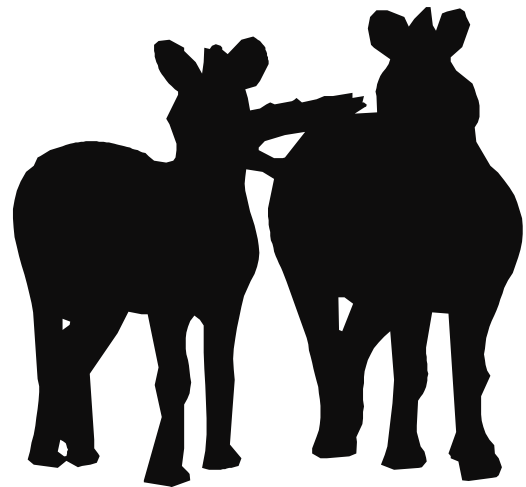
3. Did Noah do everything that God told him to do? Genesis 7:5; Hebrews 11:7.

NOTE: Even though Noah could see no danger, he obeyed God. We should also obey God's commandments today even though we do not always understand why we are to do them.

4. How old was Noah when the flood came? Genesis 7:6.

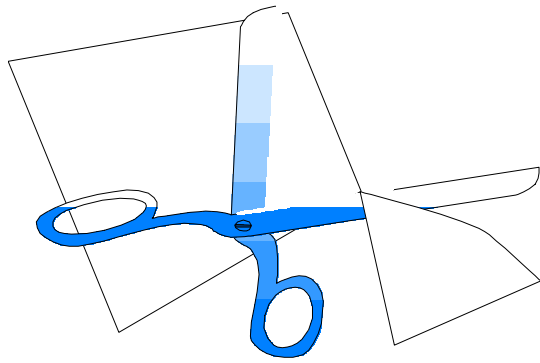
5. How long were they in the ark before it began to rain? Genesis 7:10.

6. After Noah and his family and all the animals had entered the ark, what did God do? Genesis 7:16.



Key to "BIBLE BOOKS"

- 1. Job
- 2. Ruth, Mark, Jude, Ezra, Luke, Acts, Joel, John, Amos.
- 3. Kings, Michah, Peter, Hosea, Nahum, James, Jonah, Titus.



THE EMPTY ENVELOPE

"Mother," said a little girl one day, "you and Father get letters, but I get none. Why? I can't understand!" Said Mother, with a smile, "Jessie, a received letter is often like an answered prayer - you get it because you've asked for it. How can you expect to receive a letter if you don't write one?"

Jessie said, "Then I'll write one. I can write a little. I'll write to Uncle Charles in Scotland. May I?"

"Yes, dear," said her kind mother. And so Jessie wrote the letter, and having received a stamp from her mother, she put it on the envelope she had addressed and posted the envelope.

But no answer came, though she waited for days.

"You see, Mother," she said, it's no good. Uncle will not write to me."

"But," said Mother, "what did you say in your letter?"

"Oh! I forgot - lots."

"Did you post it?"

"Yes, I posted the envelope."

"But what about the letter?"

"Oh, I don't know what became of that."

"You mean you posted the empty envelope?"

"Yes, I don't think the letter mattered much. There was nothing worth reading in it. It was a scribble."

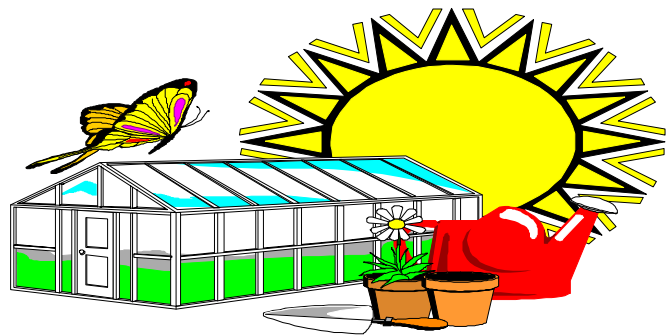
"Foolish child," said Mother. And then she taught her little daughter a lesson which her child still remembers.

"Jessie dear," said she, "do you not sometimes pray, but there is nothing in your prayer for God? I've heard you pray: 'Our Father who art in Heaven', and 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,' and 'Be present at our table, Lord,' thoughtlessly repeating the words, and not feeling or re-

ally meaning what you have said. It has been like sending an empty envelope to God, for only true and heartfelt prayer reaches Him. Think about what I have said, dear."

Jessie began to think about it, and presently she too felt how solemn it was to speak to God - to send Him a prayer, and yet for Him to find nothing in it that He could answer.

But by and by Jessie yielded her heart to the Savior, and learned to know, to love, and to trust Him. Then when she prayed there was something inside her prayer for God. It was like a full envelope with the letter inside it, and not like an empty envelope.



MAKING SUNSHINE

When days are dark and rainy
And I am feeling blue,
My mama tells me gently
The things that I should do.

She says that I should never
Be cross or sulk or pout,
Or keep complaining all the time
Because I can't go out.

Instead I should be happy
And smile and laugh and play,
And frolic with the baby
On every dreary day.

She calls this making sunshine
When there is none outside,
And tells my papa when he comes
That I'm her joy and pride.

-Sunshine for Little People.

BIBLE BOOKS

1. What book of the Bible has only three letters?
2. Fill in the first and last letters of these four letter Bible books.
 -UT- -ZR- -OE-
 -AR- -UK- -OH-
 -UD- -CT- -MO-

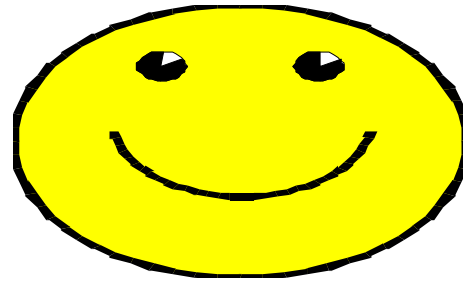
3. Fill in the first and last letters of these five-letter Bible books.
 -ING- -OSE- -ONA-
 -ICA- -AHU- -ITU-
 -ETE- -AME-

A WORD PUZZLE

In each of the following sentences, there is a misspelled word. Can you find it? If you do, underline it.

1. The boy's mother gave hymn ten cents to put in the collection.
2. I have bin to Sabbath School every week.
3. Vacation time is here because skule is out.
4. We shud love our enemies.
5. We should keep our minds filled with cleen thoughts.
6. If we smile, we bring sushine to others.
7. The wind blue Jane's hat away, but brother caught it.
8. Mary took flours to her sick friend.
9. Jane will bee ten years old tomorrow.
10. How can you sea out of the window? You are so small.

I CAN



AND



I CAN'T

L.A. Reber

I Can was a little chap,
 He was both brave and true.
 He made success with everything
 That he would try to do.

I Will is I Can's brother,
 And they always do agree.
 Everybody likes them,
 For they are nice chaps, you see.

I Can't lives in another house,
 He's as shiftless as can be.
 He never does a single thing.
 That anyone can see.

I Won't is I Can't's brother,
 But people pass them by.
 For nobody ever likes them,
 And they never seem to try.

FROM A TO Z

Although things are not perfect,
*B*ecause of trial or pain.
*C*ontinue in thanksgiving,
*D*o not begin to blame.
*E*ven when the times are hard, and
*F*ierce winds are bound to blow -
*G*od is forever able.
*H*old on to what you know.
*I*magine life without His love,
*J*oy would cease to be, so
*K*eep thanking Him for all the things,
*L*ove imparts to thee.
*M*ove out of “Camp Complaining”.
*N*o weapon that is known
*O*n earth can yield the power,
*P*raise can do alone.
*Q*uit looking at the future,
*R*edeem the time at hand.
*S*tart every day with worship,
*T*o “thank” is a command.
*U*ntil we see Him coming
*V*ictorious in the sky,
*W*e’ll run the race with gratitude
*X*alting God most high
*Y*es, there’ll be good times and yes some will be bad, but..
*Z*ion waits for all His saints, when Jesus comes on high.

-From the Internet, submitted by Kathy and Lee Petit

