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ABORTION:

After the Supreme Court narrowly struck down a Louisiana abortion law, Justice Thomas said, "The idea that the framers of the 14th Amendment understood the due process cause to protect our right to abortion is farcical. It would no doubt shock the public at that time to learn that one of the new constitutional amendments contained hidden within the interstices of the text as a right to abortion. The fact," said justice Thomas, "that it took this court over a century to find that right albeit proves that it was more than hidden. It simply was not, and is not there."

"The unborn child . . . though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being . . . and should not be robbed of its life. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely be deemed more atrocious to destroy an unborn child in the womb before it has come to light," [John Calvin, cited by George Grant in Third Time Around, 58.]

Margaret Sanger, was a devout racist who created "the Negro Project" designed to sterilize unknowing black women and others she deemed as undesirables of society? The founder of Planned Parenthood said, "Colored people are like human weeds and are to be exterminated." Is her vision being fulfilled today?

Lawrence Lader was the founder of NARAL. He wrote: "Abortion is central to everything in life and how we wanted to live it." [cited in FRC email, January, 2005]

Hispanic Americans make up 11% of the population and account for 20% of the abortions. Catholics make up 31% of the population and account for 31% of all abortions. Protestants are 54% and account for 37% of abortions. Those women who profess no religion are 6% of the population, but obtain 24% of the total number of abortions. (Alan Guttmacher Institute survey published by Peter Brimelow in FORBES. Circa 2003)

Preborn children are the only people group discriminated against based solely on where they live—in a womb. Is such discrimination heightened if it is a black woman's womb? Consider these facts:

From 1882 to 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched. (Blacks Americans For Life LIFEgram, Spring, 1996). From 1973 to 1998, 12 million blacks have been aborted. From 1882 to 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched. (Blacks Americans For Life LIFEgram, Spring, 1996). From 1973 to 1998, 12 million blacks have been aborted.

A few years ago in Los Angeles, over 17,000 aborted babies were found in a dumpster. Over 15,000 of them were Black babies. (Blacks Americans For Life Newsletter, Fall, 1997.)

Blacks total 11 % of the U. S. population, yet they comprise 33% of abortions. (Conservative News Service, October 7, 1999.)

While white women obtain 60% of all abortions, their abortion rate is well below that of minority women. Black women are more than 3 times as likely as white women to have an abortion. (Facts in Brief - Induced Abortion Allan Guttmacher Institute, 1998.)

A 1990 study of maternal deaths from legal abortion 1972 to 1985 found that minority women were three times more likely to die after a legal abortion than a white woman. (Hani K. Alrash, MD, et. al. "Legal Abortion in the U.S.: Trends and Mortality." Contemporary Ob-Gyn Feb. 1990, Vol. 35, No. 2:58-69.)

UNBORN CHILD PAIN AWARENESS. On Wednesday, January 26th, [2005] RFC staff participated in a press conference at which Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) introduced the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act (S-51). This legislation would require that every woman be told prior to an abortion that her unborn child will feel pain during the abortion procedure. Abortions are not fast. During a D&E procedure in which parts of the baby are torn off, it can take up to 30 minutes for the child to actually die. In third trimester abortions, a salt solution is injected into the womb and inhaled by the child. The burning sensations can last up to one hour before the baby dies. In contrast, Section 2 of the Humane Slaughter Act, 7 USC 1902 requires that "...all animals are rendered insensible to pain by a single blow or gunshot or an electrical, chemical, or other means that is rapid and effective, before shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast or cut." There are laws to make sure animals being led to slaughter feel no pain, yet social liberals see no problem with the torture of unborn babies. Because the nervous system of an unborn baby is fully developed at 20 weeks, the bill requires that mothers be informed at that point or later in pregnancy.

"The real question today is not when human life begins, but, what is the value of human life?" [Ronald Reagan, cited in Family Research Council Email, June 11, 2004]

"I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim and declare the unalienable personhood of every American, from the moment of conception until natural death, and I do proclaim, ordain, and declare that I will take care that the Constitution and laws of the United States are faithfully executed for the protection of America's unborn children." - Presidential Proclamation, Jan. 14, 1988

"Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former student of Karl Stern, runs in New York City the largest abortion clinic in the world, and co-founds the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Law. After being involved directly or indirectly in over 75,000 abortions (including one of his own child) and seeing his political goals achieved with the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide, he comes to understand that he has been killing human beings. In the late 1970's he become a leading pro-life advocate and produces an effective video, The Silent Scream. Contact with Christian pro-life workers gets him thinking about the source of their dedication: 'They prayed, they supported and encouraged each other, they sang hymns of joy. . . . They prayed for the unborn babies, and for the confused and pregnant women, and for the doctors and nurses in the clinic. . . . And I wondered: How can these people give of themselves for a constituency that is (and always will be) mute, invisible, and unable to thank them?' Nathanson in the 1990's becomes a Christian." [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 50-51]

Killing infants: Francis Schaeffer was right. Francis Schaeffer was right, and the nightmare has begun! On Sunday, November 2, 1997, the New York Times carried an article by Steven Pinker, a professor of psychology at the August Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Pinker argues that killing a newborn infant should not be penalized as harshly as killing an older child. "To a biologist, birth is as arbitrary a milestone as any other," Pinker says. According to Pinker, babies aren't real people because they don't have "an ability to reflect upon (themselves) as a continuous locus of consciousness, to form and savor plans for the future, to dread death and to express the choice not to die. Our immature neonates don't possess these traits any more than mice do." Other "philosophers" have argued that parents should be able to kill their children "up to the time the (baby) learns how to use certain expressions." [From the Washington Post, cited in IFC E-mail newsletter, November 17, 1997 (Issue #46)]

The ancient Assyrians were among the most brutal of all peoples. They were famous for their warfare and the torturous ways that they would put their enemies to death. The practice of impalement, placing a lance into the ground, lifting the victim up and placing them down on the lance until the sharp end protruded from their neck area, originated with the Assyrians. The Assyrians also had as one of their laws, "Thou Shalt Not Procure an Abortion."

In *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that it could not resolve "the difficult question of when life begins." They further stated that "If . . . personhood [for the unborn] is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses, for the fetus' right to life is then guaranteed specifically by the [fourteenth] Amendment . . ." [*Roe v. Wade* (410 US113 at 156-7)]

Aborted babies incinerated to heat UK hospitals

The remains of more than 15,000 babies were incinerated as 'clinical waste' by hospitals in Britain with some used in 'waste to energy' plants. By Sarah Knapton, Science Correspondent 7:00AM GMT 24 Mar 2014

www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/10717566/Aborted-babies-incinerated-to-heat-UK-hospitals.html

The bodies of thousands of aborted and miscarried babies were incinerated as clinical waste, with some even used to heat hospitals, an investigation has found. Ten NHS trusts have admitted burning foetal remains alongside other rubbish while two others used the bodies in 'waste-to-energy' plants which generate power for heat. Last night the Department of Health issued an instant ban on the practice which health minister Dr. Dan Poulter branded 'totally unacceptable.' At least 15,500 foetal remains were incinerated by 27 NHS trusts over the last two years alone, Channel 4's *Dispatches* discovered. The programme, which will air tonight, found that parents who lose children in early pregnancy were often treated without compassion and were not consulted about what they wanted to happen to the remains. One of the country's leading hospitals, Addenbrooke's in Cambridge, incinerated 797 babies below 13 weeks gestation at their own 'waste to energy' plant. The mothers were told the remains had been 'cremated.' Another 'waste to energy' facility at Ipswich Hospital, operated by a private contractor, incinerated 1,101 foetal remains between 2011 and 2013. They were brought in from another hospital before being burned, generating energy for the hospital site. Ipswich Hospital itself disposes of remains by cremation. "This practice is totally unacceptable," said Dr Poulter. "While the vast majority of hospitals are acting in the appropriate way, that must be the case for all hospitals and the Human Tissue Authority has

now been asked to ensure that it acts on this issue without delay." Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS Medical Director, has written to all NHS trusts to tell them the practice must stop. The Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, has also written to the Human Tissue Authority to ask them make sure that guidance is clear. And the Care Quality Commission said it would investigate the programme's findings. Prof Sir Mike Richards, Chief Inspector of Hospitals, said: "I am disappointed trusts may not be informing or consulting women and their families. "This breaches our standard on respecting and involving people who use services and I'm keen for *Dispatches* to share their evidence with us. "We scrutinise information of concern and can inspect unannounced, if required." A total of one in seven pregnancies ends in a miscarriage, while NHS figures show there are around 4,000 stillbirths each year in the UK, or 11 each day. Ipswich Hospital Trust said it was concerned to discover that foetal remains from another hospital had been incinerated on its site. A spokeswoman said: "The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust does not incinerate foetal remains." She added that the trust "takes great care over foetal remains" A spokesman for the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said that trained health professionals discuss the options with parents 'both verbally and in writing.' "The parents are given exactly the same choice on the disposal of foetal remains as for a stillborn child and their personal wishes are respected," they added. © Copyright of Telegraph Media Group Limited 2014

ABSOLUTES:

In a 1994 debate with Phillip Johnson, a leading figure in the intelligent design movement, the late evolutionary biologist William Provine insisted: "No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth. These are all conclusions to which Darwin came quite clearly."

Coyne has stated that evolution "says that there is no special purpose for your life, because it is a naturalistic philosophy. We have no more extrinsic purpose than a squirrel or an armadillo."

Duke University philosophy professor Alex Rosenberg shows the same inconsistency. He co-authored an article in 2003, "Darwin's Nihilistic Idea: Evolution and the Meaninglessness of Life," in which he dismissed morality as an illusion. However, Rosenberg assured us that we have nothing to fear, because nihilism has no effect on our behavior, since "Most of us just couldn't persistently be mean, even if we tried." Rosenberg needs to take some of my history courses — or just read the news — if he doesn't think many people could be mean to each other.

In a 2013 debate with William Lane Craig, Rosenberg objected to some of Craig's arguments as "morally offensive," because some of his relatives were murdered in the Holocaust. But if life is meaningless and morality is an illusion, why does it matter if Hitler killed millions? That would be just another meaningless event in the meaningless flow of history. Rosenberg apparently knows better.

Francis Schaeffer once said about the early Christians is now looking eerily familiar – and ominous:

"No totalitarian authority nor authoritarian state can tolerate those who have an absolute by which to judge that state and its actions. The Christians had that absolute in God's revelation. Because the Christians had an absolute, universal standard by which to judge not only personal morals but the state, they were counted as enemies of totalitarian Rome and were thrown to the beasts."

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Chuck Swindoll has seven questions that he and a group of fellow leaders challenge each other with periodically:

1. Have you been with a woman anywhere this past week that might be seen as compromising?
2. Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
3. Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
4. Have you spent adequate time in Bible study and prayer?
5. Have you given priority time to your family?
6. Have you fulfilled the mandates of your calling?
7. Have you just lied to me?

ADDICTION:

AP SEOUL, South Korea — A 28-year-old South Korean man died of exhaustion in an Internet cafe after playing computer games non-stop for 49 hours, South Korean police said Wednesday. Lee, a resident in the southern city of Taegu who was identified only by his last name, collapsed Friday after having eaten minimally and not sleeping, refusing to leave his keyboard while he played the battle simulation game Starcraft. Lee was quickly moved to a hospital but died after a few hours, due to what doctors are presuming was a heart attack, police said. Lee had been fired from his job last month because he kept missing work to play computer games, police said. [09:38 AM EDT on Wednesday, August 10, 2005]

AFFECTIONS:

"Fill your affections with the cross of Christ, that there may be no room for sin."
[John Owen, Treatise on Indwelling Sin]

AFFLICTION:

"For adversity will always make us feel its sting and bite. So when afflicted by illness, we will groan, lament and long to get better; when hard pressed by poverty, we will experience in some way perplexity and worry. Likewise disgrace, contempt and other evils will weigh heavily on our hearts. When one of our family dies, we will pay nature the debt of tears we owe. Always, however, we will be led to this conclusion: 'God has willed it so; let us follow his will.' This should be our thought when all around are the pangs of sorrow, tears and groans. Only so will we train our hearts to bear joyfully the things which cause it grief."
[John Calvin, Institutes]

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a joyful Christian you ought to be! How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? Luther said, "Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven; if thou hast but forgiven me, smite as hard as thou wilt"; and in a similar spirit you may say, "Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, persecution, what thou wilt, thou hast forgiven me, and my soul is glad." (Spurgeon)

Jonathan Edwards wrote a sermon with the following three points:

1. Our bad things will turn out for good (Rom. 8:28)
2. Our good things can never be taken away from us (Psa. 4:6-7)
3. The best things are yet to come (1 Cor. 2:9)

C. H. Spurgeon's words will be of great comfort— Father, prepare us for the height of blessing to which you have called us. Help us to receive gratefully the painful preliminaries necessary to fully receive your highest good to us.

"Afflictions work for good, as they make way for glory. . . . Not that they merit glory, but they prepare for it. As ploughing prepares the earth for a crop, so afflictions prepare and make us [ready] for glory. The painter lays his gold upon dark colors, so God first lays the dark colors of affliction, and then He lays the golden color of glory. The vessel is first seasoned before wine is poured into it: the vessels of mercy are first seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in. Thus we see afflictions are not prejudicial, but beneficial , to the saints." [Thomas Watson, All Things for Good - reprint; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986, 32.]

That the afflictions that do attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night, but ? joy comes in the morning' (Ps. 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm, this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end.' It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown, between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. Fourteen thousand years to the Lord is but as one day. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a post, a span, a dream? Yea, so small a while doth the hand of the Lord rest upon us, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it, for he calls it a very little cross that we bear. . . It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sack-cloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts. – Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 84-85

Afflictions serve to revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love that is cold, and they quicken that faith that is decaying, and they put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. – Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 83

Prosperity doth not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity doth to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and

embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. – Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 82

I read recently about a church leader who was shoveling snow in his driveway. As his wife backed the car out of the driveway their toddler escaped their notice & was crushed to death under the back wheels of the car. The man held his child in his arms as she died. So bad was his grief that he was literally paralyzed by it for weeks. Over time God brought healing. And through the experience he was transformed as a man who would devote the rest of his life to bringing God's compassion to others who are alone in their desperation. Listen to what he later was able to say: "Sometimes skeptics scoff at the Bible saying that God can cause good to emerge from our pain if we run toward him instead of away from him. But I've watched it happen in my own life. I've experienced God's goodness through deep pain, and no skeptic can dispute that. The God who the skeptic denies is the same God who held our hands in the deep, dark places, who strengthened our marriage, who deepened our faith, who increased our reliance on him, who gave us two more children, and who infused our lives with new purpose and meaning so that we can make a difference to others." [cited in Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith*, 53-54]

WACO, Texas. A pastor performing a baptism was electrocuted inside his church Sunday morning after grabbing a microphone while partially submerged, a church employee said. The Rev. Kyle Lake, 33, was standing in water up to his shoulder in a baptismal at University Baptist Church when he was electrocuted, said Jamie Dudley, a church business administrator and wife of another pastor there. Doctors in the congregation performed chest compressions for 40 minutes before Lake was taken to Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, Dudley said. Police said they weren't called and the hospital referred calls to the church. The woman Lake was baptizing was not injured, Dudley said. Pastors at University Baptist Church routinely use a microphone during baptisms, Dudley said. "He was grabbing the microphone so everyone could hear," Dudley said. "It's the only way you can be loud enough." About 800 people attended the morning service, which was larger than normal because it was homecoming weekend at nearby Baylor University, Dudley said. Lake, who had a wife and three children, had been at the church for nine years, the last seven as pastor, Dudley said. [Copyright 2005 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed]

Ernest Hemingway, the literary genius, said of his life: "I live in a vacuum that is as lonely as a radio tube when the batteries are dead, and there is no current to plug into." This is a startling statement, given the fact that Hemingway's life would be the envy of anyone who had bought the values of our modern society. Hemingway was known for his tough-guy image and globe-trotting pilgrimages to exotic places. He was a big-game hunter, a bullfighter, a man who could drink the best of them under the table. He was married four times and lives his life seemingly without moral restraint or conscience. But on a sunny Sunday morning in Idaho, he pulverized his head with a shotgun blast.

There was another side to Hemingway's life, one that few people know about. He grew up in an evangelical Christian home. His grandparents were missionaries, and his father was a devoted churchman and friend of evangelist D. L. Moody. Hemingway's family conformed to the strictest codes of Christianity, and as a boy and young man he was active in his church. Then came World War I. As a war correspondent, Hemingway saw death and despair

firsthand. His youthful enthusiasm for Christianity soured, and Hemingway eventually rejected the faith he had once claimed.

While we don't know all that transpired in Hemingway's heart, it seems he never developed a truly personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Genuine Christianity means more than living in a Christian environment, going through catechism, conforming to the codes, and affirming the truths of Scripture. True Christians are non-negotiated followers of Christ, those who are progressively moving toward Him and who understand all of life in the context of His teaching.

The point is not Hemingway's life. It's my life and your life. If we aren't cultivating a living, vital relationship with Jesus Christ, then we, too, may respond as Hemingway did when life's questions are agonizingly unanswerable or when our inner impulses are too seductive for us to resist. An allegiance based on systems, rituals, and rules is never enough to keep us loyal. ["Moody," *January/February 1997*, pp. 23-24.]

If you want a rainbow you have to endure some of the rain.

One by one He took them from me All the things I valued most; "Til I was empty handed, Every glittering toy was lost. And I walked earth's highways, grieving, In my rags and poverty. Until I heard his voice inviting, "Lift those empty hands to Me!" Then I turned my hands toward heaven, And he filled them with a store, Of his own transcendent riches, "Til they could contain no more and at last I comprehended With my stupid mind, and dull, That God cannot pour out His riches Into hands already full. -- Source Unknown

"The Lord's mercy often rides to the door of our heart upon the black horse of affliction." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"People are like tea bags--you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are."

"When you are bumped as a Christian, what spills out?"

"I have never . . . heard anyone say 'the deepest lessons I have ever learned have been in moments of ease.' Never has anybody said that! All the deep profound communion with God, and taking your roots down deep with Him, have happened through hard stuff." [John Piper, "Persevering in Ministry," *Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997*, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"The best lessons are learnt in affliction. A man never learns anything to profit while standing upon a lofty mountain. It is in the valley of humiliation, it is in the season of distress, trouble, anxiety, perplexity, and temptation, that a man learns the secrets of heavenly wisdom, for in them he learns his own folly, and that 'the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.'" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "*Spiritual Times and Seasons*," *Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot* (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:95-96.]

"I have thought when I was in perplexity of soul, that I never should see what it was for; and I have almost told God so. It was impossible to see the object intended. Such a cloud of pitchy darkness lowered over it, that I felt in my own mind convinced that I never should be brought to see the reason for the dispensation. But I have been brought to see the reason, and to view the merciful kindness of God in bringing me into those straits and difficulties, wherein He caused the sighs and groans of my heart to ascend to His holy ears. But when we are passing under these exercises, we seem as though we could almost dare to tell God to His face, that even He Himself cannot bring good out of them--as though the matter was too crooked even for His arm to make straight. Such poor wretches are we when left to ourselves!" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:96.]

An ancient refiner, working with silver ore separating the pure silver from the dross, knew that his job was complete when he could look into the cauldron and see his own reflection in the shining silver. It is the same with God's working in us.

ALCOHOL:

Luther on Drunkenness:

"It is possible to tolerate a little elevation, when a man takes a drink or two too much after working hard and when he is feeling low. This must be called a frolic. But to sit day and night, pouring it in and pouring it out again, is piggish... all food is a matter of freedom, even a modest drink for one's pleasure. If you do not wish to conduct yourself this way, if you are going to go beyond this and be a born pig and guzzle beer and wine, then, if this cannot be stopped by the rulers, you must know that you cannot be saved. For God will not admit such piggish drinkers into the kingdom of heaven [cf. Gal. 5:19-21]... If you are tired and downhearted, take a drink; but this does not mean being a pig and doing nothing but gorging and swilling... You should be moderate and sober; this means that we should not be drunken, though we may be exhilarated." — Martin Luther, Sermon on Soberness and Moderation (May 18, 1539)

A person takes a drink; the drink takes a drink; the drink takes the person.

ALERTNESS:

The Great Miami Hurricane of 1926. It was a category 4 hurricane, which brought winds that were the highest sustained winds ever recorded in the United States at the time. The barometric pressure fell to 27.61 inches as the eye passed over Miami. Storm surges of nearly 15 feet were reported. Every building in the downtown district of Miami was damaged or destroyed. The town of Moore Haven on the south side of Lake Okeechobee was completely flooded by lake surge from the hurricane. Hundreds of people in Moore Haven alone were killed by this surge, which left behind floodwaters in the town for weeks afterward. The great hurricane of 1926 ended the economic boom in South Florida and would be a \$90 billion disaster had it occurred in recent times. Many casualties resulted as people ventured outdoors during the half-hour lull in the storm as the eye passed overhead. Most residents, having not experienced a hurricane, believed that the storm had passed

during the lull. They were suddenly trapped and exposed to the eastern half of the hurricane shortly thereafter.

ANGELS:

Famous Indian Christian by the name of "Soon Dar Sing:" By order of the Chief Lama of a certain Tibetan Community, Soon Dar Sing was thrown into a dry well which had a lid on top that was secured and locked. There Soon Dar Sing was left to die. There were many bones and rotting flesh at the bottom of the well from other who had been put in there for the same reason. On the 3rd night, when he had been crying to God in prayer, he heard someone unlocking the lid. And a voice spoke telling him to take hold of a rope that had been lowered. He did so and was glad to find a loop at the bottom of the rope in which he could place his foot--as his arm had been broken when he had been thrown down into the well. He was then strongly pulled up, the lid was replaced and re-locked, and when he looked around in the dark to thank his rescuer, there was no one. When morning came, Sing returned to the city in which he had been arrested and began preaching again. News came fast to the Chief Lama, who denied that it could have happened since the only key to the make-shift dungeon was attached to his own belt. (cited by John MacArthur Jr.)

An inscription in an old church in Scotland reads: "Though God's Power Be Sufficient to Govern Us, Yet for Man's Infirmary He appointed His Angels to Watch Over Us." [cited in Ryrie, Basic Theology, 133]

ANGER:

“When you are bumped as a Christian, what spills out?”

ANTICHRIST:

John Calvin wrote, 'The Pope and Muhammad are the twin horns of Antichrist' in his Sermons on Deuteronomy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day" (para. 841).

APATHY:

Brainerd Struggled to Love the Indians

If love is known by sacrifice, then Brainerd loved immensely. But if it is also known by heartfelt compassion, then Brainerd struggled to love more than he did. Sometimes he was melted with love. September 18, 1742: "Felt some compassion for souls, and mourned I had no more. I feel much more kindness, meekness, gentleness and love towards all mankind, than ever" (p. 181). December 26, 1742: "Felt much sweetness and tenderness in prayer, especially my whole soul seemed to love my worst enemies, and was enabled to pray for those that are strangers and enemies to God with a great degree of softness and pathetic fervor" (p. 193). Tuesday, July 2, 1745: "Felt my heart drawn out after God in prayer, almost all the forenoon; especially while riding. And in

the evening, could not help crying to God for those poor Indians; and after I went to bed my heart continued to go out to God for them, till I dropped asleep. Oh, 'Blessed be God that I may pray!'" (p. 302).

But other times he seemed empty of affection or compassion for their souls. He expresses guilt that he should preach to immortal souls with no more ardency and so little desire for their salvation (p. 235). His compassion could simply go flat. November 2, 1744: "About noon, rode up to the Indians; and while going, could feel no desires for them, and even dreaded to say anything to 'em" (p. 272). So Brainerd struggled with the rise and fall of love in his own heart. He loved, but longed to love so much more. [John Piper. *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd* (Swans Are Not Silent). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 144]

Puritan Thomas Brook's writes of Satan's afflicting the believer with seasons of apathy:

DEVICE 7. By casting in a multitude of vain thoughts, whilst the soul is in seeking of God, or in waiting on God; and by this device he hath cooled some men's spirits in heavenly services, and taken off, at least for a time, many precious souls from religious performances. I have no heart to hear, nor no heart to pray, nor no delight in reading, nor in the society of the saints. Satan doth so dog and follow my soul, and is still a casting in such a multitude of vain thoughts concerning God, the world, and my own soul, that I even tremble to think of waiting upon God in any religious service. Oh! the vain thoughts that Satan casts in do so distaste my soul, and so grieve, vex, perplex, and distract my soul, that they even make me weary of holy duties, yea, of my very life. Oh! I cannot be so raised and ravished, so heated and melted, so quickened and enlarged, so comforted and refreshed, as I should be, as I might be, and as I would be in religious services, by reason of that multitude of vain thoughts, that Satan is injecting or casting into my soul. Remedy (i). The first remedy against this device of Satan is to have your hearts strongly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory of that God before whom you stand, and with whom your souls do converse in religious services. Oh! let your souls be greatly affected with the presence, purity, and majesty of that God before whom thou standest. Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is to be peremptory in religious services, notwithstanding all those wandering thoughts the soul is troubled with. This will be a sweet help against them: for the soul to be resolute in waiting on God, whether it be troubled with vain thoughts or not; to say. Well I will pray still, and hear still, and meditate still, and keep fellowship with the saints still. Many precious souls can say from experience, that when their souls have been peremptory in their waiting on God, that Satan hath left them, and hath not been so busy in vexing their souls with vain thoughts. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 135 ff.]

Idea of apathy. "Apathy" comes from the Greek "apatheia" (complete absence of feeling). The Stoic philosophers found as their goal "apatheia." Apatheia brings serenity. Anything that disrupts apatheia must be shunned--and concern for the poor and disadvantaged was one thing that was cited which disrupts apatheia. The Stoic Virgil, in his "Georgics" draws the picture of the perfectly happy man, and states that such a one must have no pity for the poor

and no grief for the sorrowing, for such emotions would only upset his own serenity." [cited in Barclay, James and Peter]

When Cicero addressed the Senate, everyone said "how beautifully he speaks!!" but remained seated. When Demosthenes addressed his troops, they all stood and said, "Let us march!" [cited in Peter Kreeft, Ecumenical Jihad, 45]

A Russian Pastor, visiting one of the larger churches on the West coast, stated: "I don't understand how you could minister in America with the low level of commitments. Do you know that no one in Russia would ever pretend to be a Christian?" He went on to say that whenever they open the Scriptures, everyone comes to feed on the Word. [cited by John MacArthur Jr.]

"We may take comfort about our souls if we know anything of an inward fight and conflict. It is the invariable companion of genuine Christian holiness. . . . Do we find in our heart of hearts a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would? Are we conscious of two principles within us, contending for the master? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the great work of sanctification. . . . Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness, and indifference." [Bishop J.C. Ryle, Holiness, 82]

There was a queen who was taken to the theater on a very cold wintery evening to see a drama. She wept her way through the entire drama. This was during the time of carriages in England. After the performance she went out to get into her carriage and found her "coachman," who had been left outside, frozen to death. She did not shed a tear. Funny thing how we can, at times, be moved to tears by fantasy and be absolutely cold-hearted and apathetic in the face of reality. (cited by John MacArthur Jr.)

"I would argue that the reason so many unbelievers can sit comfortably in our churches and even call themselves born-again Christians is that we give them very little to deny. The offensive message of the cross has been replaced with 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,' with the cross tucked somewhere underneath it." [Michael Horton in Christ The Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation, 54-55.]

APOLOGETICS:

Robert Woodberry of Baylor University has documented the impact of "conversionary Protestant" (missionary) Christians. Their labors have led to remarkable democratizing gains throughout the world. These include "the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, volunteer organizations, most major colonial reforms [abolishing slavery, widow-burning, foot binding, female circumcision, pre-pubescent marriage of girls, etc.], and the codification of legal protections for nonwhites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Furthermore, where Protestant missionaries have been, there you will find more printed books and more schools per capita. You'll discover that in Africa, the Middle East, and parts

of Asia, "most of the early nationalists who led their countries to independence graduated from Protestant mission schools."

Woodberry offers this challenge: Spin the globe, and note the impact of Protestant endeavor! Wherever you see stable democracies and lower corruption rates, look for the stamp of Protestantism. Its Reformation roots emphasized (a) the priesthood of all believers, (b) the importance of placing Scripture into the hands of every Christian, and (c) the dignity of any honest vocation. These emphases propelled missionaries to bring important changes and reforms that reflected these Reformation priorities. (September issue of the Worldview Bulletin, September 2020, <https://worldviewbulletin.substack.com>)

"We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to be corrupted, and consequently, it is possible for them to be and not to be. But it is impossible for them always to exist, for that which can not-be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything can not-be, then at one time there was nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist, and even now nothing would be in existence--which is absurd. Therefore, not all things are merely possible, but there must exist something, the existence of which is necessary. but every necessary thing either has its existence caused by another or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore, we cannot but admit the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God." (Thomas Aquinas).

"Science has not killed God--quite the contrary. It is clearer now than ever that what we can learn from science is limited to what is abstract and quantifiable. Because of what science has achieved, the unresolved (and undoubtedly unresolvable) dilemmas of what Unamuno called the 'man of flesh and bone; the man who is born, suffers, and dies--above all dies' are more poignant, the mysteries deeper. God is needed now more than ever." (Rene' J. Muller; cited in Archetypes of Wisdom p. 242).

"Whoever does not return to Moses, Christ, or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with eclectic hodgepodes must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing invariable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character." [Leon Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours*, 1938]

APOSTASY & BACKSLIDING

The fact that those who appear doctrinally solid come to reject the gospel of grace indicates that it is possible to adopt Evangelical Christianity as a religion that stops short of regeneration. This should cause us to humbly examine ourselves before God.

John MacArthur tells a story about a friend of his whom he knew from childhood. He was the son of a pastor, as was MacArthur. They both were training for the ministry. They went to college together. At some point they parted ways and didn't see one another for some time. Then one day MacArthur read about his friend in the paper about how he had been defrocked from a major university where he taught for parading naked men and women across the class room pointing out their body parts.

Someone told me the other day that the greatest number of converts to Mormonism come from the SBC. I'm not a SB and I'm not here to speak for the SB. But I will say this: they may be SB but they're not regenerate. Simplistic? No. Biblical! Does someone who would embrace a cult that teaches justification by works; polytheism; and man-to-god theology replete with false prophets and false writings; devoid of the power of the Spirit--does that sound like someone who really knew the truth!? Does that sound like someone who was rooted in Christ and built up in Him? Does that sound like someone who was chosen by God to know the truth and to be set free by it? [TAB]

ATHEISM & AGNOSTICISM:

Albert Einstein on Jesus, by John Dickson (Excerpt):

[Albert Einstein] was interviewed in 1929 by the journalist George Viereck and, among many other things, he was asked about some religious matters. It is well known that Einstein despised "revealed religion" as infantile; he did not even like the idea of a personal God. His religious outlook was little more than a vague hunch that behind the laws of nature there must be some "infinitely superior spirit and reasoning power". Fair enough.

But the thing that annoyed my atheist friends was Einstein's admiration for the historical figure (yes, historical figure) found in the New Testament Gospels. Here's a portion of the interview:

Viereck: "To what extent are you influenced by Christianity?"

Einstein: "As a child, I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene."

Viereck: "You accept the historical existence of Jesus?"

Einstein: "Unquestionably! No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. How different, for instance, is the impression which we receive from an account of legendary heroes of antiquity like Theseus. Theseus and other heroes of his type lack the authentic vitality of Jesus."

"Today the cornerstone of international law is the sacred, what is sacred in humanity. You should not kill.... In that sense, the concept of crime against humanity is a Christian concept and I think there would be no such thing in the law today without the Christian heritage, the Abrahamic heritage, the biblical heritage." [Atheist philosopher Jacques Derrida, "To

Forgive: The Unforgivable and Imprescriptable," in Questioning God, eds. John D. Caupito, et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 70]

"Today, even as belief in God fades across the West, the countries that were once collectively known as Christendom continue to bear the stamp of the two-millennia-old revolution that Christianity represents. It is the principal reason why, by and large, most of us who live in post-Christian societies still take for granted that it is nobler to suffer than to inflict suffering.

It is why we generally assume that every human life is of equal value. In my morals and ethics, I have learned to accept that I am not Greek or Roman at all, but thoroughly and proudly Christian." [Atheist historian Tom Holland in "Why I was wrong about Christianity," New Statesman (14 Sept. 2016): www.newstatesman.com/politics/religion/2016/09/tom-holland-why-i-was-wrong-about-christianity]

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built." [Bertrand Russell]

William B. Provine writes as what Lewis called 'a consistent pessimist', stating: 'There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die . . . That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.' Peter Atkins likewise affirms that (from his naturalistic perspective) when the sun dies: 'We shall have gone the journey of all purposeless stardust, driven unwittingly by chaos, gloriously but aimlessly evolved into sentience, born unchoosingly into the world, unwillingly taken from it, and inescapably returned to nothing.'

Others build upon [Bertrand] Russell's scaffolding with what Richard John Neuhaus calls a 'debonair nihilism', an existential determination to ignore the meaninglessness of it all by enjoying the subjective bloom of the metaphorical roses along life's way. Hence, although Richard Dawkins agrees with Steven Weinberg's comment that 'the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless', he nevertheless wants 'to guard against . . . people therefore getting nihilistic in their personal lives.' Dawkins argues (correctly) that subjective human purposes lacking objective value are compatible with an objectively meaningless cosmos: 'You can have a very happy and fulfilled personal life even if you think the universe at large is a tale told by an idiot. You can still set up goals and have a very worthwhile life and not be nihilistic about it at a personal level.' Likewise, A.C. Grayling affirms that 'the meaning of your life is the meaning you give it.' But this is at best a pyrrhic

victory over meaninglessness (and one only available to those capable of exercising such existential intentionality). [cited in the Wordview Email newsletter]

As French atheist André Comte-Sponville concludes: 'there is no way for a lucid atheist to avoid despair.'

Dawkins likes to talk up the emotional rewards of science: 'All the great religions have a place for awe, for ecstatic transport at the wonder and beauty of creation. And it's exactly this feeling of spine-shivering, breath-catching awe—almost worship—this flooding of the chest with ecstatic wonder, that modern science can provide.' However, given Russell's scaffolding, such value-laden terms as 'awe' and 'beauty' refer to nothing but subjective personal reactions taking place within, and relative to, by-products of an evolutionary process lacking any intrinsic meaning or given purpose. In the final analysis, Dawkins affirms that 'the universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.' As Lewis held (both as an atheist and a Christian): 'Either there is significance in the whole process of things as well as in human activity, or there is no significance in human activity itself . . . You cannot have it both ways. If the world is meaningless, then so are we . . .'

"It is very important not to mistake hemlock for parsley, but to believe or not believe in God is not important at all." [Enlightenment philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–84)]

In 2002, the Evangelical Union of the University of Sydney hosted a debate between an atheist, the controversial Sydney journalist Phillip Adams, and evangelical apologist William Lane Craig, on the question of the existence and relevance of God. The following statement by Adams during that debate well illustrates a popular perspective:

I think God, if he, she or it exists, should be ashamed of him, her, or itself. For the last couple of thousand years it has caused us nothing but trouble....

I do not respect the Judeo-Christian God because I regard him, or her, or it, as a brute who has created great cruelty and great horror in this world, if he, or she, in fact exists....

The one thing which we must agree on is that this division which exists between us—in your [Craig's] case over the existence of God or otherwise—should not stop us working together on the important issues involving justice, compassion and decency. At the end of the day, I have to say, God doesn't matter. [Cited in David R. Jackson Crying out for Vindication: The Gospel According to Job, 68-69]

"For unbelieving multitudes in our times, the recent modern defection from God known in His self-revelation has turned the whole of life in to a shambles. Ours is the first society in modern history to have ventured to erect a civilization on godless foundations; it may well be the last." [Carl F. H. Henry, Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief, 113]

Three weeks before Christopher Hitchens's death, George Eaton of the New Statesman wrote, "Throughout his career, he has retained a commitment to the Enlightenment values of reason, secularism and pluralism. His targets—Mother Teresa, Bill Clinton, Henry

Kissinger, God—are chosen not at random, but rather because they have offended one or more of these principles." [Eaton, George (24 November 2011). "Hitch's Rolls-Royce mind is still purring". The New Statesman. Retrieved 28 April 2016]

"There have been other instances of philosophers changing their mind on the basis of evidence. . . . Another example of one who underwent such radical change is J. N. Findlay, who argued, in Flew's 1955 book *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, that God's existence can be disproved—but then reversed himself in his 1979 work *Ascent to the Absolute*. In the latter and subsequent books, Findlay argues that mind, reason, intelligence, and will culminate in God, the self-existent, to whom is owed worship and unconditional self-dedication." [Roy Abraham Varghese in the Preface to Antony Flew, *There is a God*, xxi-xxii]

"I'm not an atheist, and I don't think I can call myself a pantheist. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books but doesn't know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws but only dimly understand these laws. Our limited minds grasp the mysterious force that moves the constellations." [Albert Einstein, cited in Antony Flew, *There is a God*, 99]

"I was particularly impressed with Gerry Schroeder's point-by-point refutation of what I call the "monkey theorem." This idea, which has been presented in a number of forms and variations, defends the possibility of life arising by chance using the analogy of a multitude of monkeys banging away on computer keyboards and eventually ending up writing a Shakespearean sonnet.

Schroeder first referred to an experiment conducted by the British National Council of Arts. A computer was placed in a cage with six monkeys. After one month of hammering away at it (as well as using it as a bathroom!), the monkeys produced fifty typed pages—but not a single word. Schroeder noted that this was the case even though the shortest word in the English language is one letter (a or I). A is a word only if there is a space on either side of it. If we take it that the keyboard has thirty characters (the twenty-six letters and other symbols), then the likelihood of getting a one-letter word is 30 times 30 times 30, which is 27,000. The likelihood of a getting a one-letter word is one chance out of 27,000.

Schroeder then applied the probabilities to the sonnet analogy "What's the chance of getting a Shakespearean sonnet?" he asked. He continued:

'All the sonnets are the same length. They're by definition fourteen lines long. I picked the one I knew the opening line for, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" I counted the number of letters; there are 488 letters in that sonnet. What's the likelihood of hammering away and getting 488 letters in the exact sequence as in "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?" What you end up with is 26 multiplied by itself 488 times—or 26 to the 488th power. Or, in other words, in base 10, 10 to the 690th.

[Now] the number of particles in the universe—not grains of sand, I'm talking about protons, electrons, and neutrons—is 10 to the 80th. Ten to the 80th is 1 with 80 zeros after it. Ten to the 690th is 1 with 690 zeros after it. There are not enough particles in the universe to write down the trials; you'd be off by a factor of 10 to the 600th.

If you took the entire universe and converted it to computer chips—forget the monkeys—each one weighing a millionth of a gram and had each computer chip able to spin out 488 trials at, say, a million times a second; if you turn the entire universe into these microcomputer chips and these chips were spinning a million times a second [producing] random letters, the number of trials you would get since the beginning of time would be 10 to the 90th trials. It would be off again by a factor of 10 to the 600th. You will never get a sonnet by chance. The universe would have to be 10 to the 600th times larger. Yet the world just thinks the monkeys can do it every time.'

Flew concludes that "After hearing Schroeder's presentation, I told him that he had very satisfactorily and decisively established that the "monkey theorem" was a load of rubbish . . . " [Antony Flew, *There is a God*, 75-77]

Einstein, of course, did not believe in a personal God. But he said:

It is a different question whether belief in a personal God should be contested. Freud endorsed this view in his latest publication. I myself would never engage in such a task. For such a belief seems to me preferable to any lack of any transcendental outlook of life, and I wonder whether one can ever successfully render to the majority of mankind a more sublime means in order to satisfy its metaphysical needs.

Einstein clearly believed in a transcendent source of the rationality of the world that he variously called "superior mind," "illimitable superior spirit," "superior reasoning force," and "mysterious force that moves the constellations." This is evident in several of his statements:

I have never found a better expression than "religious" for this trust in the rational nature of reality and of its peculiar accessibility to the human mind. Where this trust is lacking science degenerates into an uninspired procedure. Let the devil care if the priests make capital out of this. There is no remedy for that.

Whoever has undergone the intense experience of successful advances in this domain [science] is moved by profound reverence for the rationality made manifest in existence ... the grandeur of reason incarnate in existence.

Certain it is that a conviction, akin to religious feeling, of the rationality or intelligibility of the world lies behind all scientific work of a higher order.... This firm belief, a belief bound up with deep feeling, in a superior mind that reveals itself in the world of experience, represents my conception of God.

Every one who is seriously engaged in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that the laws of nature manifest the existence of a spirit vastly superior to that of men, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble.

My religiosity consists of a humble admiration of the infinitely superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God. [Cited in Antony Flew, *There is a God*, 100, 102-03]

"Max Planck, Who first introduced the quantum hypothesis, unambiguously held that science complements religion, contending, 'There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other.' He also said, 'Religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, never relaxing crusade against skepticism and against dogmatism, against unbelief and superstition ... [and therefore] 'On to God!'"

Paul A. M. Dirac, who complemented Heisenberg and Schrodinger with a third formulation of quantum theory, observed that 'God is a mathematician of a very high order and He used advanced mathematics in constructing the universe.'

Generations before any of these scientists, Charles Darwin had already expressed a similar view:

'[Reason tells me of the] extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capability of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist.'" [Cited in Antony Flew, *There is a God*, 105-06]

"Appendix B in this volume is an account of my dialogue on this latter theme with the biblical scholar and Anglican bishop N. T. Wright, with particular reference to the Christian claim that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. As I have said more than once, no other religion enjoys anything like the combination of a charismatic figure like Jesus and a first-class intellectual like St. Paul. If you're wanting omnipotence to set up a religion, it seems to me that this is the one to beat!" [Antony Flew, *There is a God*, 100, 157]

"[Bertrand] Russell's rejection of God was not motivated just by intellectual factors. In *My Father, Bertrand Russell*, his daughter, Katharine Tait, writes that Russell was not open to any serious discussion of God's existence: 'I could not even talk to him about religion.' Russell was apparently turned off by the kind of religious believers he had encountered. 'I would have liked to convince my father that I had found what he had been looking for, the ineffable something he had longed for all his life. I would have liked to persuade him that the search for God does not have to be vain. But it was hopeless. He had known too many blind Christians, bleak moralists who sucked the joy from life and persecuted their opponents; he would never have been able to see the truth they were hiding.'

Tait, nevertheless, believes that Russell's 'whole life was a search for God.... Somewhere at the back of my father's mind, at the bottom of his heart, in the depths of his soul, there was an empty space that had once been filled by God, and he never found anything else to put in it.' He had the 'ghostlike feeling of not belonging, of having no home in this world.' In a

poignant passage, Russell once said: 'Nothing can penetrate the loneliness of the human heart except the highest intensity of the sort of love the religious teachers have preached.'" [Roy Abraham Varghese in the Preface to Antony Flew, *There is a God*, xx-xxi]

"God has created us in such a way that we have a strong tendency or inclination toward belief in God. This tendency has been in part overlaid or suppressed by sin. Were it not for the existence of sin in the world, human beings would believe in God to the same degree and with the same natural spontaneity that we believe in the existence of other persons, an external world, or the past. This is the natural human condition; it is because of our presently unnatural sinful condition that many of us find belief in God difficult or absurd. The fact is, Calvin thinks, one who does not believe in God is in an epistemically substandard position--rather like a man who does not believe that his wife exists, or thinks she is like a cleverly constructed robot and has no thoughts, feelings, or consciousness." [Alvin Plantinga, cited in Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 101]

Secularists have their own religion. They worship at the altar of naturalism, while cherishing the sacrament of abortion on demand. Their praxis is licentiousness; their revolution, sexual; their unpardonable sin, bigotry. TAB

"To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation." [Yann Martel in *"Life of Pi"*]

"I had to get rid of any idea of hell or any idea of the afterlife. That's what held me, kept me down. So now I just have nothing but contempt for the church." [Bestselling author, Frank McCord, cited by Paul David Tripp in *Forever: Why You Can't Live Without It*, 21]

Antony Flew was arguably the foremost atheistic philosopher of the 20th c. A few years before he passed away, he repudiated his atheism claiming that the evidence of philosophy, science, and life logically points to theism: a belief in God.

We don't know if he became a Christian, but in his last book entitled "There is a God," he applauded Christianity as the most reasonable religious position, which, in addition to the central figure of Jesus Christ, boasts "a first class intellectual like St. Paul . . . who had a brilliant philosophical mind and could speak and write in all the relevant languages." Flew continued: "If you're wanting Omnipotence [God] to set up a religion, this is the one to beat." [A. Flew, *There Is A God*, 185-86]

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins — all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. . . .

"Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; . . . proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power." [Bertrand Russell, cited by Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 76]

"Theological instruction for individuals over eighteen years of age who are able to discuss religious questions intelligibly can be authorized in special establishments opened by permission of the Soviet authorities. . . . Collective teaching and isolated relations with young people under the age of eighteen, no matter where carried on, will be prosecuted with all the rigor of revolutionary law." Such rigor included death. [Decree by the Soviet Union on January 3, 1922, cited in Peter Hitchens, *The Rage Against God*, 19 173-74]

W. Somerset Maugham's hero, Philip Carey, in the autobiographical novel *Of Human Bondage*, speaks of his newly found atheism:

"He was free from degrading fears and free from prejudice. He could go his way without the intolerable dread of hell-fire. Suddenly he realized that he had lost also that burden of responsibility which made every action of his life a matter of urgent consequence. He could breathe more freely in a lighter air. He was responsible only to himself for the things he did. Freedom! He was his own master at last. From old habit, unconsciously, he thanked God that he no longer believed in Him." [Philip Carey, *Human Bondage*, cited in Peter Hitchens, *The Rage Against God*, 19]

The Madman by Friedrich Nietzsche

Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling out unceasingly: "I seek God! I seek God!" As there were many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of amusement. Why? is he lost? said one. Has he strayed away like a child? said another. Or does he keep himself hidden? Is he afraid of us? Has he taken a sea voyage? Has he emigrated? - the people cried out laughingly, all in a hubbub.

The insane man jumped into their midst and transfixed them with his glances. "Where is God gone?" he called out. "I mean to tell you! We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it now move? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction? - for even Gods putrify! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!

How shall we console ourselves, the most murderous of all murderers? The holiest and the mightiest that the world has hitherto possessed, has bled to death under our knife - who will wipe the blood from us? With what water could we cleanse ourselves? What lustrums, what sacred games shall we have to devise? Is not the magnitude of this deed too great for us? Shall we not ourselves have to become Gods, merely to seem worthy of it? There never was a greater event - and on account of it, all who are born after us belong to a higher history than any history hitherto!" Here the madman was silent and looked again at his hearers; they also were silent and looked at him in surprise.

At last he threw his lantern on the ground, so that it broke in pieces and was extinguished. "I come too early," he then said. "I am not yet at the right time. This prodigious event is still on its way, and is traveling - it has not yet reached men's ears. Lightning and thunder need time, the light of the stars needs time, deeds need time, even after they are done, to be seen and heard. This deed is as yet further from them than the furthest star - and yet they have done it themselves!" It is further stated that the madman made his way into different churches on the same day, and there intoned his *Requiem aeternam deo*. When led out and called to account, he always gave the reply: "What are these churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God?"

"God is dead." What are the implications of our bold pronouncement? When a man dies he leaves a void in many places. His wife is husband-less. His children are father-less. A gaping void is ripped in their lives as noticeable as if it were a hole carved in their own chests. If God is dead, then all mankind must now be God-less. What voids are left in the universe the day after God's funeral dirge has been sung?

If God was eternal and has now ceased to be, then we must reconstruct our conceptions of eternity. Time itself must now be our eternity and today and tomorrow are our heaven and hell. If God was good and now is nothing, then we must decide what our code of ethics will be. We are good, therefore our desires will be our standard. Whatever is desirable is good and the undesirable will be evil. If God was light and has faded into darkness, what tool will we use to illuminate our universe? The light of our own Reason will carry us through the dark nights after the light of God's funeral pyre fades. If God was all-powerful yet was overcome, who will now control destiny? Surely, someone must rise to power and sit upon the throne. We must then be resigned to a pantheism of force; it must be 'us' or it will be 'them.' If God's words defined Truth but his mouth has been silenced, what language will we express transcendence through? Image is Truth and all must be silent before the irrefutable facts conveyed in our captured Images. Only in seeing is believing justified. Image is Truth without need of interpretation. No priest or prophet is needed to tell us what we see with our own eyes and feel within our own breasts. If God commanded our prayers and is now dishonored and vanquished, who then will we worship and serve? Our worship is our own and we are free in it. We have in ourselves surpassed temples, shrines and idols. Our thoughts are our prayers and we choose our own sacrifices to place on our own altars which we have made with our own hands for our own glory.

We must go to God's tomb and spread his ashes to the wind. A few will weep and mourn, others will mock and jest. Most stand in silence. All will attend. We will prepare to absorb the weight of omniscience and the responsibility of determining our own purpose. We will

read God's Last Will and Testament, then close the book on this chapter of our own evolution.

The ancient scroll is unceremoniously opened. Ink on paper as dust on sand. A child is chosen to read its words; she will lead us in our final Requiem Aeternam Deo. Her lip quivers just a moment. One word whispers across the echoes, blaspheming. "Resurrection." The blood on our hands becomes warm as the blood in our hearts turns cold. What if He returns, just like the last time we put Him to death?

Robert Jensen is absolutely transparent in his atheism. "I don't believe in God," he asserts. That statement is simple enough, indicating a categorical denial in any belief in God. Lest anyone mistake his atheism for mere theological confusion, Jensen went on to explain: "I don't believe Jesus Christ was the son of a God that I don't believe in, nor do I believe Jesus rose from the dead to ascend to a heaven that I don't believe exists." What makes these statements all the more significant is that they appear in an article entitled, "Why I am a Christian (Sort Of)," in which Jensen, a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin, explains why he joined St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Austin. [Albert Mohler Commentary 05-01-06]

Back in 19th c. a man by name of Charles Bradlaugh, a prominent atheist, challenged a Christian evangelist to debate the validity of Christianity. Hugh Price Hughes, was an evangelist who worked among the poor in the slums of London. Hughes told Bradlaugh that he would agree to a debate on one condition: that each of them would bring some concrete evidence of the validity of each one's belief system in the form of men and women who have had their lives transformed through the content of their teaching. Hughes said, "I will bring 100 such men and women, and I challenge you to do the same." Hughes then said that if Bradlaugh couldn't bring 100, then he could bring 50; if he couldn't bring 50 then he could bring 20. He finally whittled the number down to one. All Bradlaugh had to do was to find one person whose life was improved by atheism and Hughes—who would bring 100 people transformed by Christ—would agree to the debate. Shamefully, Bradlaugh had to withdraw. [Adapted from D. James Kennedy, What If Jesus Had Never Been Born, 189] Note similar story told by James M. Boice related to H.A. Ironside in Boice's Foundations of the Christian Faith, 64-66]

I was fascinated to read a week ago that t/notorious atheist, Anthony Flew, is now a former atheist. And he bases his change in attitude on science! Amazing. Here's a guy who has spent his life debating theists on t/side of atheism; he proclaimed his atheistic beliefs while teaching at Oxford, Aberdeen, and Reading. And now, he says that DNA, as one example, has "shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved." [From article in the Arizona Republic, 12/04]

"Both my mother and father are alcoholics and atheists, and my coming to the Lord is truly a miracle. I was not raised in a Christian home; in fact, my father knew the Bible and would vehemently deny the truths found there, calling them a bunch of 'fairy tales.' When I was ten years old, I read from a Gideon Bible in a Holiday Inn where my family was staying. I was amazed at how the Bible I was reading was not a bunch of fairy tales like my father had told me, but it all made perfect sense to me. After that day, while most kids my age were tying

to get out of going to church, I was secretly going to worship every week." [cited in a Gideons International Newsletter dated May 29, 2005]

"As moderator of a debate between [William Craig] Lane and an atheist selected by the national spokesman for American Atheists, Inc., I marveled as Craig politely but powerfully built the case of Christianity while simultaneously dismantling the arguments for atheism. From where I was sitting, I could watch the faces of people as they discovered—many for the first time—that Christianity can stand up to rational analysis and rugged scrutiny. In the end it was no contest. Among those who had entered the auditorium that evening as avowed atheists, agnostics, or skeptics, an overwhelming 82% walked out concluding that the case of Christianity had been the most compelling. Forty-seven people entered as nonbelievers and exited as Christians—Craig's arguments for the faith were that persuasive, especially compared with the paucity of evidence for atheism. Incidentally, nobody became an atheist." [Lee Strobel in his book, The Case for Christ, 206]

"I hope I live my life in such a manner that when I die, someone cares—even if it is only my dogs. . . . I think I want some human being somewhere to weep for me." [From the diary of atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who disappeared in 1995, "World Magazine, January 8, 2000, page 31]

Thomas Hardy, who asked what possible use prayer could be to anyone because when you pray all your praying to is "the dreaming, dark, dumb thing that turns the handle of this idle show."

Voltaire's final verdict on life was that it was "a bad joke" and on his death bed he proclaimed "bring down the curtain, the farce is done."

H.G. Wells in one of his novels painted a picture of a man who was defeated by the stress, strain, and tension of modern life; who's only hope was to find fellowship with God. This man, who represented Wells' philosophy of life, said this "I would just as soon think of cooling my throat with the Milky way or shaking hands with the stars."

Albert Einstein was interviewed on one occasion and was asked if he believed there was "a God." He replied that "there is definitely a cosmic force that created things, but we could never know him." [cited by J. MacArthur on tape GC 80-30]

"Near King's Cross station in London, England, there is a cemetery containing a unique grave, the grave of the agnostic Lady Ann Grimston. She is buried there in a marble tomb marked by a marble slab. Before her death, she told a friend, 'I shall live again as surely as a tree will grow from my body.' A short time later, after her death, a tree began to grow from her grave! God does have a sense of humor and He will have the last word! [paraphrased from a story cited in Wiersbe, Be Complete: Colossians, 27]

The Madman by Friedrich Nietzsche (with commentary by Ravi Zacharias):

Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling out unceasingly: "I seek God! I seek God!" As there were many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of

amusement. Why? is he lost? said one. Has he strayed away like a child? said another. Or does he keep himself hidden? Is he afraid of us? Has he taken a sea voyage? Has he emigrated? - the people cried out laughingly, all in a hubbub.

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Commentary by Ravi Zacharias:

If God was eternal and has now ceased to be, then we must reconstruct our conceptions of eternity. Time itself must now be our eternity and today and tomorrow are our heaven and hell. If God was good and now is nothing, then we must decide what our code of ethics will be. We are good, therefore our desires will be our standard.

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I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God . . . it's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want a universe to be like that. [New York University philosopher Thomas Nagel, in his book *The Last Word*]

Is the universe possessed of value and meaning? took for granted that there was no meaning. I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning. [Aldous Huxley, cited by Paul Helm, *1 & 2 Peter; Jude*, 247-48]

Nelson Price in THE EMMANUEL FACTOR (1987) tells the story about Brown Trucking Company in Georgia who used to give polygraph tests to their job applicants. However, in part of the test the operator asked, "Do you believe in God?" In every instance when a professing atheist answered "No," the test showed the person to be lying. My pastor Adrian Rogers used to tell this same story to illustrate Romans 1:19 and it was his conclusion that "there is no such thing anywhere on earth as a true atheist. If a man says he doesn't believe in God, then he is lying. God has put his moral consciousness into every man's heart, and a man has to try to kick his conscience to death to say he doesn't believe in God."

It is true that polygraph tests for use in hiring were banned by Congress in 1988. Mr and Mrs Claude Brown on Aug 25, 1994 wrote me a letter confirming that over 15,000 applicants previous to 1988 had taken the polygraph test and EVERY-TIME SOMEONE SAID THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN GOD, THE MACHINE SAID THEY WERE LYING. <https://thedailyhatch.org/2014/06/02/deep-down-everyone-knows-that-god-exists/>

ATONEMENT: [Extent of: Heretical Teaching: Substitutionary]

Extent Of

"If a man flings himself into the water and drowns, a spectator cannot be called the cause of that man's death. Non-prevention is not causation. The efficient and responsible cause of the suicide is the suicide's free will. In like manner, the non-elect himself, by his impenitence and unbelief, is the responsible cause of the inefficacy of Christ's expiation. God is blameless in respect to the limitation of redemption; man is guilty in respect to it. God is only the indirect and occasional cause if it; man is the immediate and efficient cause of it." [W.G.T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 664]

"As long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us." [Calvin]

The medieval martyr Gottshalk: Speaking of the Jews, he says, "Our Lord perceived that they were predestined to everlasting destruction, and were not purchased with the price of his blood."

"The following quotation (by Barnabas) seems to reflect the idea of irresistible grace and would therefore be inconsistent with free will: 'When Christ chose his own Apostles who were to preach his gospel, he chose them when they were wickedder than all wickedness itself. . . .' According to the same author, Christ's death was necessary because it was prophesied. And there is a fairly clear statement of limited atonement: 'Let us rest assured, that the Son of God could not have suffered but for us.' To the same effect he imagines Christ answers a question with the words, 'I am to offer up my flesh as a sacrifice for the sins of the new people.' A certain Menardus, commenting on this passage, complains that Barnabas was here mistaken because Christ did not die for a new people, but for the whole world. The comment only emphasizes what Barnabas actually meant. A further negative note on free will is found in the words, 'We . . . speak as the Lord wills us to speak. For to that end he both circumcised our ears and our hearts that we might understand these things.'" [Gordon Clark, *God and Evil*]

"There was never a soul yet, that sincerely sought the Savior, who perished before He (God) found him. No, the gates of death shall never shut on you until the gates of grace have opened for you; until Christ has washed your sins away you shall never be baptized in Jordan's flood. Your life is secure, for this is God's constant plan: He keeps His own elect alive till the day of His grace, and then He takes them to Himself. And in as much as you know your need of a Savior, you are one of His, and you will never die until you have found Him." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"When Christ died, He died not simply to make redemption a possibility, but to make redemption a certainty. He did not simply die to make man redeemable, He died to redeem. He did not simply die to make man reconcilable, He died to reconcile. There was no limit to the potential sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ. It was "precious blood." There was no limit to the desperate need of man for the blood of Jesus Christ, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." There was no limit to the free offer of the gospel to all men. It is our responsibility to preach the gospel to every creature. And there is no limit to the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Chris to save all those whom God is pleased to save." [Wayne Mack, *To God Be The Glory: A Study in the Biblical Doctrine of Particular Redemption*, 1]

"You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone who believes was purchased by Christ." [Dr. John Piper, "For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death," Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May. 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

Let there be no misunderstanding at this point. The Arminian limits the atonement as certainly as does the Calvinist. The Calvinist limits the extent of it in that he says it does not apply to all persons (although as has already been shown, he believes that it is efficacious for the salvation of the large proportion of the human race); while the Arminian limits the power of it, for he says that in itself it does not actually save anybody. The Calvinist limits it quantitatively, but not qualitatively; the Arminian limits it qualitatively, but not quantitatively. For the Calvinist it is like a narrow bridge which goes all the way across the stream; for the Arminian it is like a great wide bridge which goes only half-way across. As a matter of fact, the Arminian places more severe limitations on the work of Christ than does the Calvinist. [Lorraine Boettner]

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Heretical Teaching

"He was a molester on that cross; he was an abuser on that cross . . . that's why God turned His back on Him." [PTL television program, Good Friday, April 2, 1999]

An example of bad theology in understanding the issue of atonement, judgment, and sin:

"There are two types of people on planet earth. Those who are going to heaven with everlasting life and those who will spend their forever life in the Lake of Fire. Neither the sins of Noah nor the sins of anyone who has lived on planet earth will be mentioned at the time of their evaluation ceremony at the end of the Age. God has promised, 'As far as the east is from the west so far have I removed your sins from you.' Psalm 103:12. Nor will the sins of unbelievers be mentioned at the time of the Great White Throne Judgement at the end of time. (The Lord Jesus Christ was judged for all the sins of the unbelievers and believers). The only issue will be the rejection or acceptance of the promised Messiah as the God-Man Savior." [Young People's Letter from God 5: Tower of Babel and New Languages, Special Promises to Abraham and His Seed. Study Guide by Angeline Grysen, 2002, page 5. Materials used by Barachah Church, R.B. Thieme]

Substitutionary

"We were enemies of God through sin, and God had appointed the sinner to die. There must needs therefore have happened one of two things; either that God, in his truth, should destroy all men, or that in his loving-kindness he should cancel the sentence. But behold the wisdom of God; he preserved both the truth of his sentence, and the exercise of his loving-kindness. Christ took our sins 'in his body on the tree, that we by his death might die to sin, and live unto righteousness' (1 Peter 2:24)." St. Cyril of Jerusalem

"God's just and loving initiative on behalf of sinners has been illustrated by the story of two classmates who graduated from law school. One used his knowledge of the law to get around it and became a noted criminal. The other used his mastery of law to support it as an attorney and later as a judge. One day the two classmates met in court. Because of their earlier acquaintance the judge was tempted to pronounce the lightest sentence possible. Instead, he decreed that his guilty former classmate must pay the highest possible fine for the offense he had committed. To the further amazement of the court, the judge stepped down from behind the bench, embraced his law-school friend, and paid the criminal's fine in full. In a far greater way than this, the Judge of the world, whose moral law was constantly violated, found us guilty and pronounced the just sentence of death. Then, leaving heaven, the Son became a man, lived without sin, and paid in full the inestimable penalty for our sins. To demonstrate how he remains just while justifying the ungodly who believe, the Father sent the Son as a sacrifice of atonement (Rom. 3:25-26). The Judge who found us guilty came in the person of his own Son to atone for our sins." [Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:399]

If Christ has died for you, you can never be lost. God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sins He will not punish you. Payment God's justice cannot twice demand; first, at the bleeding Saviour's hand, and then again at mine.' How can God be just if He punished Christ, the substitute, and then man himself afterwards? [Charles H. Spurgeon]

During the civil war substitutes volunteered to fight in the place of those drafted for service.

In January of 1975 a judge in Cleveland, Ohio, sentenced a young lady to three days in jail for the unlawful possession of a handgun. According to the Associated Press report, her boyfriend accepted the sentence for her because, he said, "A jail is not a good place for a lady." According to the judge, such substitutionary bearing of punishment was "unusual, but legal." The young lady did not go to jail. [cited by Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:402]

At Auschwitz, in June 1941, because a prisoner had escaped, a Nazi officer sentenced ten men to death by starvation. When Polish Sergeant Frank Gajowniczek heard his name called, he screamed in anguish that he wanted to see his wife and children. Then suddenly an imprisoned chaplain, who was not married, stepped forward and offered to take the place of the man with a family. The chaplain died by starvation along with nine others. For the rest of his life, Frank Gajowniczek placed a wreath at Auschwitz where the man died in his place. [cited by Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:402]

It was February 1941, Auschwitz, Poland. Maxmillan Kolba was a Franciscan priest put in the infamous death camp for helping Jews escape Nazi terrorism. Months went by and in desperation an escape took place. The camp rule was enforced. Ten people would be rounded up randomly and herded into a cell where they would die of starvation and exposure as a lesson against future escape attempts. Names were called. A Polish Jew Frandishek Gasovnachek was called. He cried, "Wait, I have a wife and children!" Kolba stepped forward and said, "I will take his place." Kolba was marched into the cell with nine others where he managed to live until August 14. This story was chronicled on an NBC news special several years ago. Gasovnachek, by this time 82, was shown telling this story while tears streamed down his cheeks. A mobile camera followed him around his little white house to a marble monument carefully tended with flowers. The inscription read: IN MEMORY OF MAXIMILLAN KOLBA. HE DIED IN MY PLACE. Every day Gasovnachek lived since 1941, he lived with the knowledge, "I live because someone died for me." Every year on August 14 he travels to Auschwitz in memory of Kolba. [Source: Victor Knowles, Peace on Earth Ministries. Adapted from Crossroads Family Circle]

ATTITUDES:

The other day I went into the local religious book store, where I saw a "honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car, and I'm really glad I did. What an uplifting experience followed!

I was stopped at a light at a busy intersection, just lost in thoughts of the Lord, and I didn't notice that the light had changed. That bumper sticker really worked! I found lots of people who loved Jesus. Why, the guy behind me started to honk like crazy. He must really love Jesus Christ because pretty soon, he leaned out his window and yelled His name as loud as he could. It was like a football game, with all his shouting.

Everyone else started honking, too, so I leaned out my window and waved and smiled to all those loving people. Another man started waving at me in a funny way with his finger stuck in the air. I asked my two kids what that meant, they squirmed, looked at each other, giggled

and told me that it was the Hawaiian good luck sign, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back.

A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and were walking toward me. I bet they wanted to pray, but just then I noticed the light had changed to yellow, and I stepped on the gas. And a good thing I did, because I was the only driver to get across the intersection. I looked back at them standing there. I leaned way out the window, gave them a big smile and held up the Hawaiian good luck sign and I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful people!

"If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again."

"People are like tea bags -- you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are."

You can complain because rosebushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.

The true story is told of an American man who was visiting Hong Kong. As he walked through the twisted streets of Kowloon, he came upon a tattoo studio. In the window was a display of the different kinds of tattoos you could choose from: anchors, flags, dragons, mermaids, etc. But one tattoo stood out among the rest; it was a tattoo that consisted of three words: "Born To Lose." The American entered the shop and asked the Chinese tattoo artist, "Does anyone really have that tattooed on their body?" "Yes," the man replied. "But, I can't believe that anyone in their right mind would do that!" The Chinese man simply tapped his forehead and in broken English said, "Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind." [cited by John Maxwell, Developing the Leader in You, 101]

"God chooses what we go through. We choose how we go through it."

Viktor Frankl was terribly mistreated in a Nazi concentration camp. His words have been an inspiration to millions of people. He said, "The one thing you cannot take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance." [cited by John Maxwell, Developing the Leader in You, 104]

Many people suffer from "psychosclerosis." Psychosclerosis is like arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Psychosclerosis is hardening of the attitudes.

BAPTISM:

"The font is a mockery and an imposition if it be put before Christ. If you have baptism after you have come to Christ, well and good, but to point you to it either as being Christ or as being inevitably connected with Christ, or as being the place to find Christ, is nothing better than to go back to the beggarly elements of the old Romish harlot, instead of standing in the 'liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,' and bidding the sinner to come as a sinner to Christ Jesus, and to Christ Jesus alone." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

BAPTIST:

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object to share with the class that represented their religion. The first student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David." The second student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Mary. I'm a Catholic and this is a Rosary." The third student got in up front of the class and said, "My name is Tommy. I am Baptist, and this is a casserole."

"I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last for ever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living." [Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in a 19th century sermon, cited in Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 70]

BEAUTY:

Beauty is only a light switch away.

BETRAYAL:

"Frankly, the deepest pain you'll ever know and the deepest pain I'll ever know is not physical. It's not material. It doesn't have to do with our physical body and it doesn't have to do with our material or economic or circumstantial life patterns. The greatest pain we will ever know is relational. It is the potential of people to devastate us, to destroy us, to abuse us. And apart from internal personal guilt which has to be the greatest pain but that is personal and internal, the most serious pain we suffer in the world comes from unfulfilled and devastated relationships. No disease is as painful as rejection. No disease is as painful as false accusation. No disease is as painful as misrepresentation, betrayal [and] hatred." [John MacArthur, *The Sufficiency of God's Grace*, gtty.org/resources/sermons/80-72/The-Sufficiency-of-Gods-Grace]

AUGUSTINE:

Augustine (354-430): Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee. [NPNF1: Vol. I, The Confessions of St. Augustine, Book I, Chapter 1, Â§1]

Augustine (354-430): You have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you. [John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., ed., WSA, Part 1, Vol. 1, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B., Confessions, Book I, Chapter 1, Â§1 (New York: New City Press, 1997), p. 39]

Augustine (354-430): 29, 40. On your exceedingly great mercy rests all my hope. Give what you command, and then command whatever you will. You order us to practice continence. A certain writer tells us, I knew that no one can be continent except by God's gift, and that it is already a mark of wisdom to recognize whose gift this is. By continence the scattered elements of the self are collected and brought back into the unity from which we have slid away into dispersion; for anyone who loves something else along with you, but does not love it for your sake, loves you less. O Love, ever burning, never extinguished, O Charity, my

God, set me on fire! You command continence: give what you command, and then command whatever you will. [John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., ed., WSA, Part 1, Vol. 1, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B., Confessions, Book 10, Chapter 29, ¶40 (New York: New City Press, 1997), p. 263]

BIBLE: [General; Importance & Application; Inspiration, Canon, Translations; Interpretation & Exegesis]

General

The Bible is not to be doubted when we cannot fit everything together because behind the revelation of the Bible is the mind of God to which nothing is a mystery and in which even the most irreconcilable ideas to our minds are brought together. There is no mystery to God; He knows all perfectly. Mystery is the limitation of the creature, not the Creator.” [Richard Pratt, Every Thought Captive, 23]

C.H. Spurgeon was converted through the ungifted preaching of a Methodist lay-minister who haltingly expanded upon Isaiah 45:22. Through the weakness of the messenger the power of the Gospel rang in the young Spurgeon's heart:

"There and then, the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; I could have risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him."

The New Testament is in the Old concealed; the Old Testament is in the New revealed.
—Augustine

The Council of Toulouse in 1229 A.D, stated: "We prohibit laymen possessing copies of the Old and New Testament ... We forbid them most severely to have them in the popular vernacular." The Council of Trent in the 16th century placed the Bible on its list of prohibited books. People were forbidden to read the Bible without a license from a Roman Catholic bishop. The council warned: "If any one shall dare to read or keep in his possession that book, without such a license, he shall not receive absolution (from the punishment of sins) till he has given it up to his ordinary (bishop)."

Sometimes what we need from the Bible is not the fulfillment of our dream, but the swallowing up of our failed dream in the all-satisfying glory of Christ. We do not always know the path of deepest joy. But all Scripture is inspired by God to take us there. Therefore Scripture is worth more than all this world can offer.

"It is nearly an axiom that people will not be better than the books they read." – Bishop Henry C. Potter (1835 – 1908)

Indeed, we may lack hope because we think we need something we do not need. It may take the Word of God to show us what we really need, and then to give us the power to get it. In the end what we really need is Christ. He is the sum of all our hopes. [John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God*, 104]

The Rule of Faith in the Post-NT Church. The pervasive and decisive role that the “Rule of Faith”⁵⁵ (Latin *regula fidei*) played in the post–New Testament church. The Rule appeared as early as 1 Clement 7.2 in an undeveloped form and is found in virtually all the orthodox writings of the patristic era from varied geographical locales including Irenaeus (c. 130–200), Tertullian (c. 160–225), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215), Origen (c. 185–254), Hippolytus (c. 170–236), Novatian (c. 200–258), Dionysius of Alexandria (c. 200–265), Athanasius (c. 296–373), and Augustine (c. 354–430). Irenaeus and Tertullian were the first writers to discuss the Rule at length. Irenaeus identified it with the central governing sense or overarching argument of Scripture (Haer. I. 9–10).⁵⁶ Similarly, Tertullian called it the “reason” or “order” of Scripture (Praescr. 9).

"It is a serious mistake to imagine that we improve Scripture or enhance its effectiveness by bunting its sharp edges. Scripture is a sword, not a cotton swab, and it needs to be fully unsheathed before it can be put to its intended use." [John MacArthur, *Tabletalk*, Feb. 2014, 8]

"We don't make the Bible relevant; it is inherently so, simply because it is God's Word." [John MacArthur]

Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf, and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lord—not crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts. It is idle merely to let the eye glance over the words, or to recollect the poetical expressions, or the historic facts; but it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models, and, what is better still, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord. I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like the reading the Bible itself. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture; and, though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his Pilgrim's Progress—that sweetest of all prose poems — without continually making us feel and say, "Why, this man is a living Bible!" Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend his example to you, beloved. [Spurgeon]

"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me. The Bible is not antique, or modern. It is eternal." [Martin Luther]

"It is a sin and shame not to know our own Bible or two understand the speech and words of our God." [Luther]

BIBLE = Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.

In the 1930s, Stalin ordered a purge of all Bibles and all believers in the former Soviet Union. Millions of Bibles were confiscated and multitudes of believers were sent to the gulags (prison camps), where most died for being "enemies of the state." In Stavropol, Russia, this order was carried out with a vengeance. Recently, the CoMission ministry, which Campus Crusade for Christ sponsored, sent a team to Stavropol. The city's history was

not known at that time. But when our team was having difficulties getting Bibles shipped from Moscow, someone mentioned the existence of a warehouse outside of town where these confiscated Bibles had been stored ever since Stalin's day.

After much prayer by the team, one member finally got up the courage to go to the warehouse and ask the officials if the Bibles were still there. Sure enough, they were. Then the CoMission asked if the Bibles could be removed and distributed again to the people of Stavropol. The answer was "yes"! The next day the CoMission team returned with a truck and several Russian people to help load the Bibles. One helper was a young man, who was a skeptical, hostile, and agnostic collegian who had come only for the day's wages.

As they were loading the Bibles, one team member noticed that the young man had disappeared. Eventually, they found him in a corner of the warehouse weeping. He had slipped away hoping to quietly take a Bible. What he found shook him to the core. The inside page of the Bible he picked up had the handwritten signature of his own grandmother! It had been her Bible! Out of the many thousands of Bibles still left in that warehouse, he stole the one belonging to his grandmother -- a woman persecuted for her faith all her life. No wonder he was weeping -- God had just dramatically revealed Himself to this young man. His grandmother had no doubt prayed for him and for her city. Her prayers had followed him, and now this young man's life has been transformed by the very Bible that his grandmother found so dear. [Dr. Bill Bright, Founder and Chairman of Campus Crusade for Christ International, 2002]

On March 15, 1543 the Scottish Parliament produced an act which made free to all men and women to read the Scriptures in their own tongue, or in the English tongue, and all the acts contrary to this act were abolished. This may astonish you, but prior to this act it was forbidden to read the Bible in any other language than Greek, Hebrew, or Latin. This act placed the Bible in the hands of the people. In the past only the Roman Catholic Priests had the Scriptures and the priests were the only ones who could teach the Scriptures. But as the Reformation gained in momentum, so did the principal of Sola Scriptura. This principle says that we should put aside the traditions of men when interpreting the Scriptures and focus on what the text itself says within the context of overall Biblical revelation. [PaperCut Press, PO Box 594, Flourtown PA 19031, <http://www.papercutpress.com>, Week of 7/19]

"All the wisdom of this world is but a tiny craft upon which we must set sail when we leave this earth. If only there was a firmer foundation upon which to sail, perhaps a divine word." [Socrates]

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible whole lot more as they get older, then it dawned on me. they were cramming for their finals.

"As an aside, no music is more sweet to a gospel preacher than the rustle of Bible pages in the congregation. Many times when I have been in the pulpit and I have read a passage of Scripture, nobody has followed me to see if I was quoting correctly. I strongly urge you to take your Bibles with you when you go to church. What is the best way of hearing the Word? Is it not to search and see whether what the preacher says is really according to the Word of God? Thus, I entreat you to search the Scriptures to see if what is being taught to you is true." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 151]

Top Ten Signs You May Not Be Reading Your Bible Enough:

- 10) The Preacher announces the sermon is from Genesis ... and you check the table of contents.
- 9) You think Abraham, Isaac & Jacob may have had a few hit singles during the 60's.
- 8) You open to the Gospel of Luke and a WWII Savings Bond falls out.
- 7) Your favorite Old Testament Patriarch is Hercules.
- 6) A small family of woodchucks has taken up residence in the Psalms of your Bible.
- 5) You become frustrated because Charlton Heston isn't listed in either the Concordance or the Table of Contents.
- 4) Catching the kids reading the Song of Solomon, you demand: "Who gave you this stuff?"
- 3) You think the Minor Prophets worked in the quarries.
- 2) You keep falling for it every time when Pastor tells you to turn to First Condominiums.
- 1) The kids keep asking too many questions about your usual bedtime story: "Jonah the Shepherd Boy and His Ark of Many Colors."

The Bible is not such a book a man would write if he could, or could write if he would. [Lewis S. Chafer]

Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. . . . When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians . . . an old statesman and warrior said to him, "Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers." So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. [H.L. Hastings, cited in John W. Lea, The Greatest Book in the World, 17-18]

"When Americans reach out for values of faith, family, and caring for the needy, they're saying, 'We want the Word of God. We want to face the future with the Bible. We're blessed to have its words of strength, comfort, and truth.' I'm accused of being simplistic at times with some of the problems that confront us. But I've often wondered: Within the covers of that single Book are all the answers to all the problems that face us today. If we'd only look there. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." [Ronald Reagan, cited in "Freedom's Alert" Newspaper (The Christian Educational Voice for New York Families), Vol. 22, Issue 6, June 2004, 4]

"All the wisdom of this world is but a tiny craft upon which we must set sail when we leave this earth. If only there was a firmer foundation upon which to sail, perhaps a divine word." [Socrates]

January 6, 1850, Charles Haddon Spurgeon was converted. The text was Isaiah 45:22, but nobody knows who the lay-preacher was who gave the message. [cited in "Prokope" Newsletter by Warren Wiersbe/Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Oct.-Dec., 1997]

The problem isn't with me, as Bob Jones used to say, if you don't like what it [Scripture] says call up heaven.

Miscellaneous quotes by Howard Hendricks (from 7 Laws of the Teacher):

"Whatever you do, don't bore people with the Word of God"

"This is why most people in evangelical churches are not excited by the truth, they are embalmed by the truth. They have not made the exciting discovery of self-discovery."

"I would suggest you need to spend more time questioning answers rather than answering questions."

"Whenever you read the word 'hear' in the N.T. you can always translate it 'do.'"

"An elderly woman came up to me and said, 'brother Hendricks, I've been through the Bible 29 times in my life.' I replied, 'great, but how many times has the Bible been through you?'"

A friend of mine (John Mahan), who lives in S. Carolina, saw an ad about an evangelist from Africa who was going to be speaking in a local church. The ad said that he had a ministry of deliverance and had himself been delivered from demons, addictions, and illnesses. They went to check him out. He spoke for a while and afterward they began the deliverance session. One woman went forward with some problem and he grabbed her head like a pumpkin and began to scream in her ear "get out; get out." After a few moments of this he dropped her and she fell to the ground.

Afterward my friend and some others questioned the man as to where in the Bible he could substantiate his ministry. His reply was: "I'm ignorant; All I do is go up front and God tells me what to say. I don't know much of anything about the Bible."

"If you find a professing Christian indifferent to his Bible, you may be sure that the very dust upon its cover will rise up in judgment against him." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"Vainly then do they run about with the pretext that they have demanded Councils for the faith's sake; for divine Scripture is sufficient above all things; but if a Council be needed on the point, there are the proceedings of the Fathers, for the Nicene Bishops did not neglect this matter, but stated the doctrines so exactly, that persons reading their words honestly, cannot but be reminded by them of the religion towards Christ announced in divine Scripture" (Athanasius, De Synodis, 6)

"As we advance through the centuries, light and life begin to decrease in the church. Why? Because the torch of the Scripture begins to grow dim and because the deceitful light of human authorities begins to replace it." [noted Reformation historian, Merle d'Aubigne (1794-1872), cited in Biblical Eldership, Alexander Strauch, 10-11]

"Where imprecise doctrine and careless biblical exegesis are tolerated, and where biblical wisdom and discernment languish, people tend to look for something more than the simple sufficiency God has provided in Christ." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 29]

"I hold one single sentence out of God's Word to be of more certainty and of more power than all the discoveries of all the learned men of all the ages." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"I have a friend who collects rare Bibles. He owns a wonderful collection, with one Bible dating back to the fourth century. But my favorite is a Bible from sixteenth-century England, one of the earliest printed copies of God's Word. The top third of this Bible is covered with the blood of its original owner. My friend let me hold it in my hands, and tears came to my eyes as I leafed through it. How did blood get on the pages of that Bible? When Bloody Mary ruled England, she terrorized Protestants, murdering as many as she could. Her soldiers would spill the person's blood, then take his Bible and dip it deep into the blood. A few of those Bibles have been preserved and are known as Martyrs' Bibles. Scientists have tested the paper and confirmed that the dark stains on every page of my friend's Bible are human blood. I examined the Bible carefully, page by page. I could see where it was well worn from being studied. There are water stains, as if from tears, and places where a thumb had frayed favorite pages. This was someone's most valuable possession, and his or her blood is there to prove it. In sad contrast, however, contemporary Christians tend to take their Bibles for granted, forgetting that many have given their lives just to own one copy." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 88-89]

"Once at a pastor's conference a man asked me, 'What's the real secret of Grace Community Church's vitality and growth?' I said, 'The clear and forceful teaching of the Word.' I was shocked when he countered, 'Don't give me that~ I tried it and it doesn't work. What's the real secret?'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 118-19]

Tokichi Ichii was hanged for murder in Tokyo in 1918. He had been sentenced to prison more than 20 times and was known as being exceptionally brutal. On one occasion, after attacking a prison official, he was gagged, bound, and hung in the air so that his feet could not reach the ground. Even through the torture, he refused to be sorry for what he had done.

Just before he was sentenced to death, Tokichi received a N.T. from 2 Christian missionaries. He began to read the story of Jesus' own trial and execution. His attention was riveted by the sentence: "And Jesus said, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'" This sentence transformed his life.

He wrote in his journal regarding this experience:

"I stopped: I was stabbed to the heart, as if by a 5 inch nail. What did the verse reveal to me? Shall I call it the love of the heart of Christ? Shall I call it His compassion? I do not know what to call it. I only know that with an unspeakably grateful heart I believed."

Tokichi accepted his death sentence as "the fair, impartial judgement of God." The very Word of God that brought him to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ went on to sustain his new-found faith in amazing ways. He came upon 1 Corinthians 6:8-10 regarding the suffering of the righteous and he wrote:

People will say that I must have a very sorrowful heart because I am daily awaiting the execution of the death sentence. This is not the case. I feel neither sorrow nor distress nor any pain. Locked up in a prison cell 6' by 9' in size, I am infinitely happier than I

was in the days of my sinning when I didn't know God. Day and night...I am talking with Jesus Christ."

It is recorded that the Word sustained him to the end, and on the scaffold with great humility and earnestness he uttered his last words, "My soul, purified, today returns to the City of God." [cited in John Piper Desiring God, 121]

Chuck Swindoll tells following story, which is one of the best I have ever heard on the subject of the indwelling Word:

"I was in Canada, months ago. I had been away from home eight days, and there were two more to go--a weekend. I was lonely and having a pity-party for myself at supper--alone. I bought a newspaper, thumbed through the sports section and found nothing but hockey--the favorite of Canadians but not mine. I heaved a sigh and walked toward the elevator. En route, I heard a couple of young women talking and laughing as they used the hotel phone in the lobby. I smiled as I passed by and a few steps later punched the 'up' elevator button. I got on. So did the two ladies. I punched '6.' They didn't reach for the row of buttons, so I asked, 'What floor?' One looked at me rather sensually and said, 'How about six?' Do you have any plans?

We were all alone on an elevator. In Canada. I was flattered to be honest, since most folks don't usually mistake me for Robert Redford . . . These women were available, and I was lonely. On that trip from the lobby to the sixth floor, I had an extremely significant decision to make . . . the bait had been dropped.

Do you know what immediately flashed into my mind? My wife and four children? No, not at first. My position and reputation? No, not then. The possibility of being seen or set up? No. God gave me an instant visual replay of Galatians 6:7: *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* And Ephesians 6:11: *Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.* And Romans 6:11-12: *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts,*

During that elevator lift, the memorized Word flew to my rescue. Right on time. As I looked back at the two, I replied, 'I've got a full evening planned already; I'm really not interested.' They looked at me like I was [a weirdo] as I stepped off the elevator (and they stayed on!). I walked to my room, suddenly grateful for the overcoming power of God's [Word]. [Swindoll, Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back, 100-101]

Charles Thomas Stud (C.T.) was a pioneer missionary who died in 1931. He left England for China in 1885. A biographer tells the story of C.T. on the mission field with a comrade one night, trying to sleep under some very primitive conditions. In fact, it was so cold that night that they struggled to sleep through the involuntary shivering of their frigid bodies. The story goes on to say that, finally after succumbing to sleep, Stud's fellow missionary awoke in the middle of the night to find C.T. awake, huddled with his blankets in the corner shivering, reading his Bible by candlelight. When his friend questioned him as to why he was out of his bed on such a cold night, C.T. replied, "I felt something was wrong in my

relationship to my Lord, so I am reading through the entire New Testament to check all the commands to me, in case I have unwittingly violated any of them." (cited by John MacArthur)

In a preface to one of his sermons, Charles Haddon Spurgeon confronted some of the pastors of his day with this parable:

In the days of Nero there was great shortness of food in the city of Rome, although there was abundance of corn to be purchased at Alexandria. A certain man who owned a vessel went down to the sea coast, and there he noticed many hungry people straining their eyes toward the sea, watching for the vessels that were to come from Alexandria with corn.

When these vessels came to the shore, one by one, the poor people wrung their hands in bitter disappointment, for on board the galleys there was nothing but sand which the tyrant emperor had compelled them to bring for use in the arena. It was infamous cruelty, when men were dying of hunger to command trading vessels to go to and fro, and bring nothing else but sand for gladiatorial shows, when wheat was so greatly needed.

Then the merchant whose ship was docked by the [wharf] said to his shipmaster, "take care that you bring nothing back with you from Alexandria but corn; and whereas before you brought in loads of sand, don't dare bring in as much sand as that which could fit upon a penny this time. Bring nothing else, I say, but wheat; for these people are dying, and now we must keep our vessels for this one business of bringing food for them."

Spurgeon went on to observe:

Alas! I have seen certain mighty galleys of late loaded with nothing but mere sand of philosophy and speculation, and I have said within myself, "Nay, but I will bear nothing in my ship but the revealed truth of God, and bread of life so greatly needed by the people." [cited in part in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 136-137]

I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept (cf. Mark 4:26-29) or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses against it. (Martin Luther in a sermon)

"The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself." [C.H. Spurgeon]

Importance & Application

It's not our business to make the message acceptable, but to make it available. We are not to see that they like it, but that they get it." – Vance Havner

"To echo an early Reformation thought, when the ploughman and the garage attendant know the Bible as well as the theologian does, and know it better than some contemporary theologians, then the desired awakening shall have already occurred." [Gordon Clark, cited by John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 142]

"Whatever you read, read the Bible first. Beware of bad books: there are plenty in this day. Take heed of what you read." [J.C. Ryle]

"It is a serious mistake to imagine that we improve Scripture or enhance its effectiveness by blunting its sharp edges. Scripture is a sword, not a cotton swab, and it needs to be fully unsheathed before it can be put to its intended use." [John MacArthur, *Tabletalk*, Feb. 2014, 8]

"It amazes me how many Christians watch the same banal, empty, silly, trivial, titillating, suggestive, immodest TV shows that most unbelievers watch - and then wonder why their spiritual lives are weak and their worship experience is shallow with no intensity. If you really want to hear the Word of God the way He means it to be heard, in truth and joy and power, turn off the television on Saturday night and read something true and great and beautiful and pure and honorable and excellent and worthy of praise (see Philippians 4:8). Then watch your heart un-shrivel and begin to hunger for the Word of God." [John Piper, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 106]

"Geneva was a pretty wild city back in the days before the Reformation. You'd never know it to visit it today, the Swiss are such a stolid people, but back in those days they used to have very wild times—they used to actually run around naked, sing songs and that sort of thing. It was almost like New Orleans at Mardi Gras. And they had a ruling body called the Council of 200, and they passed all kinds of laws against it, because they thought to have the city act properly you must have good laws. So they said you mustn't run around the city naked singing songs; it didn't do anything at all. So eventually they said, 'Well, maybe the answer is religion. We have been a Catholic country all this time, maybe we need to become a Protestant country.' And so, in 1535, they declared' as The Council, from that time on Geneva was going to be a Protestant country, they would align themselves with the Reformation. Do you know what happened? Nothing at all, of course! Same problems existed. But they did do something good along the way. They said, 'If we are going to be Protestant city we need a Protestant preacher.' Luther was occupied, of course. But there was this rather skinny intellectual from Paris; his name was John Calvin. And they said, 'Come on over here John and see if you can be our preacher.' So he came the following year, 1536. And he began to teach the Bible. You know what he was teaching in those days? He was teaching Calvinism, of course! And the people didn't like it then any more than they like it today or in the time of Jesus Christ. So he wasn't there very long, a couple years, and they said, 'Look, we've had enough of this, get out of here!' And so they sent him away and he went on down the Rhine to Strasbourg where he settled in for about 2 ½ more years—he liked it down there in Strasbourg. But things were not doing well in Geneva. All of the old problems were continuing. And finally they said, 'Look, we probably should bring this guy Calvin back.' And so they did; they prevailed upon him to come—he didn't want to go—but they got him to come. And so he came back in 1541. Now he didn't have any power; he didn't have any authority—he already failed once—no political power. The first year he was there they didn't even bother to pay him. So he certainly didn't even have

money. But he did have a Bible and he came back and started to teach it. And the story is he picked up in 1541 exactly where he left off in 1538, 2 ½ years before. I don't know what verse that was, but I was just talking about Romans 6:11 and if that's what he was talking about he said something like this, 'Now the last time we were studying verse 11 and I'd like you to open your Bibles to verse 12 because we are going to study verse 12 today.' And he began to teach. He taught the Bible every day, several times on Sunday. And under the impact of the preaching of the Bible by John Calvin, Geneva was radically transformed. People became converted, when the became converted they stopped behaving like pagans, they started acting like Christians. All of the immorality declined. They began to be concerned about their neighbors. There were all kinds of poor people in the city, because it was a refuge center for refugees from all over Europe because of the persecutions. They were sleeping out on the grates. They said, 'We need to do something about people.' So they built hospices to take care of them; many were sick, they built hospitals. There were children running all over the place; they said, 'Look, how are these children going to grow up to be Christians if they can't study the Bible and they cant' study the Bible if they can't read, so we better start educating them.' So they established a whole system of schools that began with the youngest grades and went right on up the great Academy established by Calvin where the teaching was for the minsters who went out and spread the Gospel all over French speaking Europe. And they got interested in industry. Calvin taught, as you know, that money was not a bad thing, it was a case of stewardship, it should be used for God. So they began to apply their resources in developing industry, they brought in the silk industry and other things, and the city began to prosper. John Knox was one who had studied there, and he said years later from where he was in Scotland that in those days Geneva had become literally a new Reformation. The way it happened was by the teaching of the Word. Nothing is more important than that." [James M. Boice, "Preaching the Bible: The Sufficiency of Scripture," cassette tape 2, side 2, Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/99]

"It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; the truth is, whilst in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer, is to continue praying; for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray." --- George Muller [*A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller.* Muskegon, MI: Dust & Ashes Publications, 2003. 1:44.]

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible whole lot more as they get older, then it dawned on me. they were cramming for their finals

"Too many Christians mark their Bible, but their Bibles never mark them." [Warren Wiersbe]

"The Gospel is written a chapter a day
By deeds that you do and by words that you say.
Men read what you say, whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the Gospel according to you?"
[cited in J. Vernon McGee, *James*, 42]

It's easier to preach than to practice;
It's easier to say than to do.
Most sermons are heard by the many,
But taken to heart by the few."
[cited in J. Vernon McGee, James, 44]

A missionary to the bush country of E. Africa writes of his first-hand experience of why the Bible is essential to godly living:

I've been overseas enough to know that many customs I have come to identify with Christianity will clash at some points with the culture of our hosts. My experiences have taught me to anticipate swallowing with difficulty some of my American expectations about how Christians should live. But I was unprepared for some of my encounters with many of the professing Christians in this equatorial setting. Lying, stealing, and immorality were common and generally accepted, even among the leadership of the church. Theological understanding was as scarce as water, the disease of doctrinal error as common as malaria.

Soon I discovered one of the main reasons this church looked as though it was started by Corinthian missionaries. No one had a Bible--not the pastor, not a deacon, no one. The pastor had only a half-dozen sermons, all half-baked over the coals of a few Bible-story recollections. Every sixth week came the same sermon. The only real contact with Scripture happened with the occasional visit of a missionary or when an area denominational worker would preach. For almost everyone in the church, these infrequent, vicarious brushes with the Bible were all they'd ever known. [Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 23-24.]

Evangelist Robert L. Summer, in his book "The Wonder of the Word of God," tells of a man in Kansas City who was severely injured in an explosion. His face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He had just become a Christian when the accident happened, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard of a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. But he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been too badly damaged to distinguish the characters. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, "I can read the Bible using my tongue!" At the time Robert Summer wrote his book, the man had read through the entire Bible four times. [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 30-31]

"In truth you cannot read the Scriptures too much:
and what you read, you cannot read too well;
and what you read well you cannot too well understand;
and what you understand well, you cannot too well teach;
and what you teach well, you cannot too well live."
[Martin Luther, cited in 7 Laws of the Teacher (workbook), 2]

John Chrysostom, c. 375, (the name "Chrysostom" - Gk. "golden mouth" - was given to him 150 years after his death due to his fame as a preacher) often became discouraged with the

seeming deafness of his listeners as they failed to apply the truths he preached week after week. He once complained, "My work is like that of a man who is trying to clean a piece of ground into which a muddy stream is constantly flowing."

Inspiration, Canon, Translations

"In a letter to the Corinthians (c. 95), Clement of Rome says, 'take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle,' implying that they had in their possession an authoritative letter from Paul. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (c. 70-160), said to the church at Philippi that Paul had written to them 'letters,' implying that they were aware of several biblical books. The first mention of a 'written' Gospel is found in the Didache (c. 100), which quotes The Lord's Prayer and then exhorts Christ's followers: 'And do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in his Gospel.' At about the same time Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, states: 'I heard some men saying, "if I find it not in the chapters of the Gospel I do not believe,"' which indicates that the early church knew of at least one authoritative Gospel." [Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism*, 300] *The quote by Ignatius is found in *Philadelphians*, 8:2

It is important to keep in perspective the fact that only a very small part of the text is in question - approximately 10% of the Old Testament and 7% of the New Testament. Of these, most variants make little difference to the meaning of any passage, as Douglas Stewart explains:

It is fair to say that the verses, chapters, and books of the Bible would read largely the same, and would leave the same impressions with the reader, even if one adopted virtually every possible alternative reading to those now serving as the basis for current English translations. (Paul Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism and the Bible*, 298)

"We shall not long preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained." (Luther's Works, 4:114-115).

"The autographs (the original documents) of the Bible were verbally inspired, and . . . we have in our English Bible the reproduction of those autographs, allowing for the proportionately unimportant variations in reading at some places and routine questions that are involved in the translation of any literature from one language into another." [Noel Smith, editor of the *Tribune* and one of the founders of the BBF. Baptist Bible Tribune, Jan. 29, 1971].

Noel Smith sometimes tired of dealing with those who got upset at even the slightest variation from the KJV. In response to these he said:

"And I have no respect for boasting ignorance, lathered with emotion, its brain boiling like alcohol in a T-Model radiator, shouting and yelling and squalling and stomping because somebody has suggested that a translator should have substituted a period for a semicolon. [That kind says] If God had wanted a period there he would have had one there. Hallelujah, Let's all sing Amazing Grace. We are talking here about responsible, Biblically literate people. No man of them holds up a copy of the Bible and says the he

holds in his hand an absolutely infallible book. To do so would mean that the paragraphing and punctuation were infallible. In many cases, they are very fallible. He doesn't even say he holds in his hand the Word of God. No version is the Word of God. The King James Version is not the Word of God. The American Standard Version is not the Word of God. Every version is a translation of the Word of God" [Baptist Bible Tribune, Jan. 8, 1971].

He did not advocate throwing out the KJV but rather using other translations to aid in understanding.

"You don't have to go from one extreme to another. You don't have to follow the fanatics. You have the King James Version, the American Standard Version, and the New Scofield Reference Bible. You don't have to discard your King James. You have all three. You can keep using your King James Version, as I do. But you should have the American Standard Version, if you are a real Bible student and authentic and accurate expositor of the Word of God. You should use the American Standard Version as a commentary on the King James" [Baptist Bible Tribune, Dec. 13, 1968].

"Concerning the fact of difference between the Revised and Authorized Versions, I would say that no Baptist should ever fear any honest attempt to produce the correct text, and an accurate interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. For many years Baptists have insisted upon it that we ought to have the Word of God translated in the best possible manner, whether it would confirm certain religious opinions and practices, or work against them. All we want is the exact mind of the Spirit, as far as we can get it. Beyond all other Christians we are concerned in this, seeing we have not other sacred book; we have not prayer book, or binding creed, or authoritative minutes of conference; we have nothing but the Bible; and we would have that as pure as ever we can get it. By the best and most honest scholarship that can be found we desire that the common version [KJV] may be purged of ever blunder of transcribers, or addition of human ignorance, or human knowledge, that so the word of God may come to us as it came from his own hand." [C.H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, London: Banner of Truth, 1881, pp. 341-43]

"I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There may be, and there are, mistakes of translation; for translations are not inspired." [[C.H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, London: Banner of Truth, 1881, p. 257).

"Do not needlessly amend our authorized version. It is faulty in many places, but still it is a grand work taking it for all in all, and it is unwise to be making every old lady distrust the only Bible she can get at, or what is more likely, mistrust you for falling out with her cherished treasure. Correct where correction must be for truth's sake, but never for the vainglorious display of your critical ability." [C.H. Spurgeon, Commenting and Commentaries, London: Banner of Truth, 1969, p. 31]

"No one, as far as I know, holds that the English translation of the Bible is absolutely infallible and inerrant. The doctrine held by many is that the Scriptures as originally given were absolutely infallible and inerrant, and that our English translation is a substantially

accurate rendering of the Scriptures as originally given." [R.A. Torrey, Bible Difficulties, Chicago: Moody Press, n.d., p. 19]

"Whenever possible the text of the Authorized Version has been given. In many instances this was impossible, as the Revised Version is manifestly more exact. Had it appeared that the Revised Version would soon obtain that general acceptance and use which it seems to so richly deserve, the author would have adopted it throughout; except in those rare instances where it is manifestly in error. In very few instances, indeed, has it been necessary to adopt renderings differing from both the Authorized Version and the Revised Version, and from the American appendix to the Revised Version." (R.A. Torrey What the Bible Teaches, Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1933, pp. 1-2]

"A real Bible believer believes the Authorized King James Bible IS the inspired, inerrant, preserved word of God and IS every bit SCRIPTURE as the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures which were given (the originals)." [Pastor Charles Perkins, Clairmont Bible Baptist Church, San Diego, CA (from the Fundamentalist publication, The Flaming Torch)]

Interpretation & Exegesis

In approaching the things of God, we are, as C. S. Lewis described us in "The Poison of Subjectivism," "Flatlanders," two-dimensional creatures trying to understand three-dimensional objects. "Flatlanders attempting to imagine a cube," he wrote, "would either imagine the six squares coinciding, and thus destroy their distinctness, or else imagine them set out side by side, and thus destroy the unity. Our difficulties about the Trinity are of much the same kind."

"Is it any wonder that the world is grasping at straws--the straws of experientialism, mysticism, and drugs? After all, if people are told that the Bible contains insoluble mysteries, then is not a flight into mysticism to be expected? On what grounds can it be condemned? Certainly not on logical grounds or biblical grounds, if logic is futile and the Bible unintelligible. Moreover, if it cannot be condemned on logical or biblical grounds, it cannot be condemned at all. If people are going to have a religion of the mysterious, they will not adopt Christianity: They will have a genuine mystery religion. 'Those who call for nonsense,' C.S. Lewis once wrote, 'will find that it comes.' And this is precisely what has happened. The popularity of Eastern mysticism, of drugs, and of religious experience is the logical consequence of the irrationalism of the twentieth century. There can and will be no Christian reformation--and no reconstruction of society--unless and until the irrationalism of the age is totally repudiated by Christians." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 137]

"Although tradition goes not rule our interpretation, it does guide it. If upon reading a particular passage, you have come up with an interpretation that has escaped the notice of every other Christian for 2000 years, or has been championed by universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation." [R.C. Sproul, *The Agony of Deceit*, pp. 34-35]

"The church of God has no power to establish any article of faith; nor has it ever established any; nor will it ever establish any.... The church of God has no power to confirm articles or

precepts or the Holy Writings as by a higher sanction or judicial authority; nor has it ever done this; nor will it ever do it. Rather, the church of God is approved and confirmed by the Holy Writings as by a higher and judicial authority." [Luther]

"A text can never be what it never meant; it can only mean what it only meant."

A pastor visited his church members one Saturday. At one house it was obvious that someone was home, but nobody came to the door, even though the pastor knocked several times. Finally, the pastor took out his card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it on the door. Revelation 3:20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me." The next day the card turned up in the collection plate. Below the pastor's message was the notation "Genesis 3:10 - I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself." (author unknown)

The great Bible expositor of the past, Dr. Donald Barnhouse, once stated that, "If I had only 3 years to serve the Lord, I would spend two of them studying."

In the catacombs of Rome, down deep under the ground, is an assembly area where the church met at one time. There are approx 600 miles of catacombs under Rome. 10 generations of Christians are buried there in those tunnels. All along the catacombs are little "shelves" where they entombed the bodies of these Christians over a 300 year period. An estimated 2-4 million Christians were buried there. There are inscriptions all alone the walls: such as the sign of the fish (which is the most common inscription). One of the inscriptions on the wall reads "The Word of God is not Bound" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:8-9). [cited by J. MacArthur, GC 55-7]

The undisciplined (in their approach to the Word) are like the great Broadway comic playwright George S. Kaufman (1888-1961) who was enduring a sales pitch from a gold-mine promoter. The salesman was praising the productivity of the mine in hopes of persuading Kaufman to buy shares in it. "Why, it's so rich you can pick up the chunks of gold from the ground." "Do you mean," asked Kaufman, "I'd have to bend over." The gold of God's Word isn't usually found on the surface but is wrought through disciplined study.

Why do so many Christians neglect the study of the Scriptures? R.C. Sproul stated it best: "Here then is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 32]

Puritan Richard Rogers, when asked why he was so meticulous in his approach to God's Word, stated: "I serve a precise God."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon never attended college or seminary, was never ordained, and declined several honorary degrees which were offered to him. But this mighty preacher began to publish a sermon a week at age twenty. He also authored devotional, expository, homiletic, and literary works. Taken together, his publications contain enough words to fill the 27-volume edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Spurgeon was an avid reader who not

only studied the Bible, but history, science, astronomy, and literature. Such nonreligious books comprised nearly half of his 12,000 volume library. [preface by Jerry Falwell in his edition of Spurgeon's Lectures to my Students]

The story is told of a young man who was sent to a remote African village. Upon his arrival he was shocked to see a village filled with gaunt faces and bloated bellies. The villagers were victims of extreme protein deficiency. The young man was filled with despair. How could he help these people? He received his answer when one of the villagers took him to a nearby stream to get water. As they came to the stream, the young man heard a series of plopping sounds coming from the water. It was fish. The stream was filled with them. The perfect answer to protein deficiency. For hours the man fished for the grateful villagers. Day after day they ate and the signs of malnutrition decreased and went away altogether. After a year had passed the man, feeling his job complete, left the villagers, vowing to return the next year. After another year had passed the man returned to find the villagers in the same condition as he had originally found them: gaunt faces and bloated bellies. What had happened? The answer was simple. He had fished for them; but he had never taught them how to fish for themselves.

"Bible study is the metal that makes a Christian. This is the strong meat on which holy men are nourished. This is that which makes the bone and sinew of men who keep God's way in defiance of every adversary." [C.H. Spurgeon]

Dr. Robert Thomas, professor of New Testament at The Master's Seminary, warns:

"People don't often go heretical all at once. It is gradual. And they do not do so intentionally most of the time. They slip into it through shoddiness and laziness in handling the word of truth. . . . All it takes to start the road to heresy is a craving for something new and different, a flashy new idea, along with a little laziness or carelessness or lack of precision in handling the truth of God. All around us today are startling reminders of doctrinal slippage and outright failure. In case after case someone who should have known the truth of God better failed in upholding that truth."

Dr. Thomas continues on the importance of precision in teaching the Bible:

Precision . . . is a compelling desire to master the truth of God in more definitive terms, to facilitate a more accurate presentation of that truth to others and to safeguard against doctrinal slippage that leads to error and false doctrine. . . . Everyone will not appreciate precision and willingly assent to its importance. We live in a world that would have us to be satisfied, in certain cases, with rough estimate, particularly when it comes to theological matters. It takes a lot of patience and 'thick skin' to put up with the criticism and outright opposition that will come when God's servant insists on accuracy. . . . There are too many 'ball-park' interpreters and expositors today. The theological atmosphere of evangelicalism is saturated with a dense fog of uncertainty and misplaced emphasis in handling the Word of God. Many churches are on the rocks because of careless hermeneutics, ignorance of biblical languages, and unsystematic theology. Rough estimates as to what this or that passage means will not do. We need qualified expositors who will take the time and make the necessary sacrifices to do their

homework well and bring clarity to the minds of God's people as they read and study God's holy Word." [quoted in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 130-132]

A misprint in the Yellow pages is causing a lot of grief for Gloria Quinan, the owner of a Northern California travel agency. Mrs. Quinan placed an ad in the Sonoma Yellow Pages for Banner Travel Service, but instead of a line extolling the benefits of "exotic travel," it was misprinted "erotic travel." That's when the unwanted phone calls began pouring in. Mrs. Quinan suffered a nervous breakdown and developed severe heart trouble from the ad's strain, said her lawyer, and she is suing Pacific Bell for \$10 million. Meanwhile, the travel agency had shut down because the staff quit after becoming fed up with fielding scores of weird phone calls. (cited in Focus on the Family, March 1989)

An example of the differences in cultures: "King Darius once asked some of his subjects about the proper way to honor parents when they die. First he called in some Greeks, whose custom it was to burn their father's dead bodies. 'What reward would you take for **eating** the bodies of your dead fathers?' Horrified, they cried: 'We would not eat the bodies of our fathers for all the money in the world.' He next called in certain Indians whose custom it was to eat the bodies of their dead fathers. 'What reward would you take for **burning** the bodies of your dead fathers?' Their answer: 'We would not burn the bodies of our dead fathers for all the money in the world.' The historian Herodotus mused on this deep dispute about how to honor deceased parents and decided: 'Custom is the king o'er all.'" (cited in L. Smedes Mere Morality)

One of the great minds in the field of hermeneutics, Dr. Earl Radmacher, was teaching a seminar in biblical interpretation in a local church. During one of the sessions he noticed a woman in the front row who was looking very troubled. Fearing that he had said something to offend her he asked, "Ma'am, what is wrong? Did I say something that offended you? If I did I'm certainly sorry." "No," she replied. "I just feel sorry for you." "Feel sorry for me? Why do you feel sorry for me?" Dr. Radmacher replied. "Because you feel that you have to go through so much to know what the Bible says," she replied. Dr. Radmacher asked her, "How do you find out what the Bible really says?" "Well, the Holy Spirit tells me," she replied. Dr. Radmacher then reached for his Greek N.T., opened it to a passage, and handed it to her. He then asked, "Will you tell me what this says?" Realizing that she was looking at Greek she stated, "I don't read Greek." His reply was, "Yes, but the Holy Spirit reads Greek!" [Related by Dr. Radmacher in Hermeneutics class, Southwestern Bible College, Sept. 88']

"If you want to sow dead leaves, use a rake; if you want gold be prepared to use a shovel."

BITTERNESS:

No matter how long you nurse a grudge, it won't get any better.

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless--it will change. It will not be broken; it will become

unbreakable, impenetrable, and irredeemable.... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love.....is Hell. --C.S. Lewis

Bitterness imprisons life, Love releases it. Bitterness paralyzes life, Love empowers it. Bitterness sours life, Love sweetens it. Bitterness sickens life, Love heals it. Bitterness blinds life, Love anoints its eyes. See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God, that no "root of bitterness" spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled. (Hebrews 12:15)

BOLDNESS:

When Martin Luther set out on his momentous journey to Worms, he said, "You can expect from me everything save fear or recantation. I shall not flee, much less recant." His friends, warning him of the grave dangers he faced, sought to dissuade him. But Luther would not be dissuaded. "Not go to Worms!" he said. "I shall go to Worms though there were as many devils as tiles on the roofs." (cited by J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership, p 78.

CALLING:

In his Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin writes again about calling,

"The last thing to be observed is, that the Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling. He knows the boiling restlessness of the human mind, the fickleness with which it is borne hither and thither, its eagerness to hold opposites at one time in its grasp, its ambition. Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord, that he may not be always driven about at random. So necessary is this distinction, that all our actions are thereby estimated in his sight, and often in a very different way from that in which human reason or philosophy would estimate them. There is no more illustrious deed even among philosophers than to free one's country from tyranny, and yet the private individual who stabs the tyrant is openly condemned by the voice of the heavenly Judge (I Sam. 24: 7,11; 26:9). . . .

Every one in his particular mode of life will, without repining, suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness, and anxiety, persuaded that God has laid on the burden. This, too, will afford admirable consolation, that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eye of God."

"...A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another..." Martin Luther

CALVINISM:

"I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what is nowadays called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel . . . unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace . . . unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Ken Talbot in *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, 18]

"His [John Calvin's] religion was demonism. If ever man worshiped a false God, he did. The being described in his five points is ... a demon of malignant spirit. It would be more pardonable to believe in no God at all, than to blaspheme him by the atrocious attributes of Calvin." [Thomas Jefferson, Works, Vol. IV, p. 363]

"If a man be not born again, it signifies little, whether he be called a Calvinist or Arminian, whether he belongs to a Church or Kirk, Relief, Circus, or Tabernacle. He may have a name to live among his party, but he is dead, and incapable, as to spirituals, as the stones in the street. On the other hand, if he be born from on high, he is a new creature, and though he may for a season, under many incidental mistakes, the grace which has called him will prevail over all, and will teach him, in due time, all that the Lord sees needful for him to know. His children will all see eye to eye in heaven, but they have not all equal light upon earth. Who teaches like him? He taught his disciples gradually, as they were able to bear it: but we are apt to be too hasty tutors. . . Calvinists should be the meekest and most patient of all men, if consistent with their own principle, 'That a man can receive nothing unless, and until, it is given him from above.'" [John Campbell, writing in 1801, as recorded in *Letters and Conversational Remarks* by John Newton, John Campbell, Ed., 1809]

"I am an avowed Calvinist: the points that are usually comprised in that term. seem to me so consonant with Scripture, reason (when enlightened), and experience, that I have not the shadow of a doubt about them. But I cannot dispute, I dare not speculate. What is called by some, high Calvinism, I dread. I feel much more union of spirit with some Arminians, than I could with some Calvinists; and if I thought a person feared sin, loved the word of God, and was seeking after Jesus, I would not walk the length of my study to proselyte him to the Calvinistic doctrines. Not that I think them mere opinions, or of little importance to the believer--I think the contrary; but because I think these doctrines will do no one any good till he is taught them of God. I believe a too hasty assent to Calvinistic principles, before a person is duly acquainted with the plague of his own heart, is one principle cause of that lightness of profession which so lamentably abounds in this day, a chief reason why many professors are rash, heady, high-minded, contentious about words. . . I believe that most persons who are truly alive to God, sooner or later meet with some pinches in their experience which constrain them to flee to these doctrines for relief, which perhaps they had formerly dreaded . . . In this way I was made a Calvinist myself; and I am content to let the Lord take his own way, and his own time, with others." [John Newton, Works, vol. 6, pp. 278-79]

"Well can I remember the manner in which I learned the doctrines of grace in a single instant. Born, as all of us are by nature, an Arminian, I still believed the old things I had

heard continually from the pulpit, and did not see the grace of God. When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when first I received those truths in my own soul--when they were, as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron, and I can recollect how I felt that I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a man--that I had made progress in Scriptural knowledge, through having found, once for all, the clue to the truth of God. One week-night, when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, How did you come to be a Christian? I sought the Lord. But how did you come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across my mind in a moment--I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, How came I to pray? I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. How came I to read the Scriptures? I did read them, but what led me to do so? Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, "I ascribe my change wholly to God." [Charles Haddon Spurgeon, from "Defence of Calvinism"]

A stranger came upon a young boy with a brand new litter of puppies. When the stranger asked about them the boy (who was actually an aspiring theologian) remarked, "They're Arminian Puppies." "Arminian puppies?" the stranger replied? "Yup," said the boy. Several weeks later that same stranger came upon the boy with his litter of puppies. "How are those 'Arminian' puppies doing?" he asked. "Oh, they're doing great" the boy replied. "But now they're Calvinists!" "Calvinistic Puppies?" queried the stranger. "I thought they were Arminians?" "They were," the boy answered, "but now their eyes are open."

According to Arminianism, grace has the name, but free-will has the game. [Augustus Toplady]

"After the reading of Scripture, which I strenuously inculcate, and more than any other ... I recommend that the Commentaries of Calvin be read ... For I affirm that in the interpretation of the Scriptures Calvin is incomparable, and that his Commentaries are more to be valued than anything that is handed down to us in the writings of the Fathers -- so much that I concede to him a certain spirit of prophecy in which he stands distinguished above others, above most, indeed, above all" -JACOBUS ARMINIUS (1560-1609)

The following is a letter that one man wrote in response to his feelings about Calvinism:

"The unbiblical teaching that Christ died only for the elect is repulsive and foreign to me. The teaching that those who are called "the elect" were actually predestined, preselected or predetermined by God to be saved is equal to teaching that God preselected and created the other people for none other than an eternity of hell. To believe that Jesus died for his preselected special friends and that there are other people whom he never intended to save is gross. If God is the kind of God that creates people without hope who can never be saved, then what kind of unjust person is he? Also, the correct definition of love requires freewill to exist on the part of the one who loves. Love is a choice. If no choice is involved, then love can not exist. Love without choice

is compulsion just as obedience without choice is slavery." Signed, Glen [October, 1998]

"I hear, honored sir, you are about to print a sermon on predestination. It shocks me to think of it; what will be the consequences but controversy? If people ask me my opinion, what shall I do? I have a critical part to act, God enable me to behave aright! Silence on both sides will be best. It is noised abroad already, that there is a division between you and me. Oh, my heart within me is grieved!" – Whitefield to Wesley, 1739

"Most atrocious things have been spoken about the character and spiritual condition of John Wesley, the modern prince of Arminians. I can only say concerning him that, while I detest many of the doctrines which he preached, yet for the man himself I have a reverence second to no Wesleyan; and if there were wanted two apostles to be added to the number of the twelve, I do I not believe that there could be found two men more fit to be so added than George Whitefield and John Wesley. The character of John Wesley stands beyond all imputation for self-sacrifice, zeal, holiness, and communion with God; he lived far above the ordinary level of common Christians, and was one 'of whom the world was not worthy.' I believe there are multitudes of men who cannot see these truths, or, at least, cannot see them in the way in which we put them, who nevertheless have received Christ as their Savior, and are as dear to the heart of the God of grace as the soundest Calvinist in or out of I Heaven." C.H. Spurgeon

"What is the heresy of Rome, but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ--the bringing in of the works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? And what is the heresy of Arminianism but the addition of something to the work of the Redeemer? Every heresy, if brought to the touchstone, will discover itself here. I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus. Such a gospel I abhor." [Charles Spurgeon, *A Defense of Calvinism*]

"We hold -- we are not afraid to say that we believe -- that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving "a multitude which no man can number;" and we believe that as the result of this, every person for whom He died must, beyond the shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin, and stand, washed in blood, before the Father's throne. We do not believe that Christ made any effectual atonement for those who are for ever damned; we dare not think that the blood of Christ was ever shed with the intention of saving those whom God foreknew never could be saved, and some of whom were even in Hell when Christ, according to some men's account, died to save them." [C. H. Spurgeon, from the sermon, Particular Redemption, Delivered February 28, 1858, at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens]

A Calvinist dies and goes to Heaven and sees two queues waiting to get in. One queue was for "Free Will" people and the other was for "The Elect" people so he made his way to the latter queue. The queue moved forward and an angel asked him why he was in the queue. He explained that he was in "The Elect" and then the angel asked him to change queues. He joined the other queue and it moved forward to where another angel asked him why he was in the Free Will queue. He said "First I chose to be in The Elect queue then I got put in the Free Will queue."

CHARACTER:

"Everybody is a moon, with a dark side never to be seen by others." [Mark Twain]

"A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble." [Charles H. Spurgeon]

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." [Mohandas Gandhi]

Someone once said: Personality is what you are in the light when everyone can see; character is what you are in the dark when no one can see.

There is a classical distinction between “virtue” and “innocence” in that virtue has passed the test of integrity and character. Innocence has yet to face and pass the test.

Understand first how great a duty the profession of true religion is, that you may not think as some foolish people, that every man should conceal his religion, or keep it to himself. Observe, therefore, these reasons following which require it. Our tongues and bodies are made to exercise and show forth that acknowledgment and adoration of God which is in our heart. And as he denieth God with the heart who doth not believe in him and worship him in his heart, so he denieth God imputatively with his tongue and life, who doth not profess and honor him with his tongue and life, and so he is a practical atheist.

The public assemblies and worship of God, are purposely appointed by him, that in them we might make open profession of our religion. He that denieth profession, denieth the public faith and worship of the church, and denieth baptism and the Lord's supper, which are . . . appointed for the solemn profession of our faith.

Our profession is needful to our glorifying God. Men see not our hearts, nor know whether we believe in God or not, nor what we believe of him, till they hear or see it in our profession and actions.

Our profession is the means of saving others: They must see our good works that they may glorify God. [Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, 563]

“It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain

weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place.” [Fenelon, 17th c. French Roman Catholic, cited by John Piper “Persevering in Ministry,” Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"When I was youth director in a church in Illinois, a boy in the junior department had memorized six hundred verses word perfectly. We even had him on a Christian radio program and tested him on the air. Later we were told someone apparently was stealing money from the junior-department offering each Sunday. A committee was appointed to investigate, and--you guessed it--the kid who knew the six-hundred verses was the culprit. I called him into my office and repeated to him a verse of Scripture (which, by the way, he told me I misquoted). I said, 'Do you see any connection between that verse of Scripture and your stealing from the offering?' 'No,' he said at first. And then, 'Well, maybe there is.' 'What do you think is the connection?' 'I got caught,' he said." [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 95]

In ancient China the people wanted security against the barbaric hordes to the north, so they built The Great Wall. It was so high they believed no one could climb over it and so thick nothing could break it down. They settled back to enjoy their security. During the first hundred years of the wall's existence, China was invaded three times. Not once did the barbaric hordes break down the wall or climb over it. Each time they bribed a gatekeeper and then marched right through the gates. The Chinese were so busy relying on walls of stone that they forgot to teach integrity to their children. [cited in Developing the Leader Within You, John Maxwell, page 42]

Two elderly women were walking around an overcrowded English country churchyard and came upon a tombstone. The inscription read: "Here lies John Smith, a politician and an honest man." "Good heavens!" one lady said to the other. "Isn't it awful that they had to put two people in the same grave!"

Thomas Macauley said, "The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he would never be found out." [cited in Developing the Leader Within You, John Maxwell, page 42]

One myth tells of a goddess who came to earth unseen but whose presence was always known by the blessings she left in her wake. It was said that entire forests burned to the ground sprouted new leaves and violets sprang up in her footprints. As she passed by a stagnant pool its water became fresh, and lifeless parched fields turned green as she walked through them. Wherever she went hills and valleys blossomed with new life and beauty.

Another legend tells of a princess sent as a present to a king. She was as beautiful as Aphrodite and her breath was as sweet as perfume. But in her person she carried the contagion of death and decay. From infancy she was fed poison and became so permeated with it that she poisoned the very atmosphere around her. It was said that her breath, tho sweet, could kill a swarm of insects; she would pick up a flower and it would wither. A bird flying too close would fall dead at her feet.

Woodrow Wilson once told a story of being in a barbershop one time. He says, "I was sitting in a barber chair when I became aware that a powerful personality had entered the room. A

man had come quietly in upon the same errand as myself to have his hair cut and sat it the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered, though it was not in the least didactic, showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. And before I got through with what was being done to me I was aware I had attended an evangelistic service, because Mr. D.L. Moody was in that chair. I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular affect that his visit had brought upon the barber shop. They talked in undertones. They did not know his name, but they knew something had elevated their thoughts, and I felt that I left that place as I should have left a place of worship." [cited in MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 236]

Robert Ingersoll, a notorious infidel and opponent of Christ, had a godly aunt to whom he sent one of his books attacking the Bible. On the fly leaf to his book he wrote: "If all Christians lived like aunt Sarah this book would never have been written." [cited in Laurin, Colossians, 179]

The story is told of a young supermarket clerk working in the produce department. As he is stacking some fruit, an elderly woman approaches him with an unusual request.

"Sonny, I'd like to buy half a head of cabbage."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am, but we only sell them whole."

"I know, dear, but I was wondering if you could make an exception for me. You see, my husband died many years ago. I'm all alone and have no one else to help me eat the cabbage."

"Well, I know that must be difficult, but I just don't think we can sell you half a head of cabbage. How about if I go into the back and pick out the freshest head of cabbage I can find for you. Hopefully, it will last longer."

"Thank you, young man, but I'd rather just have half a head. Would you mind asking the produce manager if he would be willing to sell me half a head?"

Irritated at her persistence, the clerk utters a "let me check," along with a forced smile. He finds the manager in the fruit section doing inventory.

"There's an old hag who wants us to sell her half a head of cabbage!"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth that he sees that the old woman has followed him and overheard what he had said. With a smile on his face, he extends his hand in a loving gesture toward the woman as if continuing his thought: "And this dear woman would like the other half."

The manager decides to make an exception, sells the woman half a cabbage, and comments to the clerk, "Great recovery, kid! That was amazing. I've never seen anyone think on his feet as quickly as you just did."

Thank you, sir. I grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania, and learned how to get out of jams quickly."

"You're from Reading, Pennsylvania?"

That's right. Reading, Pennsylvania, the home of ugly women and great hockey players."

All of a sudden, the produce manager's face turns beet red. "Young man, I'll have you know that my wife is from Reading, Pennsylvania."

"Really?" says the clerk. "What team did she play for?"

CHARISMATIC-PENTECOSTAL: [General; Laughing; Spiritual excess; Speaking in tongues]

General

A close friend of mine (John Mahan), who lives in S. Carolina, saw an ad about an evangelist from Africa who was going to be speaking in a local church. The ad said that he had a ministry of deliverance and had himself been delivered from demons, addictions, and illnesses. They went to check him out.

He spoke for a while and afterward they began the deliverance session. One woman went forward with some problem and he grabbed her head like a pumpkin and began to scream in her ear "get out; get out." After a few moments of this he dropped her and she fell to the ground.

Afterward my friend and some others questioned the man as to where in the Bible he could substantiate his ministry. His reply was: "I'm ignorant; All I do is go up front and God tells me what to say. I don't know much of anything about the Bible."

What is "faith?" Not the absence of every thread of doubt. Not "positive confessionism:" "In his pamphlet "How to Have Faith in Your Faith," Kenneth E. Hagin argues that "faith" is a synonym for "positive thinking" or "positive confession" or "positive attitude." The act of believing is more important than the object of belief. Thus, the power lies not in the One believed, but in the one believing. But that amounts to little more than self-worship or will-worship. It sees our good fortune as being determined by the degree to which we can believe something into existence and not by the One who alone spoke the worlds into being.

There are faith teachers in the electronic church who often "speak to" money, success, and health as though those things were personal gods. Similarly, they "speak to" Satan and demonic forces, "binding" them by their "word of faith."

Once again, it seems that the object of faith for those teachers is not the God of Scripture, but the gods of health, wealth, and happiness. Faith is seen not as a matter of believing in God but a matter of believing for things. Hagin speaks of decreeing his brother's salvation. Thus he makes God the absentee landlord who leaves the decreeing and application of

salvation, as well as health and wealth, to the authority of the believer." [Michael Horton Agony of Deceit, 145-46]

The following is a letter sent from a concerned church member who attended a Pentecostal church (letter sent to a Christian leader):

"The Pastor's of Brownsville Assembly of God came to a church in Irving, Texas a couple of weeks ago. My Pastor at my church had just come back from Pensacola and urged all of us to visit the church in Irving while the Revival people were there. I went for many of the same reasons you did except I was alone. I did not see anyone slain [in the Spirit], but did see some people shaking. Now people in my church are starting be to slain. I am very concerned, and I also feel that it has a demonic nature. I am not sure what to do about this, our church is very small and all the people in it feel that this is of God. I on the other hand do not and I think I am the only one. I also checked on one of their claims about kids falling out 'in the Spirit' in the local Pensacola High School. I spoke with the Vice Principal, and he told me that he knows about the Brownsville Assembly of God, but has not seen any instance of what they claimed, nor does he know of it in any school in the area. This is a blatant lie. Do you have any suggestions on how I should handle this. I have been praying for guidance and feel the Lord wants me to approach my pastor with what I know." [taken from The Midnight Cry Messenger newsletter, Jan. - March, 1997, page 8]

"I think of a certain prominent leader in the signs and wonders movement. He was diagnosed with cancer. It was then 'revealed' to him that a demon was to blame. He proceeded to have it exorcized. Then he went on national Christian television to announce that he was cured, to the applause of the studio audience. Several months later he died--of cancer." [Hank Hanegraaff, "Christian Research Institute Newsletter" dated September, 1998]

God can't do anything in this earth realm except what we, the body of Christ, allow Him to do." [Fred Price, cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis, 380]

"Heaven has a north and a south and an east and a west. Consequently, it must be a planet." [Kenneth Copeland, cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis, 379]

God spoke Adam into existence in authority with words (Gen. 1:26-28). These words struck Adam's body in the face. His body and God were exactly the same size." [Kenneth Copeland, cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis, 379]

"A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument." [Benny Hinn, cited in Integrative Theology III.217]

Laughing

On the so-called "Toronto Blessing" (laughing phenomena):

What is considered a new work of God by the TB advocates has been taught by others for centuries in India and China and, more recently, in Oregon by the cult leader, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

In his book, Life, Love, Laughter, Rajneesh teaches that, "Laughter is the very essence of religion. Seriousness is never religious, cannot be religious. Seriousness is of the ego, part of the very disease. Laughter is egolessness" [p. 97]. In his book, Dance Your Way to God, he states, "God is not serious, otherwise he cannot create such a beautiful world with so much music and delight in it, with so much love in it. He must be more of a dancer, a singer, painter or poet" [229]. On the same page, he states, "This world cannot fit with a theological god. It can fit with a poet, a painter. So let this be your constant reminder--that you have to dance your way to god, to laugh your way to god."

For Rajneesh, laughter is a needed mediator or bridge to God. He teaches, "My definition of man is that man is the laughing animal. . . .It is the highest peak of growth, and it is through laughter that you will reach to God--because it is only through the highest that is in you that you can reach to the ultimate. Laughter has become the bridge" [Life, Love, Laughter, 96]. [cited in Berean Beacon, P.O. Box 55353, Portland, OR 97238-5353, Winter, 1997]

In Bombay India, there is a "laughing club" which was organized by a doctor with the goal being better health through laughter. Typically, a large gathering of people will begin laughing with a chorus of "he hes" and "ha has" and ho hos." Soon the forced laughter turns into spontaneous laughter fueled by nothing. [cited in Tribune Newspapers Parade section, December 29, 1996]

Spiritual Excess

C.H. Spurgeon, in speaking of the mystery of spiritual anointing in prayer, also addressed the excesses of such. He wrote: "It is as easy as it is foolish to counterfeit it, as some do who use expressions which are meant to betoken fervent love, but oftener indicate sick sentimentalism or mere cant. 'Dear Lord!' 'Sweet Jesus!' 'Precious Christ!' are by them poured out wholesale, till one is nauseated. These familiarities may have been not only tolerable, but even beautiful when they first fell from a saint of God, speaking, as it were, out of the excellent glory, but when repeated flippantly they are not only intolerable, but indecent, if not profane. Some have tried to imitate unction by unnatural moans and whine; by turning up the whites of their eyes, and lifting up their hands in a most ridiculous manner. Certain brethren aim at inspiration through exertion and loud shouting; but it does not come: some have been known to stop the discourse and exclaim, 'God bless you,' and others gesticulate wildly, and drive their finger nails into the palm of their hands as if they were in convulsions of celestial ardor. Bah! The whole thing smells of the green-room and the stage. [Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 49-50]

Speaking in Tongues

"More Christians Find Faith by 'Speaking in Tongues'"

"Tongue speaking is getting an increasingly good rap. Roman Catholics are marking the 25th year of their involvement in the charismatic movement, and growing numbers of professionals are filling the pews of some of the nation's fastest-growing Pentecostal denominations. Activities once thought to be limited to the poor and poorly educated have broken through class barriers as a new generation of religious individuals search for broader spiritual experiences. In so doing, they have recaptured the spirit of the early church when speaking in tongues was considered a high-status activity, according to an article by Dale Martin in the recent *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. "You learn to speak the language of the gods and that increases your status," Martin, as assistant professor of religion at Duke University, said in an interview. In the Greco-Roman world of biblical times, heavenly beings are presumed to speak a heavenly language, according to Martin. Paul and some of the early Christians at Corinth spoke in tongues. In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul says "various kinds of tongues" are among the gifts of the spirit." (David Briggs, *The Associated Press*, from the religion section of the East Valley Tribune, August 22, 1992)

The following Email was received by me on August 12, 2004 . . .

Tony,

You were the first to tell me that praying in tongues doesn't happen today. After hearing this for the third time, along with answers to many areas of scripture that didn't make sense to me from my previous teachings, I finally accepted that you were right.

When I first seriously considered that the gifts of the Holy Spirit may not be in effect today, I had to consider that my gift of praying in tongues was not from God. If not from God, then where did I receive it from? I did not learn how to do this. It's something that happened to me one day.

I realized that if I didn't receive the gift from God, then I received it from Satan. It was a wise gift for him to give me. It fit with my flesh's desire for escape from reality. I didn't have to know how to pray. I loved that I thought the perfect prayer was going up to God. That I didn't have to work at prayer. It was easy to zone out & let God take over.

I prayed that if praying in tongues was from God, the enemy wouldn't cause me to give up something he God gave me. But if not from God, I had stop immediately this practice of falling into the enemies hands.

2 weeks ago I stopped praying in tongues. It was good for me to do. I am learning how to pray as a mature Christian, responsibly. So many things in my walk with God are improving because of this change.

Thank you for stirring up the ground & planting the seed.

In Jesus name,

PC

CHILDREN:

"Near where I live in central London there used to be a bronze statue of a local man sitting on a bench overlooking the River Thames. A few meters in front of him is a bronze figure of a little girl, his daughter who had died in childhood. As he sits, in old age, his imagination plays tricks with him, and it is as if he sees his little daughter alive and playing there. That pair of statues always moves me to tears." [Christopher Ash, Job: The Wisdom of the Cross, 57]

Tertullian noted that, contrary to those born in pagan homes, "the children of believers were in some sense destined for holiness and salvation." (On the Soul, 39.4)

A scene reminiscent of William Golding's "The Lord of the Flies."

It was just after 10:30 at night in a Milwaukee neighborhood so dangerous that residents called it "Little Beirut." Charles Young Jr., a 36 year old ex con, was teasing a 10- year old boy who was playing with his girlfriend. . . . The boy got mad at Mr. Young and later pelted him with an egg. Mr. Young gave chase, pushed the boy down, and struck him in the face knocking out a tooth. The 10 year old kept fighting and soon friends joined him, hitting Mr. Young with tree limbs and baseball bats. As the word went out through the neighborhood, more children got on their bikes and rode to the scene. By this time a mob of children was swarming around Mr. Young and he ran. Finally, he took refuge in a friend's house. The children broke the living room window and crawled in. Some had shovels. Some had two-by-fours. The blood splattered on the walls, and Mr. Young lost consciousness. "Drag him out!" the kids outside yelled. They pulled Mr. Young outside, onto the front porch. Some 20 children, most between the ages of 10 and 14 with a few older teenagers joined the fun, bashed him with folding chairs, broom handles, fence posts, and whatever they could find. One little boy, a pro-wrestling fan, put Mr. Young in a hold that he had seen on TV, holding up his head so the other kids could whack it easier. Others tried to hit him at a distance, so they would not get blood on their sneakers. By the time the police arrived, Mr. Young was brain-dead. The next day, police rounded up 16 children. Doctors took Mr. Young off life support and he died. At the hearing, many of the kids' parents did not even bother to show up. Few, if any, had parents who were married to each other. At the arraignment though, where the 10 year old was transferred to children's court and the others were indicted as adults for murder, at least one parent for each child did show up. They typically said how good their children had always been, and how they shouldn't be held responsible for what happened. One father said, "Kids will be kids." Some of the adolescents were surly, talking back to the police and still trying to act cool, even as they faced 40 years in prison. Others, finally acting like the children they were, cried. [Reported in "World Magazine" October 19, 2002]

The following "excuses" were taken from a recent collection of those received by Arizona school teachers:

Dear School: Please excuse John for being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. John has been absent because he had two teeth taken off his face.
Please excuse Ray Friday. He had loose vowels.

Please excuse Jimmy from being. It was his father's fault.

My daughter was absent yesterday because she was tired. She spent the weekend with the Marines.

My son is under the doctor's care and should not take P.E. Please excuse him.

An amazing example of spiritual maturity in a child:

"Both my mother and father are alcoholics and atheists, and my coming to the Lord is truly a miracle. I was not raised in a Christian home; in fact, my father knew the Bible and would vehemently deny the truths found there, calling them a bunch of 'fairy tales.' When I was ten years old, I read from a Gideon Bible in a Holiday Inn where my family was staying. I was amazed at how the Bible I was reading was not a bunch of fairy tales like my father had told me, but it all made perfect sense to me. After that day, while most kids my age were trying to get out of going to church, I was secretly going to worship every week." [cited in a Gideons International Newsletter dated May 29, 2005]

CHRIST: [General; Incarnation; Crucifixion; Deity; Example; Lordship; Love for; Resurrection; Suffering; Sufficiency; Supremacy; Union with] - see also "Cross"

General

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mahomet, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and schools combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke words of life such as never were spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of any orator or poet; without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art and sweet songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. Born in a manger, and crucified as a malefactor, He now controls the destinies of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire, which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, and yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history produce no other example of such complete and astonishing success in spite of the absence of those material, social, literary, and artistic powers and influences which are indispensable to success for a mere man." [Philip Schaff, The Person of Christ: The Miracle of History. With a Reply to Strauss and Renan, and a Collection of Testimonies of Unbelievers (Charles Scribner & Co., 1866)]

Jesus Through the Bible

In Genesis He is the Seed of the Woman.

In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb.

In Leviticus He is our Great High Priest.

In Numbers He is the Pillar of the Cloud by Day and the Pillar of Fire by Night.

In Deuteronomy He is The Prophet Greater than Moses.

In Joshua He is the Captain of the Host of the Lord.

In Judges He is The Judge and Lawgiver.

In Ruth He is the Kinsman Redeemer.

In I & II Samuel He is our Trusted Prophet.
 In Kings and Chronicles He is our Reigning King.
 In Ezra He is the Faithful Scribe.
 In Nehemiah He is the Rebuilder of the Broken Walls.
 In Esther He is our Mordecai.
 In Job He is our Ever-Living Redeemer.
 In Psalms He is our Good Shepherd.
 In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes He is our Wisdom.
 In The Song of Solomon He is our Bridegroom.
 In Isaiah He is our Prince of Peace.
 In Jeremiah He is our Righteous Branch.
 In Lamentations He is our Weeping Prophet.
 In Ezekiel He is our Temple.
 In Daniel He is the Son of Man.
 In Hosea He is the Faithful Husband.
 In Joel He is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.
 In Amos He is our Burden Bearer.
 In Obadiah He is the Mighty to Save.
 In Jonah He is our Great Foreign Missionary.
 In Micah He is the Messenger Beautiful Feet.
 In Habakkuk He is God's Evangelist, crying "Revive the work in the midst of the years."
 In Zephaniah He is our Savior.
 In Haggai He is The Restoration of God's Lost Heritage.
 In Zechariah He is the Fountain Opened Up in the House of David for the Sin of Uncleanness.
 In Malachi He is the Son of Righteousness Rising with Healing in His Wings.
 In Mark He is The Wonder-Worker.
 In Luke He is the Son of Man.
 In John He is the Son of God.
 In Acts He is the Ascended Lord of the Church.
 In Romans He is our Justifier.
 In I and II Corinthians He is our Sanctifier.
 In Galatians He is the Redeemer from the Curse of the Law.
 In Ephesians He is the Christ of Unsearchable Riches.
 In Philippians He is the God who Supplies all our Needs.
 In Colossians He is the Fulness of Godhead.
 In I and II Thessalonians He is our Soon-Coming King.
 In I and II Timothy He is the Mediator Between God and Man.
 In Titus He is our Faithful Pastor.
 In Philemon He is the One who Frees Us to be His Slaves.
 In Hebrews He is the Brood of the Everlasting Covenant.
 In James He is our Great Physician.
 In I and II Peter He is our Chief Shepherd.
 In I, II, and III John He is Love.
 In Jude He is the Lord Coming with Ten Thousands of His Saints.
 In Revelation He is The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

"What should be obvious at this point is that someone who is just a good human being does not say things like [those things Jesus claimed for Himself]. Imagine you are the parent of two or three children who have become fascinated with a new neighbor down the street. Even though he is a carpenter, let's say, he seems remarkably literate. Even more, he is clearly a special human being. You and your spouse admire his character. His love for other human beings is manifested in everything he does. You and your spouse often express the wish that nothing would please you more than that your children grow up to be just like this neighbor. But then suppose one day your children come home after spending an hour or two with the carpenter and tell you some of the things he told them that day. Suppose they tell you that the carpenter said that he existed before Abraham, that he and God are equal, and that at the end of the world he would come on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory, to judge the nations for their sins. Under such circumstances, I wonder if you would continue to want your children to grow up and be just like this neighbor. Jesus' very words prevent us from regarding him as a good man." [Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason, 263-64]

"[Christ] has not merely paid the penalty [for our sins, but] also he has positively merited for us eternal life . . . merited for [us] the reward by his perfect obedience to God's law." Therefore, we can run to our heavenly Father without fear. [J. Gresham Machen, cited in Keller, Prayer, 69]

Augustus Toplady, the author of "Rock of Ages," wrote in his private diary under Dec. 31, 1767: "Upon a review of the past year, I desire to confess that my unfaithfulness has been exceeding great; my sins still greater; God's mercies greater than both. . . . My shortcomings and my mis-doings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the lowest hell, was not Jesus my righteousness and my Redeemer."

"No one should be surprised that the *Logos* - the Logic, the Reason, the Wisdom, the Message, the Language, the Reflection of God - is The Truth. What is surprising and depressing is the fact that the churches called evangelical have almost totally eliminated their intellectualism from their thought. If they have not become ecstatic Pentecostals, speaking charismatic gibberish, and if they have not become Existentialists, who find little or no truth in the Bible, they have nonetheless repudiated theology in favor of a comfortably blank mind. Permit me to ask you, 'When did you last hear a sermon on the Trinity?' I remember one by Clarence Edward Macartney in 1924, and another really excellent one by a Greek Catholic priest in 1979. But even references to the Trinity, let alone complete sermons, have been few in number. References to Christ are frequent but too often meaningless. Many times evangelists have stressed 'a personal relationship to Christ.' This makes no sense. Even Satan has a personal relationship to Christ. He hates him; and hatred is very personal. What people need is a statement of the proper personal relationship to Christ, and that depends on who Christ is. One can sympathize with humble people of low IQ, who cannot understand. But one can only upbraid people of higher intelligence who refuse to understand." [Gordon Clark, cited in *The Trinity Review*, September 2008]

[L]et me have [Christ], and let the men of this world take the world, and divide it amongst themselves; I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world; his presence will make up the absence of all other comforts, and his absence will darken and embitter all my comforts; so that my comforts will neither taste like comforts, nor look like comforts, nor warm like comforts, when he that should comfort my soul stands

afar off (Lam. 1.16). Christ is all and in all to souls truly gracious (Col. 3. 11). We have all things in Christ, and Christ is all things to a Christian. If we be sick, he is a physician; if we thirst, he is a fountain; if our sins trouble us, he is righteousness; if we stand in need of help, he is mighty to save; if we fear death, he is life ; if we be in darkness, he is light; if we be weak, he is strength; if we be in poverty, he is plenty; if we desire heaven, he is the way. [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 162]

For certain kinds of murder Roman law used to inflict an abominable and living death upon the red-handed criminal. He was fast-bound face to face to his victim until the murderer died. Only death released him from the carcass. In a similar manner Christ fastened me to Himself by cords of a love stronger than death and carried me to the Cross where, with him, I was 'jointly crucified.' [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 50]

"What is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside into innumerable snares, while in the mean time we are bold and confident, and doubt not but we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep in the midst of subtle serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. Oh, how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness, and gentleness of our good Shepherd!" [Jonathan Edwards]

"Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father. What solace then must that soul be filled with that hath the possession of Him to all eternity! [John Bunyan, cited in "Quotations Past and Current" Newsletter, March/April, 1998]

"THE WILL OF THE FATHER"

Years ago, there was a wealthy couple who were unable to bear children. For many months they prayed to God for a child, and yet the wife continued to be barren. They passed the age that normally allows for successful conception and began to realize in despair that they would not have any children of their own. Still they persisted in their prayers, trusting that God would send them a child. The woman finally conceived a child and they were greatly overjoyed. Several months into the pregnancy two things were discovered. First, their child would be a boy. They would have a son! Second, their child would be born with birth defects. When the baby boy was born he arrived in the world horribly disfigured. Yet, the couple loved this boy with all of their hearts. They were overjoyed that God had sent them a baby. Shortly after the baby was born the wife died and left the father to raise the boy by himself. The father grew even closer to the child and loved him dearly. The deformities were barely even noticed in this father's eyes.

The young boy had a terrible time growing up in the world. Everyone around mocked him and ridiculed him. Even though his heart was pure and loving, even though he would have done anything in his power to help those in need, he was still an outcast.

Sadly, the young boy was killed by a group of individuals who despised him, because he did not fit into their group. The father was greatly grieved. It was not long after his son's death that the father died of a broken heart. An auction was to be held to sell off his entire estate, which was worthy in excess of eighty million dollars. Bidders gathered

from all throughout the land to bid on this man's estate. In his life he had collected some of the world's most spectacular paintings, some of the world's most splendid sculptures and some of the world's most precious gems.

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was a painting of the man's disfigured son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed, no one spoke. From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's forget it and move on to the good stuff." Many voices from the crowd echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," said the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, the maid, who had served the man faithfully for many years, spoke up. "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy since he was brought into the world, so I'd like to have it." "I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice, gone!" The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced that the auction was over as he pulled the backing off of the painting of the boy. "Enclosed inside this painting is the will for this estate. It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

"Look at him, can your imagination picture him? Behold his transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up; the pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun; the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed. He, in himself is brighter than the sun, fairer than the moon, more terrible than an army with banners. See him! See him! O! hide your heads, ye monarchs; put away your gaudy pageantry, ye lords of this poor narrow earth! His kingdom knows no bounds; without a limit his vast empire stretches out itself. Above him all is his; beneath him many a step are angels, and they are his; and they cast their crowns before his feet. With them stand his elect and ransomed, and their crowns too are his. And here upon this lower earth stand his saints, and they are his, and they adore him; and under the earth, among the infernals, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration; and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth, forever lament their being, even there is the acknowledgment of his Godhead, even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torment. In heaven, in earth, in hell, all knees bend before him, and every tongue confesses that he is God. If not now, yet the time that is to come, this shall be carried out, that every creation of God's making shall acknowledge his Son to be "God over all, blessed forever. Amen." [C.H. Spurgeon, Gems of Truth and Beauty, 107]]

"There are some sciences that must be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart." [Spurgeon, cited in Ogilvie, Colossians, 33]

"O, for a sight, a blissful sight Of our Almighty Father's throne! There sits the Savior, crowned with light, Clothed in a body like our own. Adoring saints around Him stand, And thrones and powers before Him fall; The God shines gracious through the man, And sheds sweet glories on them all." [Isaac Watts]

Incarnation

A Meditation on the Incarnation

(Psalm 40; Hebrews 10)

Henry Nicponski - 2005

A deepest pit most terribly surrounds me;
in miry clay there is no footing, no ground to stand.
What way of escape, to find my soul set free,
when prison walls are built by omnipotent hand?

For this is no prison made of bricks and stone
nor gaol, nor reformatory of justice, by sentinels trod
These high walls and awesome battlements
Are built and reinforced by the very laws of God.

My sins have entrapped me here; evils beyond
number have encompassed me with impregnable walls
My iniquities have overtaken me with great despond.
I cannot see; my heart within me falls.

More than the hairs of my head are the accusations made;
God's law is holy, just and good
Wherein his righteous character and holiness displayed
and I have transgressed and not done as I should.

Who can understand the horrors of a soul
When righteous judge begins to press his plea, to terrify?
Unerring eye, all-knowing one, unforgetting mind
Have you pleasure in my death? The guilty can you justify?

But wait - another has been here before me
yet is no longer here, not now; his steps the ground did scrape
and he left a writing there for me to see
Which may perchance effect a hope of escape

I read: *"I waited patiently for the Lord; he dropped
towards me and heard my cry. He drew me up from pit
of destruction, out of miry bog, and propped
my feet upon a rock, my steps secure and fit*

*He put in my mouth a new song of praise
to God For all to see, and fear, and trust to raise
Blessed that man, who the Lord his stay shall make."*
I draw back and search - might I this hope partake?

But more: *"You have multiplied, oh God the Lord
To us your wondrous deeds and thoughts toward*

Their sum is more than finite man can know.

I will proclaim and tell of them, this hope abroad bestow."

I perceive the writer was a prophet, and given vision
by God afar to find the key of emancipation
from this most dreadful yet all merited fate
Let us search out the vision to see his final state

"A body you have prepared for me," sings his vision
A body? For himself, or for another? An incarnation!
"You do not delight in sacrifices or burnt offerings"
Why, the very thing offended law demands - unerring justice rings.

*Behold I come, in the scroll of the book it is written of me
I delight to do your will oh God.*

Oh God! Oh God, the very person I should have been
in the body you prepared for me that was the soil and sod
and nourishing matrix of my offences and sin.

Yet more: *your law is within my heart*
Yet within *my* heart was only sin from root to crown
Even my best actions, so few, had no merit to start
Or to decrease the guiltiness wherein I drown.

Of whom spake the prophet? For many centuries a mystery
So Holy men of God, by spirit moved
Researched to know who and what part of history
Were thus foretold; to know the very angels were behooved.

Then, in course of sacred time, I lift my eyes above the pit
to see upon a storied hill, in bold relief the prophet's great visitation
In its fulfilling glory. For one came into the world, a body prepared and fit
written of him in the scroll of God, now suffering in his incarnation.

God has no pleasure in sacrifices and burnt offering
which are according to his own law. They are but still
the shadow of the good things time was to bring.
In the body prepared a saviour had come to do God's will.

And even priests by God's own appointment and decree
Repeated the same rites of death and blood perpetually
These goats and bulls can never take away the stain and sting of sin
A better merit and all atoning flow must interpose and win

Again the favor of offended deity.
I come to do your will Oh God, in the body you have prepared for me.
This great saviour offered perfect self, unstained and pure
A one-time sacrifice for sins, whose efficacy ever will endure

Until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet,
Sat down at the right hand of God above creation
Ever showing the emblems of his triumphs, as is meet
In the scars of the body prepared for him, his incarnation.

This incarnated Jesus, by a single offering
Has forever perfected those who are being sanctified.
God will remember their lawless deeds, no more to sting
By virtue of the merits of the one who died

But more, who rose again, triumphant to lead captivity
I see the walls of my prison fall away from me.
Omnipotent love, all conquering grace,
To take the prisoner from death's soon consummated embrace

Truthfully, the Holy Spirit testifies, a better start
sin forgiven and forgotten, and still more
His laws put on *my* mind and in *my* heart
As I ought have been before

The prophet's vision ends, and now in a broad space
This poor afflicted souls rises healed
With confidence to enter into the holy place.
By a new and living way revealed

Through his flesh, his incarnation,
the body prepared for him, a veil
I may draw near in acception
with true heart and full assurance of faith that will prevail.

My heart sprinkled clean from conscience evil
and accusing, that prison pit of miry clay
And body washed with pure water, twain reveal
freedom to live and walk in hope of day

And holding fast the profession of this faith
For he who promised is faithful.
His very name and self are great
I shall eternally be grateful

I will be true and tell the glad news of righteousness
before all men in the great congregation
To the sons of men I have spoken of your faithfulness
To praise your full and free salvation

Now O Lord, You will not restrain your covenant love
your mercy lavishly bestowed upon this new creation
Never condemnation, once justified from above!

The abiding fruits of Christ's incarnation.

Crucifixion

It was said during those days that a person who died by crucifixion died a thousand deaths. Crucifixion originated with the Persians and was adopted by Greece under Alexander the Great. Rome borrowed it from Greece and perfected it as a means of capital punishment. It was later abolished by the Roman Emperor Constantine.

"After being flogged, the victim was required to carry his own crossbeam (approx. 6 feet long and 30 pounds) to the place of execution. He was then nailed, or tied, to the crossbeam which was then affixed to the upright beam (or tree). Nails about 7 inches long with a large head were used, usually one through each wrist and one through both feet just below the ankles. The legs were nailed in a bent position so that the victim could push up to breathe, and a crude "seat" was sometimes affixed to the upright beam for the victim to rest on. Death usually came no sooner than 36 hours (sometimes as long as 2 or 3 days) and was often hastened with the breaking of the legs during crucifixion, or a blow to the ribs, just below the armpit, before the crucifixion. The victim was crucified naked and in public view to add to the shame. Death came slowly by suffocation as the arm and shoulder muscles fatigued to exhaustion. After death, the body was often left on the cross to decompose and be eaten by scavengers."

"The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, especially in hot climates. Severe local inflammation, coupled with bleeding of the wounds, produced traumatic fever, which was aggravated by the exposure of the heat of the sun, the strained position of the body and an insufferable thirst. The wounds swelled about the rough nails and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing headache ensure. The mind was confused and filled with anxiety and dread foreboding . . . tetanus not rarely supervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wounds and add to the burden of pain, till at last the bodily forces were exhausted and the victim sank to unconsciousness and death. The sufferings were so frightful that even among the raging passions of wary pity was sometimes excited." [ISBE]

"What you think of Christ?" this is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him:
As Jesus appears in your view--
As He is beloved or not,
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath is your lot.

Some take Him a creature to be--
A man, or an angel at most;
But they have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves to be wretched and lost.
So guilty, so helpless am I,

I would not confide in His blood,
Nor in His protection rely,
Unless I were sure He is God.

Some call Him a Savior in word,
But mix their own works with His plan;
And hope that He will help them out,
When they have done all that they can:

Some style Him "the Pearl of great price,"
And say, He's the fountain of joys;
Yet feed upon folly and vice,
And cleave to the world and its toys.

Like Judas, the Savior they kiss,
And while they salute Him, betray:
Oh! what will a profession like this
Avail in His terrible day?

If asked what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, He's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store,
My Shepherd, my trust, and my Friend,
My Savior from sin and from [hell];
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord and my All.

"When someone was crucified a list of his crimes was often nailed to the cross directly above his head. His death was payment for those crimes. The crimes that nailed Jesus to the cross were not His but ours. Because He bore our penalty, God erased the certificate of debt against us." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 175]

The Civil War Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864:

"By 1864 Lincoln and his generals had settled on a war of attrition: 'doing the arithmetic,' Lincoln called it, for the North could lose men and replace them, but if Southern forces lost half as many they would likely stay in that depleted condition. The night before battle Northern soldiers were writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them on the backs of their coats, so the identity of their corpses the next day could be recognized more readily. U.S. Grant's forces at Cold Harbor, VA, had 7,000 casualties, most of them during a furious 8-minute assault against the Southern lines; Robert E. Lee's army lost 1,500. When the attack ended, an Alabama colonel noted that 'the dead covered more than five acres of ground about as thickly as they could be laid.' One blood-stained diary found in the pocket of a dead soldier had this final entry: 'June 3. Cold Harbor. I was killed.'" [World Magazine, June 3, 2000, p. 25]

Deity

John Stott records the number of times that Jesus claimed to be God. According to those claims, Stott writes:

to know him was to know God;
to see him was to see God;
to believe in him was to believe in God;
to receive him was to receive God;
to hate him was to hate God;
to honor him was to honor God. [John Stott, *Basic Christianity*]

Ronald Nash gives the following illustration of the absurdity of believing that Jesus was "just a good man" as so many have said:

"What should be obvious at this point is that someone who is just a good human being does not say things like this. Imagine that you are the parent of two or three children who have become fascinated with the new neighbor down the street. Even though he's a carpenter, let's say, he seems remarkably literate. Even more, he is clearly a special human being. You and your spouse admire his character. His love for other human beings is manifested in everything he does. You and your spouse often express the wish that nothing would please you more than that your children grow up to be just like this neighbor. But then suppose one day your children come home after spending an hour or two with the carpenter and tell you some of the things he told them that day. Suppose they tell you that the carpenter said that he existed before Abraham, that he and God are equal, and that at the end of the world he would come on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory, to judge the nations for their sins. Under such circumstances, I wonder if you would continue to want your children to grow up to be just like this neighbor. [Faith and Reason, 263]

A cursory look at the Gospels demonstrates that Jesus equated himself with God:

1. To know him was to know God.
2. To see him was to see God.
3. To believe in him was to believe in God.
4. To receive him was to receive God.
5. To hate him was to hate God.
6. To honor him was to honor God.
7. To worship him was to worship God

"The late Dr. M.R. DeHaan, noted radio Bible teacher, told about a preacher who was confronted by a cultist who rejected the deity of Jesus Christ. 'Jesus cannot be the eternal Son of God, for a father is always older than his son,' the man argued. 'If the Father is not eternal, then He is not God. If Jesus is His Son, then He is not eternal.'

The preacher was ready with an answer. 'The thing that makes a person a father is having a son. But if God is the eternal Father, then He must have an eternal Son! This means that Jesus Christ is eternal--and that He is God!'" [Warren Wiersbe, Be Complete, 58]

Note Pliny the Younger's report to the Emperor Trajan (AD 111-112) that the Christians in Bithynia met on a fixed day before dawn and "recited an antiphonal hymn to Christ as God." [cited in Bruce, Colossians, 158]

In 1957, a monastery in Thailand was being relocated and a group of monks was put in charge of moving a giant clay statue of Buddha. In the mist of the move, one of the monks noticed a crack in the figure, so the work was immediately halted before more damage occurred. That night, one of the monks went to check on the statue. He aimed his flashlight all over the figure, but suddenly noticed a reflective gleam from the crack. His curiosity aroused, he procured a hammer and chisel and began widening the split. As he knocked off piece after piece of clay, the stature grew brighter and brighter—and after hours of work the clay was all gone, and in its place stood a golden image of Buddha. Many historians now believe that the original statue had been covered with a layer of clay by Thai monks several hundred years earlier, to hide its worth before an attack by the Burmese army. All of the monks present on that occasion died in the battle, and it was not until 1957 that its great value was discovered. There is a parallel of sorts to the two natures of Christ. As the hymn writer said, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail incarnate deity . . ." [cited in "Pulpit Helps", August 2003, 11]

Example

The following story was recorded by one of the ancient Bishops in the 4th century:

Phocus was a man who lived in the 4th century in Asia Minor. He lived in the city of Sinope and he had a little cottage outside the city gate. Travelers passed outside his door at all hours of the day and night as they went through the city gate. Motivated by the love of Christ he stopped as many as possible. Were they weary? Then let them rest themselves in his well-tended garden. Were they in need of a friendly word? He would then speak it to them in the dear Master's name.

But then, quite suddenly one day, life was all changed for Phocus. Orders went out from the Roman Emperor Diocletian that the Christians must be put to death. When the persecutors arrived in Sinope, they had been given orders to find a man by the name of Phocus and kill him. About to enter the city one hot afternoon, they passed in front of the old man's cottage and garden by the gate. In his innocence he greeted them as if they were his warmest friends and invited them to come in and rest themselves. They consented. So warm and gracious was the hospitality that they had received, that when their host invited them to stay the night and go on their way refreshed the next day, they agreed to do so. "And what is your business?" said Phocus unsuspectingly. They then told him that they would answer his question if he would regard it as a secret, for it was obvious to them by now that he was a man to be trusted. Who were they? They were soldiers of Rome who were searching for a certain man by the name of "Phocus" who was a Christian. And please, if their kind host knew him, if he would be so good as to identify him -- after all, this man was a dangerous follower of this "Jesus" of whom the Christians taught, and he must be executed immediately. "I know him well" said Phocus quietly. "And by the way, he's quite near." "But let's attend to it in the morning."

His guests having retired for the evening, Phocus sat thinking. Escape? That would be easy. He only need leave under the cover of darkness and by daybreak he could be at least 20 miles away. He knew that his fellow Christians would show him hospitality in hiding him. And when persecution had passed, he could then safely return and cultivate his little garden.

The decision to flee unto safety or stay unto death was apparently made without struggle or delay. We can only imagine what he was thinking. Out into his garden went Phocus, and he began digging into the night. Was there any earthly thing he loved more than that little plot of ground? The odor of the humus, the feel of the soil, the miracle of fertility? What were his thoughts as he went on digging? There was still time to run away. But the Savior didn't run. He didn't run from Gethsemane, and He didn't run from Calvary.

Perhaps he thought of his fellow Christians whom he might go for rest. Would not his coming endanger them? And as for these executioners who were now soundly sleeping under his roof, they were only men who were carrying out orders. And if they failed to find their man, perhaps their own lives would be taken and they would die in their sins. Deeper and deeper Phocus dug, and before long he was done. And there it was: his own grave.

Morning came, and with it the awakening of the executioners. "I am Phocus" he said calmly. They wouldn't believe it! They stood motionless in astonishment! And when they did believe it they obviously were reluctant to perform an execution without mercy on a man who had shown them nothing but mercy. But it was a duty, Phocus reminded them, that they were required to perform. And he was not bitter at them. Besides, death did not terrify him -- his heart was filled with the hope of heaven. Toward them he bore nothing but the love of Christ.

Moments later, it was all over. The sword had done its work. And the body of Christ's servant lay in the stillness of death, in the garden he loved so dearly.

Robert Murray McCheyne spoke at the ordination of young Dan Edwards in the 1860s. He said something like this: "Mr Edwards, . . . do not forget the inner man, the heart. The cavalry officer knows that his life depends upon his saber, so he keeps it clean. Every stain he wipes off with the greatest care. Mr. Edwards, you are God's chosen instrument. According to your purity, so shall be your success. It is not great talent; it is not great ideas that God uses; it is great likeness to Jesus Christ. Mr. Edwards, a holy man is an awesome weapon in the hand of God." [cited in MacArthur, Found: God's Will, 37]

Lordship [see also "Soteriology" - *Lordship/Repentance*]

"[T]he lordship of Jesus is absolutely fundamental to the preaching of the gospel in the NT. It is inconceivable that anyone could respond appropriately to that gospel without confessing from the heart that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)." [John Frame, *System Theology*, 16]

Just recently, the United Church of Christ decided to write a new hymnal and among the changes they made they removed what they called "patriarchal language" from many hymns

(words like Father and King). But they also removed all references to Jesus as Lord. [AZ Republic 7/24/93]

"Christ is not valued at all if He is not valued above all." [Augustine, cited in Oglivie, Colossians, 96]

Love for

"The only growing and thriving life comes through a living contemplation and application of Jesus Christ. You must be constantly studying him and conversing with him and drawing grace from him . . . Do you want great power against sin? Do you desire to increase in holiness? Let your eye be on Christ all the time. Set your heart on him. Let it dwell in him and be still with him. When any kind of sin threatens to prevail, go to Christ, and tell him about the attack and your inability to resist it. Ask him to defeat it. If your heart inclines toward sin, lay this before Christ. His beams of love will eat out the fire of those sinful desires. Do you want your pride, passions, love of the world, and self-love to be killed? Seek the virtue of Christ's death, and it will be so. Seek to imitate his spirit, the spirit of meekness and humility and divine love. Look on Christ, and he will draw your heart toward heaven and unite it to himself and make it like himself. Is this not the one thing you desire?" [Robert Leighton, 1 Peter, 180-81]

"Fill your affections with the cross of Christ, that there may be no room for sin." [John Owen, *Treatise on Indwelling Sin*]

"If suddenly upon the street
My gracious Savior I should meet,
And He should say, 'As I love thee,
What love hast thou to offer me?'
Then what could this poor heart of mine
Dare offer to that heart divine?
His eye would pierce my outward show,
His thought my inmost thought would know;
And if I said, 'I love thee, Lord,'
He would not heed my spoken word,
Because my daily life would tell
If verily I loved Him well.
If on the day or in the place
Wherein He met me face to face
My life could show some kindness done,
Some purpose formed, some work begun,
For His dear sake, then, it were meet
Love's gift to lay at Jesus' feet."

[Charles F. Richardson, cited in Roy Laurin, Colossians, 34]

"Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for You." [St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th c., from his hymn, "O Sacred Head"]

Resurrection

"I say unequivocally that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt." [Sir Lionel Luckhoo, famous attorney who won 245 consecutive murder acquittals recognized by Guinness Book of World Records, after years of analyzing the evidence for and against the resurrection]

Theologian Erich Sauer has written: "The present age is Easter time. It begins with the resurrection of the Redeemer and ends with the resurrection of the redeemed. Between lies the spiritual resurrection of those called into life through Christ. So we live between two Easters, and in the power of the first Easter we go to meet the last Easter." [cited by MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, 415]

"The doctrine of the resurrection is full of joy to the bereaved. It clothes the grave with flowers and wreathes the tomb with unfading laurel. The sepulcher shines with a light brighter than the sun, and death grows fair, as we say, in full assurance of faith. 'I know my brother shall arise again.' Rent from the ignoble shell, the pearl is gone to deck the crown of the 'Prince of Peace.' Buried beneath the sod, the seed is preparing to bloom in the King's garden." [Spurgeon, cited in Gems of Truth and Beauty, 245]

Recently, two men, Richard Andrews & Paul Schellenberger, wrote a book: The Tomb of God: The Body of Jesus and the Solution to a 2,000 Year-Old Mystery. The advertising blurb for the book states: "Applying mathematical logic to the mystery, the authors turn up evidence of a long-suppressed secret challenging Christian dogma--that Christ's body actually rests in a Rennes-le-Chateau tomb [in SW France]! This fascinating study illuminates the real secret maintained over the centuries by the Templars and others, revealing at the same time a 'heretical' Christian teaching stressing responsibility over blind faith." [From Barnes and Noble circular, 1997]

John Dominic Crossan, co-chair of the Jesus Seminar, recently asserted: "After the crucifixion, Jesus' corpse was probably laid in a shallow grave, covered with dirt, and subsequently eaten by wild dogs--the story of Jesus' entombment and resurrection was the result of wishful thinking." [cited in Hank Hanegraaff CRI Newsletter, March, 1999]

Suffering

"Christ is the wounded surgeon who operates on people's hearts." [T.S. Elliot, cited in World Magazine, April 24, 2004]

Our blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Deep depression of spirit is the most grievous of all trials; all besides is as nothing. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to his God, "Be not far from me," for above all other seasons a man needs his God when his heart is melted within him because of heaviness. Believer, come near the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory as having once been brought far lower, in mental distress and inward anguish, than any one among us; and mark his fitness to become a faithful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Especially let those of us whose sadness springs directly from the withdrawal of a present sense of our Father's love, enter into near and intimate communion with Jesus. Let us not give way to despair,

since through this dark room the Master has passed before us. Our souls may sometimes long and faint, and thirst even to anguish, to behold the light of the Lord's countenance: at such times let us stay ourselves with the sweet fact of the sympathy of our great High Priest. Our drops of sorrow may well be forgotten in the ocean of his griefs; but how high ought our love to rise! Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at the flood in spring tides, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord's feet, and there let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by his love, having no virtue or value; and only venturing to whisper to him that if he will put his ear to me, he will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of his own love which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at his feet for ever. [Title: Morning and Evening, Author: Spurgeon, Charles H. MORNING - April 12 "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." - Psalm 22:14]

Sufficiency

By various maxims, forms, and rules,
That pass for wisdom in the schools,
I sought my passion to restrain;
But all my efforts proved in vain.
But since my Savior I have known
My rules are all reduced to One,
To keep my Lord by faith in view,
This strength supplies and motive too. [John Newton]

Upon Luther's complaint that in spite of his repeated promises to God to overcome his sin, sin was always the victor within him, Staupitz replied:

"More than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the love of Christ and grant me a happy departure, when I must quit this world, I shall never, with the aid of all my vows and all my good works, stand before him. I must perish!" [D'Aubigne, page 62]

He later continued:

"Why," said he, "do you torment yourself with all these speculations and high thoughts? . . . Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you: it is here that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life—in the atonement of his death. Do not shrink back; God is not angry with you, it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favour. He says to you, You are my sheep; you hear my voice; no man shall pluck you out of my hand." [D'Aubigne, page 62]

"My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am or shall be or feel or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has

done, and in what He is now doing for me. Hallelujah!" [Charles Spurgeon, updated English by Alistair Begg]

Martin Luther was briefly encouraged by the advice of John Staupitz, but he yet again found himself in the "slough of despair." How could he find within himself, a sinner, the repentance necessary for salvation? How can he change himself when the self is sinful to the core? He found wise counsel from Staupitz here as well. The mentor encouraged him with these words:

"There is no real repentance except that which begins with the love of God and of righteousness. . . . In order that you may be filled with the love of what is good, you must first be filled with love for God. If you desire to be converted, do not be curious about all these mortifications and all these tortures. Love him who first loved you." [D'Aubigne, page 62]

In order to repent, Luther must first love God. The words struck Luther at the core. The passages of Scripture that used to alarm him now intrigue him, even beckon to him. Repentance, once a foe, has become a friend. It is a delight to repent by virtue of the wounds of Christ!

Old habits die hard and Luther's habit of bemoaning his sin was no exception. "My sin, my sin, my sin" Luther exclaimed before Staupitz who then replied, "Well! would you only be a sinner in appearance and have a Saviour only in appearance? You know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour even of those who are great, real sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation." [Adapted from J.H. Merle D'Aubigne, History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1883), 62]

The following true story could be used as an illustration of embracing the shadows rather than the substance which is Christ, or religion without regeneration:

Widow Lives with Corpses of Husband, Twin. By Michael Rubinkam, AP. July 05, 2010 The Buffalo News

The 91-year-old widow lived by herself in a tumbledown house on a desolate country road. But she wasn't alone, not really, not as long as she could visit her husband and twin sister. No matter they were already dead. Jean Stevens simply had their embalmed corpses dug up and stored them at her house - in the case of her late husband, for more than a decade - tending to the remains as best she could until police were finally tipped off last month. Much to her dismay. "Death is very hard for me to take," Stevens told an interviewer.

As state police finish their investigation into a singularly macabre case - no charges have been filed - Stevens wishes she could be reunited with James Stevens, her husband of nearly 60 years who died in 1999, and June Stevens, the twin who died last October. But their bodies are with the Bradford County coroner now, off-limits to the woman who loved them best.

From time to time, stories of exhumed bodies are reported, but rarely do those involved offer an explanation. Jean Stevens, seeming more grandmother than ghoul, holds little back as she describes what happened outside this small town in northern Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains.

She knows what people must think of her. But she had her reasons, and they are complicated, a bit sad, and in their own peculiar way, sweet. Dressed smartly in a light blue shirt and khaki skirt, silver hoops in her ears, her white hair swept back and her brown eyes clear and sharp, she offers a visitor a slice of pie, then casts a knowing look when it's declined. "You're afraid I'll poison you," she says.

On a highboy in the corner of the dining room rests a handsome, black-and-white portrait of Jean, then a stunner in her early 20s, and James, clad in his Army uniform. It was taken after their 1942 marriage but before his service in World War II, in which he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, James worked at a General Electric Corp. plant in Liverpool, N.Y., then as an auto mechanic. He succumbed to Parkinson's disease on May 21, 1999. Next to that photo there is a smaller color snapshot of Jean and June, taken when they were in their late 80s.

In many ways, Jean shared a closer bond with her twin than her husband. Though June lived more than 200 miles away in West Hartford, Conn., they talked by phone several times a week, and June wrote often. The twins - who, as it happened, married brothers - were honored guests at the 70th reunion of the Camptown High School Class of 1937.

Then, last year, June was diagnosed with cancer. She was in a lot of pain when Jean came to visit. The sisters shared a bed, and Jean rubbed her back. "I'm real glad you're here," June said. On Oct. 3, June died. She was buried in her sister's backyard - but not for long. "I think when you put them in the (ground), that's goodbye, goodbye," Stevens said. "In this way I could touch her and look at her and talk to her."

She kept her sister, who was dressed in her "best housecoat," on an old couch in a spare room off the bedroom. Jean sprayed her with expensive perfume that was June's favorite. "I'd go in, and I'd talk, and I'd forget," Stevens said. "I put glasses on her. When I put the glasses on, it made all the difference in the world. I would fix her up. I'd fix her face up all the time."

She offered a similar rationale for keeping her husband on a couch in the detached garage. James, who had been laid to rest in a nearby cemetery, wore a dark suit, white shirt and blue knitted tie. "I could see him, I could look at him, I could touch him. Now, some people have a terrible feeling, they say, 'Why do you want to look at a dead person? Oh my gracious,'" she said. "Well, I felt differently about death."

Part of her worries that after death, there's ... nothing. "Is that the grand finale?" But then she gets up at night and gazes at the stars in the sky and the deer in the fields, and she thinks, "There must be somebody who created this. It didn't come up like mushrooms." So she is ambivalent about God and the afterlife. "I don't always go to church, but I want to believe," Stevens said.

Dr. Helen Lavretsky, a psychiatry professor at UCLA who researches how the elderly view death and dying, said people who aren't particularly spiritual or religious often have a difficult time with death because they fear that death is truly the end. For them, "death doesn't exist," she said. "They deny death."

Stevens, she said, "came up with a very extreme expression of it. She got her bodies back, and she felt fulfilled by having them at home. She's beating death by bringing them back." There was another reason that Stevens wanted them above ground. She is severely claustrophobic and so was her sister; she was horrified that the bodies of her loved ones would spend eternity in a casket in the ground. "That's suffocation to me, even though you aren't breathing," she said. So she said she had them dug up, both within days of burial.

She managed to escape detection for a long time. The neighbors who mowed her lawn and took her grocery shopping either didn't know or didn't tell. Otherwise forthcoming, Stevens is vague when asked about who exhumed the bodies and who knew of her odd living arrangement. She blames a relative of her late husband's for calling the authorities about the corpses. "I think that is dirty, rotten," she said.

State police - who haven't yet released the identities of those who retrieved the bodies - will soon present their findings to the Bradford County district attorney. A decision on charges is expected in a few weeks. Stevens has talked extensively with both the police and Bradford County Coroner Tom Carman, who calls it a "very, very bizarre case." But the coroner has nothing but kind things to say about the woman at the center of it. "I got quite an education, to say the least. She's 100 percent cooperative - and a pleasure to talk to," Carman said. "But as far as her psyche, I'll leave that to the experts."

Christianity takes for granted the absence of any self-help and offers a power which is nothing less than the power of God. [A. W. Tozer (1897–1963)]

"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." [John Newton at age 82, cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

Some of you may have read C.S. Lewis' classic satire, "The Screwtape Letters." This book contains legendary letters from the demon "Screwtape" to his apprentice "Wormwood" who was trying desperately to keep his "human" from practicing biblical Christianity. In one of the letters, Screwtape instructs Wormwood to steer his "patient" away from the sufficiency of Christ:

"Dear Mr. Wormwood: The real trouble about the [condition] your patient is living in is that it is merely Christian. They all have individual interests, of course, but the bond remains mere Christianity. What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call 'Christianity And.' You know--Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians let them

at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian coloring."

It was said that one of the godly Puritans sat down to his meal one day and found that he only had a little bread and some water. To that he exclaimed, "What? All this and Jesus Christ, too!"

"Where imprecise doctrine and careless biblical exegesis are tolerated, and where biblical wisdom and discernment languish, people tend to look for something more than the simple sufficiency God has provided in Christ." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 29]

"Homer and Langley Collyer were sons of a respected New York doctor. both had earned college degrees. In fact, Homer had studied at Columbia University to become an attorney. When old Dr. Collyer died in the early part of this century, his sons inherited the family home and estate. The two men--both bachelors--were now financially secure.

But the Collyer brothers chose a peculiar lifestyle not at all consistent with the material status their inheritance gave them. They lived in almost total seclusion. They boarded up the windows of their house and padlocked the doors. All their utilities--including water--were shut off. No one was ever seen coming or going from the house. From the outside it appeared empty.

Though the Collyer family had been quite prominent, almost no one in New York society remembered Homer and Langley Collyer by the time World War II ended.

On March 21, 1947, police received an anonymous telephone tip that a man had died inside the boarded-up house. Unable to force their way in through the front door, they entered the house through a second-story window. Inside they found Homer Collyer's corpse on a bed. He had died clutching the February 22, 1920 issue of the Jewish Morning Journal, though he had been totally blind for years. This macabre scene was set against an equally grotesque backdrop.

It seems the brothers were collectors. They collected everything--especially junk. Their house was crammed full of broken machinery, auto parts, boxes, appliances, folding chairs, musical instruments, rags, assorted odds and ends, and bundles of old newspapers. Virtually all of it was worthless. An enormous mountain of debris blocked the front door; investigators were forced to continue using the upstairs window for weeks while excavators worked to clear a path to the door.

Nearly three weeks later, as workmen were still hauling heaps of refuse away, someone made a grisly discovery. Langley Collyer's body was buried beneath a pile of rubbish some six feet away from where Homer had died. Langley had been crushed to death in a crude booby trap he had built to protect his precious collection from intruders.

The garbage eventually removed from the Collyer house totaled more than 140 tons. No one every learned why the brothers were stockpiling their pathetic treasure, except an old friend of the family recalled that Langley once said he was saving newspapers so Homer could catch up on his reading if he ever regained his sight.

Homer and Langley Collyer make a sad but fitting parable of the way many people in the church live. Although the Collyer's inheritance was sufficient for all their needs they lived their lives in unnecessary, self-imposed deprivation. Neglecting abundant resources that were rightfully theirs to enjoy, Homer and Langley instead turned their home into a squalid dump. Spurning their father's sumptuous legacy, they binged instead on the scraps of the world." [cited in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 37-38]

"The story is told of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who was riding home one evening after a heavy day's work, feeling weary and depressed, when the verse came to mind, 'My grace is sufficient for you.'

In his mind he immediately compared himself to a little fish in the Thames River, apprehensive lest drinking so many pints of water in the river each day he might drink the Thames dry. Then Father Thames says to him, 'Drink away, little fish. My stream is sufficient for you.'

Next he thought of a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt, afraid lest it daily nibbles exhaust the supplies and cause it to starve to death. Then Joseph comes along and says, 'Cheer up, little mouse. My granaries are sufficient for you.'

Then he thought of a man climbing some high mountain to reach its lofty summit and dreading lest his breathing there might exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere. The Creator booms His voice out of heaven, saying, 'Breathe away, ho man, and fill your lungs. My atmosphere is sufficient for you!'" [cited in MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 256-57]

"A story is told about William Randolph Hearst, the late newspaper publisher. Hearst invested a fortune in collecting great works of art. One day he read about some valuable pieces of art and decided that he must add them to his collection. He sent his agent abroad to locate and purchase them. Months went by before the agent returned and reported to Hearst that the items had at least been found--they were stored in his own warehouse. Hearst had purchased them years before!" [cited in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 169]

"A poor man had wanted to go on a cruise all his life. As a youngster he had seen an advertisement for a luxury cruise, and ever since, he had dreamed of spending a week on a large ocean liner enjoying fresh sea air and relaxing in a luxurious environment. He saved money for years, carefully counting his pennies, often sacrificing personal needs so he could stretch his resources a little further.

Finally he had enough to purchase a cruise ticket. He went to a travel agent, looked over the cruise brochures, picked out one that was especially attractive, and bought a ticket with the money he had saved so long. He was hardly able to believe he was about to realize his childhood dream.

Knowing he could not afford the kind of elegant food pictured in the brochure, the man planned to bring his own provisions for the week. Accustomed to moderation after years of frugal living, and with his entire savings going to pay for the cruise ticket, the man decided to bring along a week's supply of bread and peanut butter. That was all he could afford.

The first few days of the cruise were thrilling. The man ate peanut-butter sandwiches alone in his room each morning and spent the rest of his time relaxing in the sunlight and fresh air, delighted to be aboard ship.

By midweek, however, the man was beginning to notice that he was the only person on board who was not eating luxurious meals. It seemed that every time he sat on the deck or rested in the lounge or stepped outside his cabin, a porter would walk by with a huge meal for someone who had ordered room service.

By the fifth day of the cruise the man could take it no longer. The peanut-butter sandwiches seemed stale and tasteless. He was desperately hungry, and even the fresh air and sunshine had lost their appeal. Finally, he stopped a porter and exclaimed, 'Tell me how I might get one of those meals! I'm dying for some decent food, and I'll do anything you say to earn it!'

'Why, sir, don't you have a ticket for this cruise?' the porter asked.

'Certainly,' said the man. 'But I spent everything I had for that ticket. I have nothing left with which to buy food.'

'But sir,' said the porter, 'didn't you realize? Meals are included with your passage. you may eat as much as you like!'

Lots of Christians live like that man. Not realizing the unlimited provisions that are theirs in Christ, they munch on stale scraps." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 241-42]

Supremacy

"Therefore since it is true that Christ has absorbed all the wrath of God that was aimed at me, and since it is true that Christ has performed the perfect righteousness that God demands of me, there is now for me no condemnation. Instead, every thought of God and every act of God toward me in Christ Jesus is mercy. The way is open to know him and all the beautiful supremacy of his Son. The cross of Christ has made the supremacy of Christ knowable. The best gift of the gospel is not the forgiveness of sins. The best gift of the gospel is not the imputed righteousness of Christ. The best gift of the Gospel is not eternal life. The best gift of the gospel is seeing and savoring the supremacy of Christ himself. The greatest reward of the cross is knowing the supremacy of Christ." [John Piper, *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, 43]

Union with

"Union with Christ is a phrase used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ." [Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 840]

"We can distinguish [the] two aspects of our union with Christ this way: Our legal union with Christ entitles us to all that Christ did for us as He acted in our place, as our substitute.

Our vital union with Christ is the means by which He works in us by His Holy Spirit. The legal union refers to His objective work outside of us that is credited to us through faith. The vital union refers to His subjective work in us, which is also realized through faith as we rely on His Spirit to work in and through us. Though our union with Christ has two aspects, it is one union. We cannot have legal union without also having vital union. If through faith we lay hold of what Christ did for us, we will also begin to experience His workings in us." [Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life*. 2002, 39]

"When Jesus died, He died as my representative, and I died in Him; when He arose, He rose as my representative, and I arose in Him; when He ascended up on high and took His place at the right hand of the Father in the glory, He ascended as my representative and I ascended in Him, and today I am seated in Christ with God in the heavenlies. I look at the cross of Christ, and I know that atonement has been made for my sins; I look at the open sepulcher and the risen and ascended Lord, and I know the atonement has been accepted. There no longer remains a single sin on me, no matter how many or how great my sins may have been." [Jerry Bridges, *The Bible and Its Christ*, Revell, n.d., 107-108]

"We must seek to know something of heart-felt, experimental communion with Him. Never, never let us forget, that "union" is one thing, and "communion" another. Thousands, I fear, who know what "union" with Christ is, know nothing of "communion." [J.C. Ryle]

"The subject of spiritual union is the most important, the most profound, and yet the most blessed of any that is set forth in the sacred Scriptures; and yet, sad to say, there is hardly any which is now more generally neglected. The very expression "spiritual union" is unknown in most professing Christian circles, and even where it is employed it is given such a protracted meaning as to take in only a fragment of this precious truth." [A.W. Pink, *Spiritual Union and Communion*, Baker, 1971, 7]

"The expression 'in Christ' sums up as briefly and as profoundly as possible the inexhaustible significance of man's redemption. It speaks of security in Him who has Himself borne in His own body the judgment of God against our sin; it speaks of acceptance in Him with whom alone God is well pleased; it speaks of assurance for the future in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life; it speaks of the inheritance of glory in Him who, as the only-begotten Son, is the sole heir of God; it speaks of participation in the divine nature in Him who is the everlasting Word; it speaks of knowing the truth, and being free in that truth, in Him who Himself is the Truth. All this, and very much more than can ever be expressed in human language, is meant by being in Christ." [R.A. Torrey. *2 Corinthians*, Eerdmans, 1962, 202]

"Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die; another's life, another's death, I stake my whole eternity." [Horatius Bonar]

"The day may come when after a long fight with disease, we shall feel that medicine can do no more, and that nothing remains but to die. Friends will be standing by, unable to help us. Hearing, eyesight, even the power of praying, will be fast failing us. The world and its shadows will be melting beneath our feet. Eternity, with its realities, will be looming large before our minds. What shall support us in that trying hour? What shall enable us to feel, 'I fear no evil?' (Psalm 23:4). Nothing, nothing can do it but close communion with Christ.

Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Christ putting His right arm under our heads. Christ felt to be sitting by our side. Christ can alone give us the complete victory in the last struggle." [J.C. Ryle]

CHRISTMAS:

I heard a story of a woman who was out Christmas shopping with her two children. After many hours of looking at row after row of toys and everything else imaginable. And after hours of hearing both her children asking for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the elevator with her two kids. She was feeling what so many of us feel during the holiday season time of the year. Overwhelming pressure to go to every party, every housewarming, taste all the holiday food and treats, getting that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card. Finally the elevator doors opened and there was already a crowd in the car. She pushed her way into the car and dragged her two kids in with her and all the bags of stuff. When the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and stated, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot." From the back of the car everyone heard a quiet calm voice respond, "Don't worry, we already crucified him." For the rest of the trip down the elevator it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

After the Sunday School had sung "Silent Night" and had been told the Christmas story, the teacher suggested that the children draw a picture of the nativity scene. A little boy finished first. The teacher praise his drawing of the manger, of Joseph, of Mary and the baby Jesus. But she was puzzled by a roly-poly figure off to the one side and asked who it was. "Oh," explained the youngster, "that's round John Virgin."

How much did that first Christmas cost?

It cost Mary and Joseph a smudge against their name
With accompanying shame.
It cost the angels a venture to planet Earth
With good news of a long-awaited birth.
It cost the shepherds a sleepless night
With more than their share of fright.
It cost three kings day after weary day of travel
With a starry mystery to unravel
It cost God the gift of His only Son
With a mutinous world to be won.
It cost our Lord Jesus Christ everything.
"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15)

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day (By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow).

Longfellow was a legend in his own lifetime. He is known in many circles as "The Children's Poet." In his last years, his birthday was a holiday in many schools.

He was born in Portland, Maine in 1807. His ancestors can be traced back to the Pilgrims, even to John Alden and Elder Brewster. He was educated at Bowdoin College, to which he returned in later years as professor of modern languages.

He is not usually thought of as a hymn writer, but one of his poems has been set to music by John Calkin and the result is one of our most popular Christmas Carols.

It is reported, that in his 56th year, Longfellow, on Christmas day, fell to writing of the joy of the season.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

As he came to the 3d stanza he was stopped by the thought of the condition of his beloved country. The Civil War was in full swing. The battle of Gettysburg was not more than 6 months past. Days looked dark, and he probably asked himself the question, "How can the last phrase of these stanzas be true in this war-torn country, where brother fights against brother and father against son?" But he kept writing, and what did he write?

And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to man!"

It seems as if he could have been writing for the present day, too. Then, as every Christian should do, he turned his thoughts to the One who solves all problems, and he wrote:

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail.
With peace on earth, good will to men."

The Christmas Stranger.

At Christmas time there was a man, who looked so out of place.
As people rushed about him, at a hurried sort of pace.

He stared at all the Christmas lights, the tinsel everywhere.
The shopping center Santa Claus, with children gathered near.

The mall was packed with shoppers, who were going to and fro.
Some with smiles, some with frowns, and some too tired to go.

They rested on benches, or they hurried on their way.
To fight the crowds for purchases, to carry home that day.

The music from the stereo, was playing loud and clear.
Of Santa Claus and snowmen, and funny nosed reindeer.

He heard the people talk about, the good times on the way.
Of parties, fun and food galore, and gift exchange that day.

I'd like to know what's going on, the man was heard to say.
There seems to be some sort, of celebration on the way.

And would you tell me who this is, all dressed in red and white.
And why are children asking "him" about a special night.

The answer came in disbelief, I can't believe my ear.
I can't believe you do not know, that Christmas time is here.

The time when Santa comes around, with gifts for girls and boys.
When they are asleep on Christmas Eve, he leaves them books and toys.

The man you see in red and white, is Santa Claus so sly.
The children love his joyful laugh, and twinkle in his eye.

His gift packed sleigh is pulled along, by very small reindeer.
As he flies quickly through the air, while darting here and there.

The children learn of Santa Claus, while they are still quite small.
When Christmas comes "he" is the most, "important" one of all.

The stranger hung His head in shame, He closed a nail pierced hand.
His body shook in disbelief, He did not understand.

A shadow crossed His stricken face, His voice was low but clear.
"After all these years they still don't know." And JESUS shed a tear.

Politically Correct Holiday Wish:

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, my best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low-stress, non-addictive, gender-neutral, celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, or secular practices of your choice, with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all and a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions to society have helped make America great (not to imply that America is necessarily greater than any other country or is the only "America" in the western hemisphere), and without regard to the race, creed, color, age, physical ability, religious faith, choice of computer platform, or sexual preference of the wishee. (By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms.) This greeting is

subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable with no alteration to the original greeting. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others, and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. This wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year, or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first, and warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

At Christmas time it is seasonable to consider the etymology of the word *Christmas*. Although it is at once evident that the derivation is Christ's mass—*Christimissa*—yet it must be borne in mind that this name was applied to the festival at a much earlier period than that in which the word "mass" was given and limited to a certain office or service of the Roman Catholic Church. The *missa* of the primitive Church was the name given to every part of Divine service, and was not reserved for one portion of it; and, originally, it was restricted to the termination of such service, and the dismissal—*missio*—of the catechumens and worshippers with such words as "Ite missa est." The termination *mas* was also used for other seasons besides Christmas—such as Candlemas, Martinmas, Michaelmas, and Lammas; and for the last-mentioned word, Dr. Johnson, rejecting the derivation of Lamb-mass and Loaf-mass, considered it to be merely a corruption of Lattermath, as marking the season—*August ist*—when the second mowing of grass might take place. The derivation of the termination mass from the Hebrew *missach*, "an oblation," brings us to the Saxon messe, and the old French *mes*, "a meal or repast," which is still preserved to us in the terms "an officer's mess," and in "messmate" and "messaging together." So that, in every way, the word *Christmas* means *Christ's festival*, whether the festal celebration be a sacred service or a social meal; and the highest and best celebration of the day seems to us to be a combination and mingling of the social and sacred character of the season. [Eneas Sweetland Dallas, *Once a week*, Volume 23. London: Sweeting and Company Printers, 1870, 479.]

CHURCH: [General; Sacraments; Teamwork; Truth; Unity; Visible vs. Invisible]

General

7 Essential Elements that Make up a Church according to Martin Luther

The Word

"First, the holy Christian people are recognized by their possession of the holy word of God." Martin Luther always returned to the foundational importance of the Scriptures and the gospel in his approach to any doctrinal question. The church must have and cherish the revelation of God. "And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian, holy people must exist there, for God's word cannot be without God's people, and conversely, God's people cannot be without God's word."

Baptism

"Second, God's people or the Christian holy people are recognized by the holy sacrament of baptism, wherever it is taught, believed, and administered correctly according to Christ's ordinance."

The Lord's Supper

"Third, God's people, or Christian holy people, are recognized by the holy sacrament of the altar, wherever it is rightly administered, believed, and received, according to Christ's institution. This too is a public sign and a precious, holy possession left behind by Christ by which his people are sanctified so that they also exercise themselves in faith and openly confess that they are Christian, just as they do with the word and baptism."

Discipline

"Fourth, God's people or holy Christians are recognized by the office of the keys exercised publicly. That is, as Christ decrees in Matthew 18, if a Christian sins, he should be reproved; and if he does not mend his ways, he should be bound in his sin and cast out. If he does mend his ways, he should be absolved. That is the office of the keys."

Biblical Offices

"Fifth, the church is recognized externally by the fact that it consecrates or calls ministers, or has offices that it is to administer."

Worship

"Sixth, the holy Christian people are externally recognized by prayer, public praise, and thanksgiving to God."

Suffering

"Seventh, the holy Christian people are externally recognized by the possession of the sacred cross. They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from t h e d e v i l , t h e w o r l d , a n d t h e f l e s h . " [ligonier.org/blog/martin-luthers-7-characteristics-church/]

The revolving door has become a fitting symbol for today's church. Only one person can fit inside the door, which speaks of our rampant individualism. And the fact that it revolves is symbolic of how many flow from church to church, never staying in one place, always on the move.

In 1672 John Bunyan was released from prison because of the Declaration of Religious Indulgence. Immediately he was licensed as the pastor of the church in Bedford, which he had been serving all along, even from within prison, by writings and periodic visits. A barn was purchased and renovated as their first building, and this was where Bunyan ministered as pastor for the next sixteen years until his death. He never was wooed away from this little parish by the larger opportunities in London. The estimate is that, in 1676, there were perhaps 120 nonconformist parishioners in Bedford, with others no doubt coming to hear him from the surrounding villages.

"The Church of Christ had been founded by shedding its own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not inflicting it" [St. Jerome]

"I had to get rid of any idea of hell or any idea of the afterlife. That's what held me, kept me down. So now I just have nothing but contempt for the church." [Bestselling author, Frank McCord, cited by Paul David Tripp in *Forever: Why You Can't Life Without It*, 21]

"That very church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors." – Charles H. Spurgeon

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object to share with the class that represented their religion. The first student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David." The second student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Mary. I'm a Catholic and this is a Rosary." The third student got in up front of the class and said, "My name is Tommy. I am Baptist, and this is a casserole."

There were three churches in a small Texas town: the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Church. Each church was overrun with pesky squirrels. One day, the Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration, they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

The Methodist group got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creations. So, they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

It was only the Episcopalians who were able to come up with the best and most effective solution. They baptized the squirrels.....and registered them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

"It is not the business of the church to adapt Christ to men, but men to Christ." [Dorothy Sayers, cited in *Leadership Journal*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 48]

"God reveals His glorious majesty in the highest heavens, His fearful justice in the hell of the damned; His wise and powerful providence is manifest throughout the whole world; but His gracious love and mercy in, and unto His church here upon earth." John Robinson

"The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones." [Henry Ward Beecher]

Devero Sprat was an Englishman, who in 1641, was captured by the Algerian Pirates and made a slave. As a slave this nobleman founded a church. And when his release was finally settled -- accomplished by his brother back in England -- he refused to accept the release and said he would remain a slave until the day he died in order to serve the church that Christ had privileged him to found among the slaves. Today there is a plaque in a church in Algiers that bears his name. [cited by John MacArthur, GC 45-89]

"The church is an anvil that has worn out many hammers." [Alexander MacLaren]

"Do not go where it is all fine music and grand talk and beautiful architecture; those things will neither fill anybody's stomach nor feed his soul. Go where the gospel is preached, the gospel that really feeds your soul, and go often." [C.H. Spurgeon on discerning what local church to join, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 88]

"Do you want to know that your new life is real? Commit yourself to a local group of saved sinners. Try to love them. Don't just do it for 3 weeks. Don't just do it for 6 months. Do it for years. And I think you'll find out, and others will too, whether or not you love God. The truth will show itself." [Mark Dever, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 57]

Sacraments

Gelasius, Bishop of Rome (492-496): "Surely the sacrament we take of the Lord's body and blood is a divine thing, on account of which, and by the same we are made partakers of the divine nature; and yet the substance of the bread and wine does not cease to be. And certainly the image and similitude of Christ's body and blood are celebrated in the action of the mysteries." (Tractatus de duabus naturis 14 [PL Sup.-III. 773]) See Francis Turretin, Institutes of Elenctic Theology, 3 Vols., trans. George Musgrave Giger and ed. James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg: reprinted by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1992), Vol. 3, p. 479 (XVIII.xxvi.xx).

Teamwork

There is a Texas story about a man who drove his car into a ditch in a desolate area. A local rancher came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move. Then the rancher hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond. Once more the rancher commanded, "Pull, Pokey, pull!" Nothing. Then the rancher nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull." The horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was thankful—and curious. He asked the rancher why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. The rancher said, "Oh, Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try."

Truth

"The church's lack of power is the result of its lack of truth. . . . We are saying that Christianity is intellectually defensible—that, in fact, it is the only intellectually defensible system of thought. We are saying that God has made the wisdom of this world—whether that wisdom be called science, religion, philosophy, or common sense—foolishness." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 141]

"Any church which puts in the place of justification by faith in Christ another method of salvation is a harlot church." [Charles Spurgeon]

Precedents give light to succeeding times. We see farther than the fathers, because, like dwarfs, we get up on their shoulders. We see with their eyes and our own also. So Diogenes might brag that he had more wit than his mother, because he had his mother-wit and his own too. [Thomas Adams, 2 *Peter*, 207]

"The Word of God tells us that Christ's church is glorious. . . . [But] today the glory of the church is thickly veiled. It is no exaggeration to assert that in the main it presents a picture of advanced decadence and extreme feebleness. . . . Let it be said emphatically, the church is where the truth is. Sound doctrine always has been, is today, and ever will be the foremost mark of the true church. But who dares to assert that there is today in the churches a rising

tide of interest in doctrine? By and large people do not go to church to learn about God from His infallible Word, but to be tranquilized. And that the glory of God is both the beginning and the end of common worship does not seem to occur to them." [R.B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ, Banner of Truth*, 1966, p. 13-14]

Peter Marshall in his characteristically trenchant manner describes 20th century Christians in these words: "They are like deep-sea divers encased in suits designed for many fathoms deep, marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bathtubs."

"An old church in England had a motto etched across the top of the granite doorway that read "We Preach Christ Crucified." And as often happens in England, ivy grows upon the buildings—as it did on this old church. The ivy grew across the front of the building, and before long all that could be read of the motto was "We Preach Christ." And the ivy grew some more and then the motto read "We Preach." And the ivy grew even more and the motto read "We." Then the church died . . . [cited by John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 143]

"Within the last quarter of a century we have actually seen a major shift in the beliefs and practices of the evangelical wing of the church so radical as to amount to a complete sellout and all this behind the cloak of fervent orthodoxy. With Bibles under their arms and bundles of tracts in their pockets, religious persons now meet to carry on 'services' so carnal, so pagan, that they can hardly be distinguished from the old vaudeville shows of earlier days. And for a preacher or a writer to challenge this heresy is to invite ridicule and abuse from every quarter." [A.W. Tozer Of God and Men]

This indictment against the church was written by Tozer in 1960! One wonders what Tozer and other godly men of his era would think if they could see those in the church today who have carried this carnality to an even greater extreme?

Unity

"In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity." 19th c. church historian, Philip Schaff calls this famous quote "the watchword of Christian peacemakers" (History of the Christian Church, vol. 7, p. 650). Often attributed to Augustine, it appears to come from a German Lutheran theologian of the early 17th c., Rupertus Meldenius. The phrase occurs in a tract on Christian unity written (circa 1627) during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), a bloody time in European history in which religious tensions played a significant role. The saying has found great favor among subsequent writers such as Richard Baxter, and has since been adopted as a motto by the Moravian Church of North America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as well as FIRE.

[adapted from ligonier.org/learn/articles/essentials-unity-non-essentials-liberty-all-things]

Ah! how doth the name of Christ, and the way of Christ, suffer by the discord of saints! How are many that are entering upon the ways of God hindered and sadded, and the mouths of the wicked opened, and their hearts hardened against God and his ways, by the discord of his people! Remember this, the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph: and what a sad thing is this, that Christians should give Satan cause to triumph! [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 205]

Ah! Christians, God loses much, and you lose much, and Satan gains much by this, that you do not, that you will not, walk lovingly together so far as your ways lie together. It is your sin and shame that you do not, that you will not, pray together, and hear together, and confer together, and mourn together, because that in some far lesser things you are not agreed together. What folly and madness is it in those whose way of a hundred miles lies fourscore and nineteen together, yet will not walk so far together, because that they cannot go the other mile together; yet such is the folly and madness of many Christians in these days, who will not do many things they may do, because they cannot do everything they should do. I fear God will whip them into a better temper before he hath done with them. He will break their bones, and pierce their hearts, but he will cure them of this malady. [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 207]

"Jesus nowhere says, 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you are scintillatingly critical and condescending toward evangelicals who have some things wrong.' I do not mean to hint for a moment that we who teach can afford to duck the responsibility of teaching discernment. I mean only to say that even discernment must be nestled into the bigger 'main thing' of love for the brothers and sisters in Christ." (D.A. Carson, *The Pastor As Scholar and the Scholar As Pastor*, 101)

“To dwell above with saints we love will be our hope in glory. To dwell below with saints we know, we’ll that’s another story!”

There are places in Europe (I forget where) with walls of stone—giant walls that go on for yard after yard if not mile after mile—that were quarried and built by hand. The walls have no mortar; the stones are so perfectly cut and placed that you can't get a credit card between them. Their strength is in their unity. As a result they have lasted through the centuries and yet stand as firm and strong as the day they were set in place. God cuts and quarries us by His hand. He places us in the body so that we can stand together in strength. We do this apart from any earthly mortar, only the mortar of His love and grace, a love and grace we minister to one another. [TAB]

I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to.

I heard of one church where the pastor and the music director weren't getting along too well. As time went on, their feud spilled over into the worship service. The first week the pastor preached on commitment and dedication. The music director chose for the closing hymn, "We will not be moved." The second week the pastor preached on giving. The music director chose for the closing hymn, "Jesus paid it all." The third week the pastor preached on gossip. The music director chose for the closing hymn, "I love to tell the story." With all of this, the pastor became so disillusioned that the following Sunday he announced to the congregation that he was considering resigning. The music director changed the closing hymn to, "Oh Why Not Tonight." Well, the pastor did eventually resign. His last Sunday in the pulpit he told the congregation that it was God who led him there, and it was God who was taking him away. The music director closed with, "What a friend we have in Jesus."

"The church is like Noah's Ark, if it wasn't for the storm outside we couldn't stand the stink inside." (European Theologian Reinhold Niehbur)

Phillip Keller, was a shepherd and agricultural researcher in East Africa and Canada. He explains how unaware and vulnerable sheep are to danger and even inevitable death:

"It reminds me of the behavior of a band of sheep under attack from dogs, cougars, bears, or even wolves. Often in blind fear or stupid unawareness they will stand rooted to the spot watching their companions being cut to shreds. The predator will pounce upon one then another of the flock raking and tearing them with tooth and claw. Meanwhile, the other sheep may act as if they did not even hear or recognize the carnage going on around them. It is as though they were totally oblivious to the peril of their own precarious position." [cited in Alexander Strauch, Biblical Eldership, 18]

"I've been in the pastorate for 30 years and have never had such hurt and pain as this," a pastor recently lamented. "I didn't realize how easily people you've helped can turn against you." [cited by Alfred H. Ells, Hope of Hope Counseling, Inc., in the leaflet, "Counselor's Corner," 1997]

A church in GA decided to re-roof their sanctuary. When it came time to make the monumental decision as to the color of tiles to use the church was split between two colors. The congregation drew ranks and formed battle lines. Neither side would budge. With no end in sight and with the rainy season coming the church made the only reasonable decision: they tiled the roof with both colors, half and half. And once the job was completed, church members expressed their support for their color by boycotting one side of the sanctuary and sitting only under the roof color they had voted for. [cited in Grace to You letter dated 7/27/95]

From the Old “How Many Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb” Joke...

1. How many Charismatics does it take to change a light bulb? One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.
2. How many Calvinists does it take to change a light bulb? None. God has predestined when the light will be on. Calvinists do not change light bulbs. They simply read the instructions and pray the light bulb will be one that has been chosen to be changed.
3. How many Armenians does it take to change a light bulb? All. They need everyone to make sure it stays on. One can never really be sure.
4. How many Baptists does it take to change a light bulb? Change???
5. How many neo-orthodox does it take to change a bulb? No one knows. They can't tell the difference between light and dark.
6. How many TV evangelists does it take to change a light bulb? One. But for the message of light to continue, send in your donation today.
7. How many independent fundamentalists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, because any more might result in too much cooperation.

8. How many liberals does it take to change a light bulb? At least ten, as they need to hold a debate on whether or not the light bulb exists. Even if they can agree upon the existence of the light bulb, they still might not change it, to keep from alienating those who might use other forms of light.

9. How many Catholics does it take to change a light bulb? None. They always use candles.

10. How many worship leaders who use guitars does it take to change a light bulb? One. But soon all those around can warm up to its glowing.

11. How many members of an established fundamental Bible teaching church that is over 20 years old does it take to change a light bulb? One to actually change the bulb, and nine to say how much they liked the old one.

12. How many United Methodists does it take to change a light bulb? This statement was issued: "We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb (or light source, or non-dark resource), and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life, and tinted-all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence."

13. How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb? "What's a light bulb?"

14. How many youth pastors does it take to change a light bulb? Youth pastors aren't around long enough for a light bulb to burn out.

15. How many Southern Baptists does it take to change a light bulb? 109. Seven on the Light Bulb Task Force Subcommittee, who report to the 12 on the Light Bulb Task Force, appointed by the 15 on the Trustee Board. Their recommendation is reviewed by the Finance Committee Executive of 5, who place it on the agenda of the 18 member Finance Committee. If they approve, they bring a motion to the 27 member church Board, who appoint another 12 member review committee. If they recommend that the Church Board proceed, a resolution is brought to the Congregational Business Meeting. They appoint another 8 member review committee. If their report to the next Congregational Business Meeting supports the changing of a light bulb, and the Congregation votes in favor, the responsibility to carry out the light bulb change is passed on to the Trustee Board, who in turn appoint a 7 member committee to find the best price in new light bulbs. Their recommendation of which Hardware Store has the best buy must then be reviewed by the 23 member Ethics Committee to make certain that this hardware store has no connection to Disneyland. They report back to the Trustee Board who, then commissions the Trustee in charge of the Janitor to ask him to make the change. By then the janitor discovers that one more light bulb has burned out.

False Notions of Unity – "First, the oneness that Jesus is talking about is not just organizational oneness. In our generation we gave a tremendous push for ecclesiastical oneness. It is in the air—like German measles in a time of epidemic—and it is all about us. Human beings can have all sorts of organizational unity and yet exhibit to the world no unity at all. The classic example is the Roman Catholic Church down through the ages. The Roman Catholic Church has had a great external unity—probably the greatest outward organizational unity that has ever been seen in this world—but there have been at the same time titanic and hateful power struggles between the different orders within the one church. Today there is a still greater difference between the classical Roman Catholicism and progressive Roman Catholicism. The so-called 'progressive' Roman Catholic theologians are the same as the liberal theologians in the Protestant groups. The Roman Catholic Church still tries to stand in organizational oneness, but there is only organizational unity, for here are two completely different religions, two concepts of God, two different concepts of truth." [Francis Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian*, 191-92]

Visible vs. Invisible

Jerome (347-420): "The Church does not depend upon walls, but upon the truth of its doctrines. The Church is there, where the true faith is. But about fifteen or twenty years ago, heretics possessed all the walls of the Churches here. But the true Church was there, where the true faith was." [See William Goode, *The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, 2nd edition, 3 Volumes (London: John Henry Jackson, publisher, 1853), Vol. 2, p. 344.]

There is an assumption—a false assumption—that God must work through an institution (the Roman Catholic Church) rather than through a spiritual body (the invisible church). This applies to the canon and doctrine.

CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT:

"The church has not been spending its energy to go deep with the unfathomable God of the Bible. Against the overwhelming weight and seriousness of the Bible, much of the church is choosing, at this very moment, to become more light and shallow and entertainment-oriented, and therefore has become irrelevant. The popular God of fun-church is simply too small and too sociable to hold a hurricane in his hand." [John Piper]

"If I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. The old cross slew men, the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it. - A.W. Tozer

What you win them with is likely what you'll win them to. If you win them with the Gospel, you'll win them to the Gospel. If you win them with technique, programs, entertainment, and personal charisma, you might end up winning them to yourself and your methods (and you might not!), but it's likely that they won't be won to the Gospel first and foremost. "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). The implication is that once you try to turn the corner from technique, program, or entertainment to the Gospel, it's likely that you'll either lose them, or

they will be converted to you, not Christ. The Gospel of Christ has never needed the gimmicks of man to effect conversion in the soul (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor 2:1-5). [Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Crossway, 2005), p. 44]

One man who is at the forefront of the church growth movement tells of how he sometimes devotes hours of his time each week to come up with a catchy sermon title that will be appealing to his listeners. He writes: "I do this because I know non-churched people won't come, or come back, unless they say, 'Now that's something I want to hear about.'" [Bill Hybels, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, 32]

"The apostles weren't trying to finesse people. Their communication was not supposed to be 'cool' or soothing. They aimed for a piercing of the heart, for conviction of sin. They had not the faintest intention of asking, 'What do people want to hear? How can we draw more people to church on Sunday?' That was the last thing in their minds. Such an approach would have been foreign to the whole New Testament. Instead of trying to bring men and women to Christ in the biblical way, we are consumed with the unbiblical concept of 'church growth.' The Bible does not say we should aim at numbers but rather urges us faithfully to proclaim God's message in the boldness of the Holy Spirit. This will build God's church God's way." [Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 124]

"The truth is that 'user-friendly' can be a cover-up word for carnality. The same people who want sixty-minute worship services rent two-hour videos and watch NBA and NFL games that run even longer. The issue is not length, but appetite." [Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 132-33]

"Our assignment as churches is not to create a Wal-Mart Community Church, where the aisles are wide, the merchandising is slick, the message is comfortable, and the price of salvation is a little cheaper." [Marion D. Aldridge, cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

"Churching the unchurched is an absolute fallacy--it is like purposing to let the tares in. It is absolutely bizarre to want to make unsaved people feel comfortable in a church. The church is not a building--the church is a group of worshiping, redeemed, and sanctified people among whom an unbeliever should feel either miserable, convicted and drawn to Christ, or else alienated and isolated. Only if the church hides its message and ceases to be what God designed the church to be, can it make an unbeliever comfortable." [John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*, 373]

The aim . . . is to lure baby boomers back to church by welcoming all comers regardless of their beliefs . . . mainline denominations may be dying because they lost their theological integrity. The only thing worse, perhaps, would be the rise of a new Protestant establishment that succeeds because it never had any. [Newsweek, cited in *The Berean Call*, July 1996]

Many Christians have the misconception that to win the world to Christ we must first . . . make unconverted sinners feel comfortable with the Christian message. . . . Give them something they want. Put on a show. Entertain them. Avoid sensitive subjects like sin and damnation. . . . The strategy is to tantalize non-Christians rather than confront their unbelief.

That is altogether incompatible with sound doctrine. It is compromise with the world. James called it spiritual adultery. [John MacArthur, *Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses its Will to Discern*]

"Marketing principles are becoming the arbiter of truth. Elements of the message that don't fit the promotional plan are simply omitted. Marketing savvy demands that the offense of the cross must be down-played. Salesmanship requires that negative subjects like divine wrath be avoided. Consumer satisfaction means that the standard of righteousness cannot be raised too high. The seeds of a watered-down gospel are thus sown in the very philosophy that drives many ministries today. [John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, 24]

"Some church leaders evidently think the four priorities of the early church--the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42)--make a lame agenda for the church in this day and age. Churches are allowing drama, music, recreation, entertainment, self-help programs, and similar enterprises to eclipse traditional Sunday worship and fellowship. In fact, everything seems to be in fashion in the church today except biblical preaching. The new pragmatism sees preaching--particularly expository preaching--as passe'. Plainly declaring the truth of God's Word is regarded as unsophisticated, offensive, and utterly ineffective. We're now told we can get better results by first amusing people or giving them success tips and pop-psychology, thus wooing them into the fold. Once they feel comfortable, they'll be ready to receive biblical truth in small, diluted doses." [John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, xiv]

"The church growth movement does not produce lasting results, a point that has been recognized within the church growth movement. Though unwilling to concede that there was 'anything intrinsically wrong' with the church growth principles they had developed, one prominent church growth advocate was quoted in an article in *Christianity Today* as acknowledging that 'somehow they don't work.'" [cited in *Power Religion*, 142]

John MacArthur tells of his visit to the tomb of the great Baptist preacher of the 19th century, C.H. Spurgeon, in London, England:

"I stood by his tomb in London--a heavy stone vault, blended into the cemetery between a road and a large building. If I hadn't had someone to lead me there, I would not have found it. Spurgeon's and his wife's names are engraved in stone, but there is no information on the tomb itself about who he was. The average sightseer might miss the stone vault (there are larger, more impressive ones all around), or in seeing it, not realize it is the burial place of a man who in his time was perhaps more well known and more influential than England's Prime Minister."

"As I stood by Spurgeon's grave, I couldn't help thinking how much the church needs men like him today. Spurgeon was not afraid to stand boldly for the truth, even when it meant he stood alone. Preaching the Word of God was his sole passion. He believed the church's tolerance of preaching was beginning to decline, while some ministers were experimenting with alternate approaches and abbreviated messages. He saw in that a great danger, and his concern thrust him into a battle that ultimately led to his death. He had been placed in that grave exactly a hundred years before my visit."

"Contrast Spurgeon's attitude toward preaching with the prevailing opinion of our day. In fact, Spurgeon's lament is diametrically opposite the perspective expressed in a column that appeared a few years ago in a popular Christian magazine. A well-known preacher was venting his own loathing for long sermons. January 1 was coming, so he resolved to do better in the coming year. 'That means wasting less time listening to long sermons and spending much more time preparing short ones,' he wrote. 'People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon.'

MacArthur sums up:

"Unfortunately, that perfectly sums up the predominant attitude behind much of modern ministry. Bad doctrine is tolerable; a long sermon most certainly is not. The timing of the benediction is of far more concern to the average churchgoer than the content of the sermon. Sunday dinner and the feeding of our mouths takes precedence over Sunday School and the nourishment of our souls. Long-windedness has become a greater sin than heresy." [cited in Ashamed of the Gospel, xi-xii]

To increase his attendance one pastor makes daring promises to his congregation. For each new level of attendance, the pastor has promised a new feat. For 200 attenders the pastor danced a jig. For 300 the pastor will preached from the roof-top. For 400 the pastor promised to be tar and feathered (with honey). It's said that he wore a garbage bag for this stunt while the church youth gleefully applied the honey and feathers. When asked about this growth strategy the pastor modestly states that it works. [cited in Idea Source, December 1994]

In a suggestion entitled, "Bury Satan to Raise Consciousness," a church in Alabama borrowed a casket from a local mortuary and placed a mirror inside of it. They then rolled the casket to the front of the sanctuary to have a "Devil's Funeral." After giving a message on "putting the Devil to death," the pastor then invited the congregation to walk past the coffin looking into the mirror so they could each see the sinful person inside each of them." [cited in Idea Source, Nov. 1994]

"When the leaders of the church growth movement claim that theology gets in the way of growth and insist that it doesn't matter what a particular church believes: growth is a matter of following the proper principles, they are displaying their debt to (Charles) Finney. When leaders of the Vineyard movement praise this sub-Christian enterprise and the barking, roaring, screaming, laughing, and other strange phenomena on the basis that "it works" and one must judge its truth by its fruit, they are following Finney as well as the father of American pragmatism, William James, who declared that truth must be judged on the basis of "its cash-value in experiential terms." [Michael Horton]

"If churches don't . . . concern themselves with the issues of relevance and church growth it's quite likely that within a generation those institutions will be out of business." [Charles Arn, cited in a newspaper article dated September 18, 1994]

"Worship services in many churches today are like a merry-go-round. You drop a token in the collection box; it's good for a ride. There's music and lots of motion up and down. The ride is carefully timed and seldom varies in length. Lots of good feelings are generated, and

it is the one ride you can be sure will never be the least bit threatening or challenging. But though you spend the whole time feeling as if you're moving forward, you get off exactly where you got on." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 150-151]

"For the church to address the unchurched with a theocentric attitude is to invite failure in mission. The non-churched who have no vital belief in a relationship with God will spurn, reject, or simply ignore the theologian, church spokesperson, preacher, or missionary who approaches with Bible in hand, theology on the brain and the lips, and expects nonreligious persons to suspend their doubts and swallow the theocentric assertions as fact." [Robert Schuller, cited in MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 153-54]

"The outside observer see us as staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all where we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes action. . . . Unlike the first Christians who in three centuries won the Roman world, and those later Christians who pioneered the Reformation, and the Puritan awakening and the Evangelical revival, and the great missionary movement of the last century, we lack certainty. [J.I. Packer, cited in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 122-23]

"Making unbelievers and evildoers feel welcome and comfortable in the church by non-confrontive, vapid, shallow preaching leads them to false security on the basis of their attendance, participation, religious feelings, and acceptance. That can be a damning deceit." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 126]

"I would argue that the reason so many unbelievers can sit comfortably in our churches and even call themselves born-again Christians is that we give them very little to deny. The offensive message of the cross has been replaced with 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,' with the cross tucked somewhere underneath it." [Michael Horton in Christ The Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation, 54-55.]

"The pastor of one large church echoes Fosdick's philosophy: 'We have put a lot of time and thought into what non-churched people want from a Sunday morning service, and we have concluded that they basically want four things: Anonymity, uncomplicated teaching, a non-threatening environment, and contemporary relevancy.'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 148]

"One of the reigning tenets of our time is the extreme belief that all our problems are new. I would call this the disease of contemporaneity . . . associated with it is a really terrible conceit . . . the notion that we are living in such a fresh time and that wisdom has *come with us* whereas nobody ever had it before--this I find to be an absolutely intolerable conceit." [Elton Trueblood, cited in Larry Christenson, The Christian Family, 12]

Popular Pastor Cloned In Church Growth Experiment - by Horace Pook, July 2005

In an attempt to combat a severe drop in attendance every time their popular preacher goes on summer vacation, Marina Bay Community Church made the shocking announcement that they have cloned their longtime pastor, Rev. Spencer Klagg. To make this possible, Marina Bay enlisted the help of RevClone, a new Christian cloning

facility in Southern California dedicated to multiplying the current pool of dynamic seeker-sensitive preachers. "As a cutting-edge mega church, we're always looking for innovative ways to grow our church, and DNA duplication just seemed like a no-brainer," explained church spokesman and elder, Clarence Ambrose. "Statistically our lowest Sunday attendance is when Pastor Klagg is on vacation and we have our associate pastor, Raymond Elliot, fill in. No offense to Raymond, but the people think Pastor Klagg's sermon jokes are funnier." Added Ambrose with concern, "Quite frankly, Raymond just doesn't have the comic timing. In fact we've suggested that he go out on the road and work on his material."

By cloning their pastor, Marina Bay hopes to fill their 3,000 seat auditorium every Sunday, whether the original Pastor Klagg is in the pulpit or not. During those times when Klagg is taking time off, his clone will perform the pastoral duties in his stead, assuring the congregation of no interruption in enjoying their pastor's unique spiritual gifts. "Not to mention keeping the weekly offering at the same high level as the attendance," Ambrose quipped wryly.

Not all church members, however, are pleased with the cloning of Pastor Klagg. Herman Tayback, a deacon for twenty years, is a vocal critic of the RevClone project. "Am I the only one creeping out over this? Last week the pastor was performing a wedding while his clone was back home mowing his lawn and taking out the garbage. I mean, are we gaining a spare pastor for the church or a spare husband for Mrs. Klagg?"

Tayback also worries about possible theological ramifications. "Hey, I've seen those science fiction movies where the clone slowly goes insane because of a missing chromosome. What happens if Klagg's double goes mad and starts preaching on sin and repentance, and we lose half the congregation? Believe me, I've shared my concerns about this with Pastor Klagg. at least I think I have. Ooo, did anyone else just get a chill down their back?"

Regardless of the criticism, RevClone's head scientist Farnsworth Diddle is quite proud of his work with Marina Bay, and he envisions a wide application for this new cloning technology. "Just think... pastors won't just give up their pulpits to Rick Warren's purpose-driven teachings, now they can give up their pulpits to one of Rick Warren's clones." Deacon Tayback disagrees. "Don't we have enough Rick Warren clones in churches already?"

All in all, Ambrose says Marina Bay is very pleased with the initial reaction to their new genetically-created pastor. "Attendance has never been better," he reported happily. "But if we ever start losing folks, we're not worried. Our contingency plan is to start cloning the congregation, too. Doesn't science work in mysterious ways?"

In related news, associate pastor Raymond Elliot will be performing August 15th at the "Laugh Factory" in Dubuque, Iowa, during Open Mike Night.

COMMITMENT:

"Dr. John Henry Jowett said, 'Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing.' He was right. A pastor friend and I once heard a young man preach an eloquent sermon, but it lacked something. 'There was something missing,' I said to my friend; and he replied, 'Yes, and it won't be there until his heart is broken. After he has suffered awhile, he will have a message worth listening to.'" [Warren Wiersbe, Be Encouraged, 51]

COMMUNICATION: [Speech; Listening; Misunderstandings in]

Speech

"'Always' and 'never' are two words you always should remember never to use." [Wendell Johnson]

"Never miss a good chance to shut up." [Will Rogers]

You know you have a problem when your dentist is Dr. Scholl!

Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

There is an ancient story about a wiseman of ancient Greece by the name of Bios who was sent an animal to sacrifice. He was instructed to sacrifice the animal and return to the donor the best and worst parts of the animal. He sent back the tongue. The tongue is indeed the best and worst part of man (cf. James 3).

C.H. Spurgeon, reflecting on a trip he took to a museum in Venice, noted:

I saw in the museum at Venice an instrument with which one of the old Italian tyrants was wont to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his wonton malignity. [then] I thought of gossips, backbiters, and secret slanderers, and wished that their mischievous devices might come to a speedy end. Their weapons of innuendo, shrug, and whispers, appear to be insignificant as needles, but the venom which they instil is deadly to many a reputation." [cited in Gems of Truth and Beauty, Chicago: Rhodes and McClure Pub. Co., 1896, p. 279]

Calvin Coolidge once remarked: "I have never been cursed by the things I have left unsaid." [Knight's Illustrations, 411]

"In company guard your tongue; in solitude, your heart. Our words need watching. So also do our thoughts and imaginations which grow most active when we are alone." [Spurgeon, cited in Knight's Illustrations, 412]

The tongue weighs practically nothing, But so few people can hold it.

The story is told of a young man during the middle ages who went to a monk, saying, "I've sinned by telling slanderous stories about someone. What should I do?" To which the monk replied, "Put a feather on every doorstep in town." The young man did it. He then returned to the monk, wondering if there was anything else that he should do. The monk said, "God back and pick up all the feathers." It was a windy day and the man replied, "That's

impossible! By now they've all blown away. I could never retrieve them all!" To that the monk replied, "so have your slanderous words become impossible to retrieve. Slander no one again."

On a windswept hill in an old English country churchyard stands an aged, weathered tombstone. The faint etchings read:

BENEATH THIS STONE, A LUMP OF CLAY, LIES ARABELLA YOUNG,
WHO, ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH OF MAY, BEGAN TO HOLD HER TONGUE.

Someone once remarked to John Wesley, "I think I know what my talent is." Wesley said, "Tell me." She replied, "I think my talent is to speak my mind!" Wesley replied, "I do not think God would mind if you bury that talent."

"Blessed are those who have nothing good to say and cannot be persuaded to say it."

The late Dr. J. Vernon McGee wrote:

"you can tame a lion, you can tame an elephant, but you cannot tame the little tongue. . . . the most untamable thing in the world has its den just behind the teeth. That's one little animal which no zoo has in captivity, no circus can make it perform, no man can tame it. Only a regenerate tongue in a redeemed body, a tongue that God has tamed, can be used for Him." [James, 80-81]

As someone once stated, "What is in the well of the heart will come out through the bucket of the mouth." (cf. Matt. 12:34)

The philosopher Socrates was once approached by a young man who wanted to enter his school. Before Socrates could say a word, the visitor began to speak and continued for 10 full minutes. When he had finally finished talking, Socrates told him, "I will accept you as a student, but I am going to have to charge you twice as much." "Why?" the student asked. Socrates replied, "First I am going to have to teach you how to hold your tongue, and then how to use it."

"The tongue is a tattle-tale and it tells upon the heart." [John MacArthur]

The Rabbis used to say that the tongue was an arrow and not a knife, because the tongue could kill from a distance. [cited by John MacArthur]

The sages of old used to have a saying: "Three things cannot come back: the spent arrow, a wasted opportunity, and the spoken word." [cited in Barclay, James, 86]

"Every one of us is carrying around with us a concealed weapon, the tongue."

"Remember your tongue is in a wet place and it can slip easily."

"Your tongue is in a cage which is your teeth and behind walls which are your mouth."

"Behind every smile there is a set of teeth."

Years ago, Spurgeon included this little poem in his "Salt Cellars:"

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declares the Greek.
"The tongue destroys a greater hoard,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

A Persian proverb wisely saith,
"A lengthy tongue--an early death;"
Or sometimes takes this form instead,
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
The Chinese say, "outstrips the steed;"
While Arab sages this impart,
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit this maxim sprung,
"though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."
The sacred writer crowns the whole,
"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul!"

As someone has pointed out, "it takes 2 years for a baby to learn how to open his mouth and the rest of his life to learn how keep it closed."

I remember hearing about a man living in London who turned on his TV late one night and found an unfamiliar program that originally aired from Texas. Perplexed by the program, he called the local network who then informed him that the program had actually aired 3 years prior -- the man just happened to receive a signal that was "floating around in space for that time period." Some scientists actually believe that every spoken word continues on and on through the airways of the universe.

Warren Wiersbe had a pastor friend who had a church member that was a notorious gossip. She would call around on the phone daily sharing tid-bits of news with anyone who would listen. She came to her pastor one day and said, "Pastor, the Lord has convicted me of my sin of gossip." He knew that she wasn't really sincere, because she had gone through the same routine many times before. He then asked her, "well what do you plan to do?" Piously she stated, "I want to put my tongue on the alter." With that her Pastor replied "Ma'am, there isn't an alter big enough!"

Did you know that on two occasions President Abraham Lincoln's body was exhumed from his grave?

The first time was in 1887, 22 years after his assassination. Why? Not to determine how he died, but because idle tongues had spread rumors that his tomb was empty. So they exhumed

his body in that a group of witnesses could refute the hideous rumor. They, then, served as witnesses, as the casket was resealed with lead.

Fourteen years later, in 1901, the body was removed once again for the same reason. Rumors again were spreading that Lincoln's grave was empty. In spite of protests from Lincoln's son, Robert, the body was once again exhumed. It was then decided that to prevent further rumors spread by idle tongues, the body of President Lincoln would be permanently embedded in a vault in Springfield, IL. All this commotion and aggravation because of idle tongues--gossip.

The average person speaks about 18,000 words per day. In one day, the average person speaks enough words to fill a 54 page book. In one year sixty-six 800 page volumes would be filled. Approx 1/5 of your life is spent talking. (cited by J. MacArthur, GC 59-11)

Prof. Robert E. Provine has spent six years studying chortles, titters, giggles and guffaws. He and his assistants hung around shopping malls and city streets, taping hoots and whoops. Then he analyzed those tapes in an acoustic lab at the National Zoo set up to study bird calls. Among his findings:

- * People are around 30 times more likely to laugh in groups than alone.
- * The person who is talking chuckles 46% more than the people listening.
- * Four times more laughter is triggered by bland phrases than by formal jokes.
- * Women laugh more than men--except when listening to other women. Then they clam up.

While each individual's laugh may sound distinctive, Provine says studies show that all laughter fits essentially the same pattern: a staccato burst of notes about 1/15th of a second long, repeated about every fifth of a second. Most laughter has nothing to do with jokes, Provine points out. In studying 1200 episodes of laughter, he found that only about 1 in 5 was linked to a deliberate effort at humor. The big laugh-getters? Dull stuff like, "You're doing what?" And, "Where have you been?" [From "The Baltimore Sun," cited in Tribune Newspapers Parade section, December 29, 1996]

Are Gossips in Heaven? - James 1:26-27 (Monday with Mounce 156) Posted: 10 Sep 2012

This verse hit me pretty hard this morning: "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless" (James 1:26).

I have often said that gossip is the native tongue of the church, and what this means is that a large number of people who attend religious services Sunday morning need to be told that their "religion is worthless." But what does that mean?

So what are we to do with all this? What hit me when I first read it was the question of whether perpetual and consistent gossip was a sign of a person who was not truly converted. After all, Paul says that neither "thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:10). And what made me really stop and look was v 27: imitating the character of God by defending those

who cannot defend themselves, and a basic call to sanctification, are core, I believe, to what it means to be saved. So is James talking about worthless in the sense of non-existent, non-salvific?

But this is where word studies really do help. . . . Certainly, how we behave is an expression of who we are, but the emphasis here is on what we do. If this is right, then "worthless" means that gossips and slanderers may make a great show of religious behavior, but none of their general religiosity is of any significance. Their gossip invalidates everything else they do. Their outward show, their pretense of being religious (spiritual?), is worthless.

So gossips, hear this. You can go to church, sing loudly, give money, volunteer in the nursery, led a Bible study, wear your Christianity on your sleeve, be an elder — but no matter what you do, no matter what people think of you, it is all a sham, worthless. Your gossip invalidates everything you do. At least, that's what the Bible teaches.

When I was working on my view of church discipline, one of the real questions is what offenses are worthy of discipline. I was thinking through the normal answers, but someone challenged me that I was too focused. "The question," he asked, "is what sins are the most destructive of the church?" Gossip, in my mind, is number one. There is nothing that tears down and destroys faster. Not divorce, Not sexual misconduct. As I said, I believe gossip is the native tongue of the church. It rips and shreds. The church should be the safest place of all, and yet most have found that it is one of the most dangerous. It is a place where knowledge is used as a weapon to pummel and destroy. It is a place where unity is destroyed by the quick jab of the tongue.

Is it of no wonder, then, that the church has, as a whole, failed to show the world that God has sent Jesus (John 17:23). [William D. [Bill] Mounce]

Listening

The word listen contains the same letters as the word silent.

"It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen." [Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.]

Misunderstandings in

As you are receiving my note by e-mail, it's wise to remember how easily this wonderful technology be misused, sometimes unintentionally, with serious consequences. Consider the case of the Illinois man who left the snow-filled streets of Chicago for a vacation in Florida. His wife was on a business trip and was planning to meet him there the next day. When he reached his hotel, he decided to send his wife a quick e-mail. Unable to find the scrap of paper on which he had written her e-mail address, he did his best to type it in from memory. Unfortunately, he missed one letter, and his note was directed instead to an elderly preacher's wife, whose husband had passed away only the day before. When the grieving widow checked her e-mail, she took one look at the monitor, let out a piercing scream, and fell to the floor in a dead faint. At the sound, her family rushed into the room and saw this note on

the screen: "Dearest Wife, Just got checked in. Everything prepared for your arrival tomorrow. PS. Sure is hot down here."

The following "excuses" were taken from a recent collection of those received by Arizona school teachers:

Dear School: Please ackuse John for being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. John has been absent because he had two teeth taken off his face.
Please excuse Ray Friday. He had loose vowels.
Please excuse Jimmy from being. It was his father's fault.
My daughter was absent yesterday becuase she was tired. She spent the weekend with the Marines.
My son is under the doctor's care and should not take P.E. Please execute him.

Classic Church Bulletin Typos:

- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Evening massage - 6 p.m.
- The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.
- Don't let worry kill you - let the church help.
- The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.
- Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
- Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30p.m. Please use the back door.
- Ushers will eat latecomers.
- The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.
- During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J.F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.
- Next Sunday Mrs. Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience."
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
- Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.
- The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.
- Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- This afternoon there will be a meeting in the north and south ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- Affirmation of faith No. 738: "The Apostle's Greed."

- This was printed after a church pot-luck: "Ladies, if you have missing bowels, you will find them in the church kitchen."
- Pastor Brown will marry his son next Sunday morning.
- The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.
- Tuesday at 4 p.m. there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk will please come early.
- Next Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of the new carpet. All those wishing to do something on the carpet will come forward and do so.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermoon topic will be "What is Hell?" . . . Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Here are some bumper stickers you may not have seen before:

- <>Keep honking...I'm reloading.
- <>Caution: I drive like you do
- <>Cover me. I'm changing lanes.
- <> I brake for no apparent reason.
- <> Your kid may be an honors student, but you're still an idiot.
- <> Forget about World Peace...Visualize using your turn signal.
- <> IRS: We've got what it takes to take what you've got.
- <> Very funny Scotty, now beam down my clothes.
- <> Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies.
- <> So many stupid people... so few comets.
- <> All generalizations are false.
- <> I'm not as think as you drunk I am.
- <> We have enough youth, how about a fountain of Smart?
- <> He who laughs last thinks slowest.
- <> Lottery: A tax on people who are bad at math.
- <> Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- <> Time is what keeps everything from happening at once.
- <> I love cats...they taste just like chicken.
- <> Out of my mind. Back in five minutes.
- <> Rehab is for quitters.
- <> Sometimes I wake up grumpy; Other times I let him sleep.
- <> Jack Kevorkian for White House Physician.
- <> If you don't like the news, go out and make some.
- <> No radio - Already stolen.
- <> Real women don't have hot flashes, they have power surges.
- <> I took an IQ test and the results were negative.
- <> Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
- <> OK, who stopped payment on my reality check?
- <> Tell me to 'stuff it' - I'm a taxidermist.
- <> Time is the best teacher; Unfortunately it kills all its students.

<()> How can I miss you if you won't go away?
 <()> Give me ambiguity or give me something else.
 <()> Make it idiot-proof and someone will make a better idiot.
 <()> Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.
 <()> Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home.
 <()> Why is 'abbreviation' such a long word?
 <()> Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

COMPASSION:

"We may take for a certain rule, that the more the divine nature and life of Jesus is manifest in us, and the higher our sense of righteousness and virtue, the more we shall pity and love those who are suffering from the blindness, disease, and death of sin. The sight of such people then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt or holier-than-thou indignation, will rather fill us with such tenderness and compassion as when we see the miseries of a dread disease." [William Law, an English devotional writer of the early 1700s, cited in Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, 140]

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing ... I just helped him cry."

COMPLAINING:

Some airline pilots complete a gripe sheet after each flight which conveys to the mechanics problems encountered with the aircraft during the flight that need repair or correction. The form is a piece of paper that the pilot completes and then the mechanics read and correct the problem. They then respond in writing on the lower half of the form what remedial action was taken and the pilot reviews the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews and engineers lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems as submitted by Qantas pilots and the solution recorded by maintenance engineers. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never had an accident. (P = the problem logged by the pilot. S = the solution and action taken by the engineers.)

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.
 S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Loose nut in the cockpit.
 S: Medical check up ordered for Pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.
 S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Dead bugs on windshield.
 S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Auto pilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.
 S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
 S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.
 S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
 S: That's what they're there for.

P: IFF inoperative.
 S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.
 S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.
 S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.
 S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.
 S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

COMPROMISE:

Those who walk the middle of the road get bit by traffic going both ways

CONSCIENCE:

Conscience is an important part of human nature, but it is not an absolutely trustworthy indicator of what is right. One's conscience can be "good" (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19) and "clear" (Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18), but it can also be "guilty" (Heb. 10:22), "corrupted" (Titus 1:15), "weak" (1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12), and "seared" (1 Tim. 4:2). All people need to trust the Lord Jesus Christ so that "the blood of Christ" might "cleanse [their] consciences" (Heb. 9:14). [Romans 2:14–15 (BKC)]

"A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory." [Steven Wright]

"But I will not become a heretic by renouncing the faith by which I became a Christian. I would rather be exiled, accursed, and burnt do death." [Martin Luther, page 146]

CONSIDERATION:

When an ice cream sundae cost much less, a boy entered a coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" "Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. "How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table, and the waitress was impatient. "Thirty-five cents," she said angrily. The little boy again counted the coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream." The waitress brought the ice cream and walked away. The boy finished paid the cashier, and departed. When the waitress came back, she swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies -- her tip.

CONTENTMENT:

"Remember this, had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, divine love would have put you there. You are placed by God in the most suitable circumstances, and if you had the choosing of your lot, you would soon cry, "Lord, choose my inheritance for me, for by my self-will I am pierced through with many sorrows." Be content with such things as you have, since the Lord has ordered all things for your good. Take up your own daily cross; it is the burden best suited for your shoulder, and will prove most effective to make you perfect in every good word and work to the glory of God. Down busy self, and proud impatience, it is not for you to choose, but for the Lord of Love!" [Spurgeon, C. H. (2006). Morning and evening: Daily readings]

"If you don't enjoy what you have now, how can you be happier with more?"

A city missionary in London was called to an old tenement building. A lady was dying and in the last stages of her disease. The room was cold and the woman was living on the floor. This missionary tried to help the lady and asked if there was anything she wanted. This is what she said: "I have all I really need--I have Jesus Christ."

The missionary never forgot that incident and as soon as he left the old woman he wrote the words:

"In the heart of London city, amid the dwellings of the poor, these bright and golden words were uttered 'I have Christ what want I more.'"

"Spoken by a lonely woman, dying on a garret floor, having not one earthly comfort 'I have Christ what want I more!'"

"He who heard it went to fetch her something from the world's great store. It was needless died she saying 'I have Christ what want I more!'"

"Oh my dear fellow sinner, high or low or rich or poor, can you say with deep thanksgiving 'I have Christ what want I more?'"

"Take away all the things the world has to offer and you cannot take away my contentment. Give to me all the things that the world has to offer and you cannot increase my contentment. My contentment is in the Lord!" [John MacArthur, Jr.]

Mary Slessor was a young single woman who left Scotland at the turn of the century to go to a part of Africa that was infested with disease and indescribable danger. But she had an indomitable spirit and kept going when lesser men and women broke down, ran, and never came back. Once, after a particularly draining day, she found herself trying to sleep in a crude jungle hut. Of that night she wrote:

I am not particular about my bed these days, but as I lay on a few dirty sticks laid across and covered with a litter of dirty corn-shells, with plenty of rats, and insects, three women and an infant three days old alongside, and over a dozen sheep and goats and cows outside, you don't wonder that I slept little. But I had such a comfortable quiet night in my own heart. [cited in MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 24-25]

It was said that one of the godly Puritans sat down to his meal one day and found that he only had a little bread and some water. To that he exclaimed, "What? All this and Jesus Christ, too!"

CONFUSION:

Two men met recently and struck up a conversation. One was telling the other about some problems he was having with one of his kids. After a while the other guy said, "You think you have family problems? Get a load of my situation. A few years ago I met a young widow with a grown-up daughter and we got married. Later, my father married my stepdaughter. That made my stepdaughter my stepmother and my father became my stepson. "Also, my wife became mother-in-law of her father-in-law. Then the daughter of my wife, my stepmother, had a son. This boy was my half-brother because he was my father's son, but he was also the son of my wife's daughter, which made him my wife's grandson. That made me grandfather of my half-brother. "This was nothing until my wife and I had a son. Now the sister of my son, my mother-in-law, is also the grandmother. This makes my father the brother-in-law of my child, whose stepsister is my father's wife. "I am my stepmother's brother-in-law, my wife is her own child's aunt, my son is my father's nephew and I am my own grandfather. You think you have family problems!" --Author unknown.

One of the fads of our day is to "return to nature." One young couple decided that they would move out of the inner city into a little country home. They could not afford to buy, so they finally found one they could rent.

As they moved into their new home in the country, they discovered there was no commode in the bathroom. The young wife thought it would be wise if they would write a letter to the landlord in a neighboring city to explain the situation. She felt quite embarrassed about complaining that there was no bathroom commode so she decided to abbreviate the two words with "B.C."

Upon receiving the letter, the landlord pondered the initials "B.C" quite some time and finally decided that the young renters were talking about a Baptist Church. So taking her "B.C." to mean "Baptist Church," the landlord sat down and penned the following letter:

Dear Friends,

I regret very much the delay in answering your letter, but I take great pleasure in telling you the B.C. is located nine miles from your home and is capable of seating 250 people. This is very unfortunate indeed if you are in the habit of going regularly, but, no doubt, you will be interested to know a great number of people take a lunch and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late. The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and we had to stand up the whole time. It may interest you to know a fund drive has been planned to raise money to buy new seats. I would like to say it pains me very much not to be able to go more regularly, but it is surely not a lack of desire on my part. As we grow older it seems more of an effort to go -- particularly in cold weather.

May I hope to see you there!

Sincerely yours,

Your landlord

In the classified ad section of a small-town newspaper the following ad appeared on Monday:

FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

On Tuesday--NOTICE: We regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: "one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7:00 p.m.

On Wednesday--R.D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows: FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him.

Finally on Tuesday--NOTICE: I R.D. Jones have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 958-2020 as the telephone has been taken out. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit.

CONTROVERSY:

John Newton (1725-1807), author of "Amazing Grace," writes to a fellow pastor who is composing a tract against prevalent false doctrines:

You are likely to be engaged in controversy. . . . You are of the strongest side; for truth is great, and must prevail. . . . I am not therefore anxious for the [outcome] of the battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph, not only over your adversary, but over yourself. If you cannot be vanquished, you may be wounded. To

preserve you from such wounds as might give you cause of weeping over your conquests, I would present you with some considerations, which, if duly attended to, will do you the service of a great coat of mail. . . . I may reduce my advice to three heads, respecting your opponent, the public and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish that before you set pen to paper against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. This practice will have a direct tendency to conciliate your heart to love and pity him; and such a disposition will have a good influence upon every page you write. If [he is a believer] . . . the Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever. But if [he is not a believer], . . . he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his. . . . If you write with a desire of being an instrument of correcting mistakes, you will of course be cautious of laying stumbling blocks in the way of the blind or of using any expressions that may exasperate their passions, confirm them in their principles, and thereby make their conviction, humanly speaking, more impracticable. . . . [John Newton, Works, Vol 1 (Banner of Truth, 1985), p. 269f.]

CONVICTION:

In the classic eighteenth-century work *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*, Thomas Boston described the eleventh (!) stage in the conversion process in the following terms:

"The man being thus far humbled ... looks on himself as unworthy of Christ, and unworthy of the favour of God If you now tell him he is welcome to Christ, if he will come to him, he is apt to say, "Can such a vile and unworthy wretch as I be welcome to the holy Jesus."

"But I will not become a heretic by renouncing the faith by which I became a Christian. I would rather be exiled, accursed, and burnt do death." [Martin Luther, page 146]

COUNTERFEITS:

If you ever visit London, you'll have no trouble spotting St. Paul's cathedral. It's considered to be among the 10 most-beautiful buildings in the world, and it dominates the city's skyline. The venerable structure stands as a monument to its creator--astronomer and architect Sir Christopher Wren. While St. Paul's is his best-known achievement, an interesting story is connected with a lesser-known building of his design.

Wren was given charge of designing the interior of the town hall in Windsor, just west of central London. His plans called for large columns to support the high ceiling. When construction was complete, the city fathers toured the building and expressed concern over one problem: the pillars. It wasn't that they minded the use of pillars--they just wanted them in greater numbers.

Wren's solution was as devilish as it was inspired. He did exactly as he was told and installed four new pillars, thus meeting the demands of his critics. Those extra pillars remain in Windsor town hall to this day, and they aren't difficult to identify. They are the ones that support no weight and, in fact, never even reach the ceiling. They're fakes. Wren installed the pillars to serve only one purpose--to look good. They are an ornamental embellishment built to satisfy the eye. In terms of supporting the building and fortifying the structure, they are as useful as the paintings that hang on the walls." [Grace to You Newsletter, June 17, 1996]

COVETING:

"After time you may find that 'having' is not so pleasing a thing after all as 'wanting.' It is not logical, but it is often true." (Spock, Star Trek, season 2 episode 1)

CREATION AND EVOLUTION:

"It is certainly not necessary to think that the six days spoken of in that first chapter of the Bible are intended to be six days of twenty four hours each. We may think of them rather as very long periods of time." [Dr. J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man* (1937; Eerdmans reprint; Grand Rapids, 1947), p. 131]

Charles Darwin recalled that in the days when he was a creationist, the splendor of the Brazilian forest reinforced his "firm conviction of the existence of God. . . . But now the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions and feelings to rise in my mind. It may be truly said that I am like a man who has become color-blind. . . . There seems to be no more design to the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course in which the wind blows." [cited by Carl F.H. Henry in *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 84]

The following quotes are from blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2015/01/28/biblical-reasons-to-doubt-the-creation-days-were-24-hour-periods (2018)

Augustine, writing in the early fifth century, noted, "What kind of days these were it is extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible, to determine" (*City of God* 11.7).

J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), author of the 20th century's best critique of theological liberalism, wrote, "It is certainly not necessary to think that the six days spoken of in that first chapter of the Bible are intended to be six days of twenty four hours each."

Old Testament scholar Edward J. Young (1907-1968), an eloquent defender of inerrancy, said that regarding the length of the creation days, "That is a question which is difficult to answer. Indications are not lacking that they may have been longer than the days we now know, but the Scripture itself does not speak as clearly as one might like."

Theologian Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003), one of the most important theologians in the second half of the twentieth century and a defender of Scriptural clarity and authority, argued that "Faith in an inerrant Bible does not rest on the recency or antiquity of the earth. . . . The Bible does not require belief in six literal 24 hour creation days on the basis of Genesis 1-2. . . . it is gratuitous to insist that twenty-four hour days are involved or intended."

Old Testament scholar and Hebrew linguist Gleason Archer (1916-2004), a strong advocate for inerrancy, wrote "On the basis of internal evidence, it is this writer's conviction that *yôm* in Genesis could not have been intended by the Hebrew author to mean a literal twenty-four hour day."

"Dr. Lumsden (sp?) is a very storied professor in his own field. A geneticist in microbiology, a man who manned genetic studies through electron microscopes. A formidable mind, he became the chair of the graduate school of science at Tulane University. . . . He'd written a hundred journal articles in his field. . . . He had some extremely difficult questions to which he didn't know the answer--he was an avowed evolutionist. But he couldn't figure out how when a cell evolved a membrane around the cell also evolved at the same time to keep the cell encapsulated; there was no explanation for that and some other things. So he had some lingering doubts in his heart. He said to me one day, 'A girl came up to me in one of my graduate science classes and she asked me all the questions that Christians ask evolutionists. And in a very gracious and sweet way, she answered my answer by showing me how that wasn't possible, and explaining what the Bible said. And I gave her all the standard answers. And she walked away after having said 'thank you,' and for the first time in my life I stood there hearing the echo of my own stupidity. And I said to myself, 'If you believe what you just said to that girl is true, you're an idiot.' And I walked home from school that day, and I went home and got a Bible. And I began to read. And in a matter of a few weeks I became a Christian. I gave my life to Christ, and in another few weeks I began to look at what the Word of God had to say, to read some material about a scientific view of Scripture that was creationist. My whole world-view changed, I announced it to my university, and they fired me immediately.'" [cited by John MacArthur in cassette message "The Theology of Faith" delivered at Scottsdale Bible Church, 4/13/97, side B]

"By studying the creation, one can gain a glimpse of the power, knowledge, and wisdom of the Creator. The sheer size of the universe is staggering. The sun, for example, has a diameter of 864,000 miles (one hundred times that of earth's) and could hold 1.3 million planets the size of earth inside it. The star Betelgeuse, however, has a diameter of 100 million miles, which is larger than the earth's orbit around the sun. It takes sunlight, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, about 8.5 minutes to reach earth. Yet that same light would take more than four years to reach the nearest star, Alpha Centauri, some 24 trillion miles from earth. The galaxy to which our sun belongs, the Milky Way, contains hundreds of billions of stars. And astronomers estimate there are millions, or even billions of galaxies.

What they can see leads them to estimate the number of stars in the universe at 10^{25} . That is roughly the number of all the grains of sand on all the world's beaches.

The universe also bears witness to the tremendous wisdom and knowledge of its Creator. Scientist now speak of the Anthropic Principle, 'which states that the universe appears to be carefully designed for the well-being of mankind' (Donald B. DeYoung, "Design in Nature: The Anthropic Principle," *Impact*, no. 149 [November 1985]: p. ii). A change in the rate of earth's rotation around the sun or on its axis would be catastrophic. The earth would become either too hot or too cold to support life. If the moon were much nearer to the earth, huge tides would inundate the continents. A change in the composition of the gasses that make up our atmosphere would also be fatal to life. A slight change in the mass of the proton would result in the dissolution of hydrogen atoms. That would result in the destruction of the universe, because hydrogen is its dominant element.

The creation gives mute testimony to the intelligence of its Creator. Max Planck, winner of the Nobel Prize and one of the founders of modern physics, wrote, 'According to everything taught by the exact sciences about the immense realm of nature, a certain order prevails—one independent of the human mind . . . this order can be formulated in terms of purposeful activity. There is evidence of an intelligent order of the universe to which both man and nature are subservient' (cited in DeYoung, "Design in Nature," p. iii). [MacArthur, Colossians and Philemon, 47-48]

"We can ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito." [C.S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm, chapter 14]

"I do not see how we could have come to know the greatness of God without that hint furnished by the greatness of the material universe." [C.S. Lewis, 1970, 42]

"The testimony of nature to the existence, power and creativity of God cannot be destroyed. Throw it out the door and it will return through the window. Try to burn it and it will rise Phoenix-like from the ashes. Cut off its limbs, and it will sprout new ones. The recognition of design in nature is one of those irresistibly powerful realities that defies destruction." [Daniel E. Wray]

"We would be very foolish to maintain that our advancing understanding of the cosmos and the biological world in any way argues against the existence of God. I, like many other scientists, therefore see no conflict between my religious beliefs and the work of science." [Kenneth R. Miller, "Scientific Creationism versus Evolution: The Mislabeled Debate" in Montagu 1984, 58]

"A spark of the entire creation glows even in the smallest of creatures; the less a living animal seems able to think, owing to the inferiority of its organs, the more, judging by the acts of wisdom of which it is capable, does it become evident that some One has thought for it." [Jonathan Franklin, English naturalist]

"In the September 11, 1998 PBS special *Faith and Reason*, Fuller Theological Seminary professor Nancy Murphy said that 'God created the human race through the process of evolution.' She went on to say that it is 'a terrible misconception to see evolutionary biology

and Christian theology as in competition." . . . It is one thing to believe in evolution, it is quite another to blame God for it. Not only is theistic evolution a contradiction in terms--like the phrase *flaming snowflakes*--but it is also the cruelest, most inefficient system of creation imaginable. As Noble Prize winning evolutionary biologist Jacques Monod concedes: '[Natural] selection is the blindest, and most cruel way of evolving new species. . . The struggle for life and elimination of the weakest is a horrible process, against which our whole modern ethic revolts. . . . I am surprised that a Christian would defend the idea that this is the process which God more or less set up in order to have evolution." An omnipotent, omniscient God does not have to painfully plod through millions of mistakes, misfits, and mutations in order to have fellowship with humans. Rather He can create humans in a microsecond. If theistic evolution is true, Genesis is at best an allegory and at worst a farce. . . . If Adam did not eat the forbidden fruit and fall into a life of constant sin terminated by death, there is no need for redemption." [Hank Hanegraff, Christian Research Report, Volume 11, Issue 5, Dec. 1998]

CROSS, THE:

"When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own;
When I see thee as thou art,
Love thee with unsinning heart;
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe."

"If I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. The old cross slew men, the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it. - A.W. Tozer

Augustus Toplady, the author of "Rock of Ages," wrote in his private diary under Dec. 31, 1767: "Upon a review of the past year, I desire to confess that my unfaithfulness has been exceeding great; my sins still greater; God's mercies greater than both. . . . My shortcomings and my mis-doings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the lowest hell, was not Jesus my righteousness and my Redeemer."

"The Cross was the cup of eternal wrath, distilled from the anger that had been building up since the sin of Adam, concentrated into one terrible drink. The Son drank the cup of wrath, so that we could drink the cup of salvation. And when he had finished his cup, there was not even one drop left for us who gratefully receive the benefit of his death." [Michael Horton, *We Believe*, 102]

"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." [Dietrich Bonhoeffer]

In August of 2013, the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Songs for the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to exclude "In Christ Alone" from its new hymnal, the chairwoman of the committee said the popular hymn mistakenly expressed "the view that the cross is primarily about God's need to assuage God's anger."

I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
I mark their wrathful mien;
Their shouts of "Crucify!" appall,
With blasphemy between.

And of that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude
I recognize my own.

'Twas I that shed the sacred blood,
I nailed Him to the tree,
I crucified the Christ of God,
I joined the mockery.

Around the cross the throng I see
Mocking the Sufferer's groan;
Yet still my voice it seems to be
As if I mocked alone. - Horatius Bonar.

True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. . . . Oh! but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up, and keep up, the world's crown. 'Demas hath forsaken us to embrace this present world' (2 Tim. 4. 10). [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 158]

“At the heart of most religions is a moral code. At the heart of Christianity is a cross, planted in the middle [of] history. The ancient equivalent of the modern electric chair, in its day the cross was a symbol of defeat rather than victory. So why does the death of Christ continue to be viewed as salvation-bearing by Christians?

In his 1952 play . . . Waiting for Godot), Irish novelist Samuel Beckett placed his two central characters, Estragon and Vladimir, in a music hall where, throughout the entire play, they are . . . waiting for the arrival of someone named Godot. Making the most of the boredom, they carry on a dialogue that highlights the tragic despair of human existence. Godot never arrives, and the play ends in resignation to hopelessness.” [Michael Horton, We Believe, 85-86] *** [Illustration can be used to point out that the cross became a symbol of victory sealed in the resurrection of JC, or even to point out the impact of the incarnation, cf. John the Baptist declaring “behold the Lamb!”]

The pain of the cross was so unbearable that the word *excruciating* was derived from it. “Literally, excruciating means ‘out of the cross.’ [Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ, 198]

“The Cross is the outflow of the anger of God--not just the love of God--the anger of God. The Cross is the fruit of the wrath of God against sin. . . . The Cross is the fruit of two things, not just one thing: Just anger and incredible mercy.” [Dr. John Piper, “He Made Purification

of Sins: Maundy Thursday,” Cassette Message in Hebrews 1:1-4 dated April 4, 1996 PM, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

“You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone who believes was purchased by Christ.” [Dr. John Piper, “For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death,” Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

At a class in New York City, Greek scholar A.T. Robertson found the message of the cross in three Greek prepositions: 1) All who rely on observing the law are *under* (ὑπο) a curse (Galatians 3:10). Robertson likened that to being under Damocles' sword hanging by a thread. 2) Jesus became curse *for* (ὑπερ) us (v. 13). As the sword of divine judgement dropped, Jesus interposed his body "over" or "in place of" ours, and the sword fell on him instead of on sinners. 3) So Jesus redeemed believers *from* (ἐκ) the curse of the law (v. 13). He died that believers might live "out from in under" the law that can only condemn because of the weakness of our natures. [cited by Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:402]

The cross is indeed a symbol of charity--stunning, shattering charity. It is also clearly a symbol of spiritual warfare. It is shaped like a sword held at the hilt by the hand of Heaven and struck into the earth, not to draw blood by to give it." [Peter Kreeft, Ecumenical Jihad, 45-46]

"Years ago, during the Boxer rebellion in China, the rebels captured a missionary training compound. They sealed off every gate that lead out of the compound except for one which they left open. They then took a cross and set it down in the dirt at the center of the gate and said to all of the missionaries and students who were there that if they were to walk out that gate and trample the cross under their feet, they could then go free. The first 7 students did just that. The 8th student, however, was a young girl who came to the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, stood up and walked around the cross--right into the firing squad. 92 of the remaining student--all that were left--did the same thing and walked to their deaths rather than to trample the cross of Christ beneath their feet.

"The cross is proof of both the immense love of God and the profound wickedness of sin. Do you want to see God's love at its pinnacle and sin's vileness at its nadir? Look at the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. See Him hanging on the cross--the sinless, spotless, Lamb of God, bearing the sin of the world. Hear Him cry in agony . . . "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Realize that nothing short of the shed-blood of the eternal, beloved Son of God Himself could have atoned for sin. The weight of our guilt must have been infinitely heavy and the heinousness of our sin indescribably black to require such a sacrifice! And God's love must have been inexpressibly rich to allow it!" [John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 115]

At the recent Global Gathering III, sponsored by the Methodist Church:

One speaker declared that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ revealed an abusive Heavenly Father who is not fit for Christian worship. Rather, the speaker urged the church to revere the baby Jesus along with all the world's children as equally little messiahs.

Another speaker, Nancy Pereira, a Methodist "theologian" from Brazil, rejected the atonement of Christ. "We have to stop praising Abraham's knife." We have to stop praising Solomon's sword. We have to stop praising Jesus' cross." She went on to declare that those "traditions" from the Bible falsely portray a God who welcomes "child sacrifice." "We have to find other expressions of salvation and liberation. We have developed a Christology with a tradition of the cross. That is a sacrificial Christology. It's a mechanism of salvation that heeds guilt, pain, whipping and death. We have to look at Jesus' cross as a tragedy, a human episode without any sense of meaning."

Another speaker declared that "every child in the world is Christ's child and the Christ child." [cited in AFA Journal, June 1997]

The most satisfying theodicy is implied in the cross of Jesus Christ. As R.L. Dabney wrote, "The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, coupled with His proper divinity, enables us to complete our 'theodicy' of the permission of evil. . . . For had there been in God the least defect of [holiness or benevolence], He certainly would never have found it in His heart to send His infinite Son, more great and important than all the worlds, to redeem anyone." [R.L. Dabney, Systematic Theology, 537-38]

The Cross of Christ and The Denial of Self: "Such a denial of self is no mere severing of this or that indulgence, but putting the axe of the Cross to the very tree of self. . . ." To one who asked George Mueller the secret of his service, he replied:

'There was a day when I died', and, as he spoke, he bent lower, until he almost touched the floor. Continuing he added, 'Died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.'" [L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 60-61]

In the days of the Scottish Covenanters, in those times before an enervating effeminacy had overtaken our faith, Jane Welsh, the noble daughter of John Knox, was approached by the prison officials with the assurance that her husband, John Welsh, would be freed if only he would renounce the Protestant faith. Gathering up her apron she replied, "Please your majesties, I would rather catch his head there." Our modern sentiment would call her intolerant, dogmatic, unloving. But she truly loved God first, and her husband as herself. She had suffered much for the faith through her husband's imprisonment, but she still had him in her heart to die and live with him. There is nothing so terrible, nothing so revolutionary as the Cross. But it is God's place of victory for ourselves and for our relatives--" dying, and, behold we live." [L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 99-100]

CULTURE AND CULTURAL REFORM:

Robert Woodberry of Baylor University has documented the impact of "conversionary Protestant" (missionary) Christians. Their labors have led to remarkable democratizing gains throughout the world. These include "the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, volunteer organizations, most major colonial reforms [abolishing slavery, widow-burning, foot binding, female circumcision, pre-pubescent marriage of girls, etc.], and the codification of legal protections for nonwhites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Furthermore, where Protestant missionaries have been, there you will find more printed books and more schools per capita. You'll discover that in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, "most of the early nationalists who led their countries to independence graduated from Protestant mission schools."

Woodberry offers this challenge: Spin the globe, and note the impact of Protestant endeavor! Wherever you see stable democracies and lower corruption rates, look for the stamp of Protestantism. Its Reformation roots emphasized (a) the priesthood of all believers, (b) the importance of placing Scripture into the hands of every Christian, and (c) the dignity of any honest vocation. These emphases propelled missionaries to bring important changes and reforms that reflected these Reformation priorities. (September issue of the *Worldview Bulletin*, September 2020, <https://worldviewbulletin.substack.com>)

"Today the cornerstone of international law is the sacred, what is sacred in humanity. You should not kill.... In that sense, the concept of crime against humanity is a Christian concept and I think there would be no such thing in the law today without the Christian heritage, the Abrahamic heritage, the biblical heritage." [Atheist philosopher Jacques Derrida, "To Forgive: The Unforgivable and Imprescriptible," in *Questioning God*, eds. John D. Caupito, et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 70]

Theo Hobson describes the three marks of a cultural revolution.

1. What was universally condemned is now celebrated.
2. What was universally celebrated is now condemned.
3. Those who refuse to celebrate are condemned.

"There is a kind of hate for the sinner (viewed as morally corrupt and hostile to God) that may coexist with pity and even a desire for their salvation... [T]hat there comes a point of such extended, hardened, high-handed lovelessness toward God that it may be appropriate to call down anathema on it." John Piper [Do I Not Hate Those Who Hate You, O Lord?, by John Piper]

"Critical theory (CT) is the philosophy motivating most all of the BLM and Antifa upheavals. It is drawing some Christians into its orbit as well. CT sees social reality in terms of racial, gender, and economic groups. You are defined by your group or intersection of your groups (intersectionality). You are either in or out of power, and society is reducible to power relationships. If you are in power, you are privileged and undeserving. If you are out of power, you are underprivileged and entitled. Those in power are automatically discredited in their discourse because of their status as privileged. Those out of power are

automatically legitimated in their discourse. The views of the underprivileged are immune from criticism and are unfalsifiable because the privileged suffer from false consciousness. The underprivileged make demands, they need not make arguments. They are above the law, since the law is the product of privilege and false consciousness." [attributed to theologian/philosopher, Doug Groothuis]

"Every cultural revolution includes the "progressive" elites standing on the sideline, cheering on, abetting, and funding the radicals subverting, looting, firebombing, and smashing "The Establishment." Only in the end do they learn the grim truth they are insufficiently pure, zealous, and radical, and will face at the hands of the nihilistic fanatics Robespierre's guillotine, figuratively or literally.

The revolution always eats its own, who all along hypocritically relied on the evenhanded liberty of the alleged corrupt society that permitted its own subversion — and in the end, they ironically perish along with the society that alone kept them viable." (P. Andrew Sandlin, Founder and President at Center for Cultural Leadership)

The moral revolution in the west has its own "mark of the beast" apart from which one will be thwarted in efforts to "buy or sell" in the public marketplace. Namely, we are entering a time when those who lack a modern-day the mark of LGBTQ upon their foreheads will be driven from public life.

"For unbelieving multitudes in our times, the recent modern defection from God known in His self-revelation has turned the whole of life in to a shambles. Ours is the first society in modern history to have ventured to erect a civilization on godless foundations; it may well be the last." [Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 113]

Secularists have their own religion. They worship at the altar of naturalism, while cherishing the sacrament of abortion on demand. Their praxis is licentiousness; their revolution, sexual; their unpardonable sin, bigotry. TAB

"Perhaps the Harvard Report is correct when it predicts that society will never again choose Christianity as its unifying principle. But there is no other type of philosophy that has a unifying principle to offer. And a continued repudiation of Christian principles promises a future which, even more than the present, will be characterized by social instability, wars and rumors of war, brutality, and despair." [Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 325]

“Value means whatever is actually liked, prized, esteemed, desired, approved, or enjoyed by anyone at any time. . . . Good is synonymous with value.” [cited in Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 239]

The Anglican thinker, Theo Hobson, noted three things that must accompany a sexual worldview revolution: 1) That which was condemned must be celebrated; 2) That which was celebrated must be condemned; 3) And those who will not celebrate must also be condemned.

Frank Bruni, columnist for the New York Times, said that religious people need to understand that freedom of worship means the freedom to hold whatever position you believe and to teach whatever you want to teach in your homes, in your hearts, and in your pews. A Christian worldview, any worldview for that matter, cannot be so restricted.

This is an example of how quickly the sexual revolution has impacted our culture since the 1990s. In former Tonight Show host Johnny Carson's opening monologue, he expressed astonishment at a recent TV stunt where two men were married in a civil ceremony:

"Today, during a civil ceremony on the Donahue Show, two men married each other. It is true; I'm not making this up. . . . I mean, what the [heck] is the world coming to - two men got married on television on a daytime show? I'm not lying to you. . . . Where are our standards? [Program dated May 16, 1991]

In Charles Swindoll's book, *The Quest for Character* (Multnomah), he cites,"sociologist and historian Carle Zimmerman, in his 1947 book *Family and Civilization*, recorded his keen observations as he compared the disintegration of various cultures with the parallel decline of family life in those cultures. Eight specific patterns of domestic behavior typified the downward spiral of each culture Zimmerman studied:

- * Marriage loses its sacredness ... is frequently broken by divorce;
 - * Traditional meaning of the marriage ceremony is lost;
 - * Feminist movements abound;
 - * There is increased public disrespect for parents and authority in general;
 - * An acceleration of juvenile delinquency, promiscuity and rebellion occurs;
 - * There is refusal of people with traditional marriages to accept family responsibilities;
 - * A growing desire for, and acceptance of, adultery is evident;
 - * There is increasing interest in, and spread of, sexual perversions and sex-related crimes.
- [Confident Living, November 1987, p. 34]

America the Beautiful: A Poem by Judge Roy Moore (former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court)

America the beautiful, or so you used to be.
Land of the Pilgrims' pride; I'm glad they'll never see.

Babies piled in dumpsters, abortion on demand,
Oh, sweet land of liberty; your house is built on sand.

Our children wander aimlessly poisoned by cocaine,
Choosing to indulge their lusts, when God has said abstain.

From sea to shining sea, our Nation turns away,
From the teaching of God's love and a need to always pray.

We've kept God in our temples, how callous we have grown.
When earth is but His footstool, and Heaven is His throne.

We've voted in a government that's rotting at the core,
Appointing Godless Judges who throw reason out the door.

Too soft to place a killer in a well deserved tomb,
But brave enough to kill a baby before he leaves the womb.

You think that God' not angry, that our land's a moral slum?
How much longer will He wait before His judgement comes?

How are we to face our God, from Whom we cannot hide?
What then is left for us to do, but stem this evil tide?

If we who are His children, will humbly turn and pray;
Seek His holy face and mend our evil way:

Then God will hear from heaven and forgive us of our sins,
He'll heal our sickly land and those who live within.

But, America the Beautiful, if you don't – then you will see,
A sad but Holy God withdraw His hand from thee.

“We have lost our capacity to think morally . . . the God who gives reality to sin has disappeared off the scene.” [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

“In thinking of ourselves what can only be thought of God, we are then unable to think of Him more highly than we think of ourselves. In being to ourselves what God ought to be to us, He is no more to us than we are to ourselves.” [Karl Barth, cited by David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98, tape 3, side 1]

“Today (1998) only 17% define sin in relationship to God as a violation of His character, His law, and His will.” [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

Quoting another author, David Wells states that “By 1900 it was impossible to reattach the word ‘sin’ to its original sense because the target of the violation, God, was gone.” [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

During my hiatus from full-time ministry while I was driving a truck to Flagstaff, AZ, I stopped at a local coffee shop (6/7/02). While I was waiting for my coffee I saw written on a white board behind the counter: “There is nothing either good or bad, only makes it so.” I should have told them that I thought it would be good for me to have free coffee that day.

“Geneva was a pretty wild city back in the days before the Reformation. You’d never know it to visit it today, the Swiss are such a stolid people, but back in those days they used to have very wild times—they used to actually run around naked, sing songs and that sort of

thing. It was almost like New Orleans at Mardi Gras. And they had a ruling body called the Council of 200, and they passed all kinds of laws against it, because they thought to have the city act properly you must have good laws. So they said you mustn’t run around the city naked singing songs; it didn’t do anything at all. So eventually they said, ‘Well, maybe the answer is religion. We have been a Catholic country all this time, maybe we need to become a Protestant country.’ And so, in 1535, they declared’ as The Council, from that time on Geneva was going to be a Protestant country, they would align themselves with the Reformation. Do you know what happened? Nothing at all, of course! Same problems existed. But they did do something good along the way. They said, ‘If we are going to be Protestant city we need a Protestant preacher.’ Luther was occupied, of course. But there was this rather skinny intellectual from Paris; his name was John Calvin. And they said, ‘Come on over here John and see if you can be our preacher.’ So he came the following year, 1536. And he began to teach the Bible. You know what he was teaching in those days? He was teaching Calvinism, of course! And the people didn’t like it then any more than they like it today or in the time of Jesus Christ. So he wasn’t there very long, a couple years, and they said, ‘Look, we’ve had enough of this, get out of here!’ And so they sent him away and he went on down the Rhine to Strasbourg where he settled in for about 2 ½ more years—he liked it down there in Strasbourg. But things were not doing well in Geneva. All of the old problems were continuing. And finally they said, ‘Look, we probably should bring this guy Calvin back.’ And so they did; they prevailed upon him to come—he didn’t want to go—but they got him to come. And so he came back in 1541. Now he didn’t have any power; he didn’t have any authority—he already failed once—no political power. The first year he was there they didn’t even bother to pay him. So he certainly didn’t even have money. But he did have a Bible and he came back and started to teach it. And the story is he picked up in 1541 exactly where he left off in 1538, 2 ½ years before. I don’t know what verse that was, but I was just talking about Romans 6:11 and if that’s what he was talking about he said something like this, ‘Now the last time we were studying verse 11 and I’d like you to open your Bibles to verse 12 because we are going to study verse 12 today.’ And he began to teach. He taught the Bible every day, several times on Sunday. And under the impact of the preaching of the Bible by John Calvin, Geneva was radically transformed. People became converted, when they became converted they stopped behaving like pagans, they started acting like Christians. All of the immorality declined. They began to be concerned about their neighbors. There were all kinds of poor people in the city, because it was a refuge center for refugees from all over Europe because of the persecutions. They were sleeping out on the grates. They said, ‘We need to do something about people.’ So they built hospices to take care of them; many were sick, they built hospitals. There were children running all over the place; they said, ‘Look, how are these children going to grow up to be Christians if they can’t study the Bible and they can’t study the Bible if they can’t read, so we better start educating them.’ So they established a whole system of schools that began with the youngest grades and went right on up the great Academy established by Calvin where the teaching was for the ministers who went out and spread the Gospel all over French speaking Europe. And they got interested in industry. Calvin taught, as you know, that money was not a bad thing, it was a case of stewardship, it should be used for God. So they began to apply their resources in developing industry, they brought in the silk industry and other things, and the city began to prosper. John Knox was one who had studied there, and he said years later from where he was in Scotland that in those days Geneva had become literally a new Reformation. The way it happened was by the teaching of the Word.

Nothing is more important than that.” [James M. Boice, “Preaching the Bible: The Sufficiency of Scripture,” cassette tape 2, side 2, Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/99]

A.A. Hodge was right when he stated in the late 19th century that “a comprehensive and centralized system of national education separated from religion . . . will prove the most appalling enginery for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and anti-social, nihilistic ethics, individual, social, and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.” [cited in “World Magazine,” Dec. 2, 2000, p. 31]

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazi war machine of WWII, had a proven philosophy that is yet in practice today: tell the people big lies often enough and they will come to believe them.

“There is nothing so absurd but if you repeat it often enough people will believe it.” [Dr. William James, father of modern psychology, cited in “America’s Godly Heritage” cassette message by David Barton of Wallbuilders, 1992]

"Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. In this sense and to this extent, our civilizations and our institutions are emphatically Christian." Richmond v. Moore, Illinois Supreme Court, 1883]

Adam Lanza gunned down 20 first-graders and six educators with a semi-automatic rifle at Sandy Hook Elementary School on Dec. 14, 2012, in Newtown. They discussed chimp society, with Lanza remarking that chimps "were able to show more empathy to members of their group than humans were at time." Lanza said humans were "glorified animals" with a "flawed faculty of judgment." Adam was interested in Japanese techno music and had taken Chinese lessons with a private tutor. He even talked about joining the military. In general, the friend said, Lanza would adopt "a very nihilist take on things" and seemed "overtly fatalistic and bleak." Lanza would disappear for weeks at a time, after which he would say he was "having an existential crisis." He liked to go "off grid" from time to time, and frequently reformatted his computer hard drives, presumably to cover his tracks, the friend said. Another topic of discussions was pedophilia. Among the documents investigators found on Lanza's computer was one titled "pbear" that investigators described as "advocating pedophiles' rights and the liberation of children." Another, called "Lovebound," was a screenplay describing a relationship between a 10-year-old boy and a 30-year-old man.

IF I WERE THE DEVIL By Paul Harvey * 1999 Paul Harvey News

I would gain control of the most powerful nation in the world;
I would delude their minds into thinking that they had come from man's effort, instead of God's blessings;
I would promote an attitude of loving things and using people, instead of the other way around;
I would dupe entire states into relying on gambling for their state revenue;
I would convince people that character is not an issue when it comes to leadership;
I would make it legal to take the life of unborn babies;

I would make it socially acceptable to take one's own life, and invent machines to make it convenient;
I would cheapen human life as much as possible so that the life of animals are valued more than human beings;
I would take God out of the schools, where even the mention of His name was grounds for a lawsuit;
I would come up with drugs that sedate the mind and target the young, and I would get sports heroes to advertise them;
I would get control of the media, so that every night I could pollute the mind of every family member for my agenda;
I would attack the family, the backbone of any nation
I would make divorce acceptable and easy, even fashionable. If the family crumbles, so does the nation;
I would compel people to express their most depraved fantasies on canvas and movie screens, and I would call it art;
I would then funnel tax dollars to promote this art.
I would convince the world that people are born homosexuals, and that their lifestyles should be accepted and marveled;
I would convince the people that right and wrong are determined by a few who call themselves authorities and refer to their agenda as politically correct;
I would persuade people that the church is irrelevant and out of date, and the Bible is for the naive;
I would dull the minds of Christians, and make them believe that prayer is not important, and that faithfulness and obedience are optional;
I guess I would leave things pretty much the way they are.

"If there was a God, he wouldn't let me feel the way I do. There is no God, only hate." [From the journal of Kip Kinkel, read aloud during his sentencing hearing by Lane County Sheriff's Detective Pamela McComas. Mr. Kinkel pleaded guilty to four counts of murder for the May 1998 slayings of his parents and two high school students, cited in World, November, 13, 1999, page 16]

"Tell me what the world is saying today, and I'll tell you what the church will be saying in seven years." [Francis Shaeffer]

In yet another piece of evidence which suggests that contemporary culture, far from preparing children to enter society as mature adults, panders to the nascent evil within the human heart, we find the following list of names of bands announced for this year's week-long Milwaukee Metalfest: Morbid Angel; Cradle of Filth; Rotting Christ; Twin Obscenity; Impaler; Dying Fetus; Myself Am Hell; Internal Bleeding; Jungle Rot; Bludgeon to Death. [World, 1998]

An example of the misguided efforts of Christians who would reform society at the expense of the Gospel:

Sirs,

Last week I pulled into the parking lot of a Carl's Jr. Before I even turned off my car, I was insulted and outraged to see a poster in the window inviting me to perform oral sex on one of your sandwiches ("Bite the Big One"). This disgusting invitation is totally unacceptable. What were you thinking? From that day forward, neither I nor anyone that I can influence will patronize Carl's Jr until such time as evidence is in hand that you have pulled that and any like advertising. I have already asked my Sunday School class to join me in boycotting Carl's Jr. and provided them with your address so they could write you. If I have not received a satisfactory response from you by 6/19, I will initiate a city-wide boycott and we will see if we can't put Carl's Jr's Phoenix area business in the toilet (seeing as how you like toilet humor). [from a letter I received from the author of this boycott letter, dated June 25, 1997]

In 1787, Gibbon completed his masterful book "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Below are listed five reasons for the fall of that Empire:

"First, the rapid increase of divorce, the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, the basis of human society. "Second, higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. "Third, the mad craze for pleasure: sports becoming more exciting and more brutal every year. "Fourth, the building of Gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people. "Fifth, the decay of religion - faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide the people."

"My comrades, never allow yourselves to put social work before the gospel of the grace of God. Take a man who has ruined himself by strong drink, has become a confirmed drunkard, beggared his family so that his wife has been separated from him, and his children are in orphan homes; he is just a common drunkard on the street. Take that man and sober him up; get him to sign the pledge and promise never to take another drink; move him out into the country in a new environment; settle him down in a little cottage; teach him a trade if he does not know one; bring back his wife and children; make his home a comfortable one, and then let him die in his sin and go to hell at last!" [General William Booth, cited in H.A. Ironside, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, 114]

In the face of liberalism a generation or two ago you couldn't teach the truth about Christianity. In the face of post-modernism today, you can't teach that Christianity is the truth.

"As we read the records of that world into which Christianity came we cannot but be appalled at the sheer fleshliness of life within it. There was a desperate poverty at the lower end of the social scale; but at the top we read of banquets which cost thousands of [dollars] where peacocks brains and nightingale's tongues were served and where the Emperor Vitellius set on the table at one banquet two thousand fish and seven thousand birds. Chastity was forgotten. Martial speaks of a woman who had reached her tenth husband; Juvenal of a woman who had eight husbands in five years; and Jerome tells us that in Rome there was one woman who was married her twenty-third husband, she herself being his twenty-first wife. Both in Greece and in Rome homosexual practices were so common that they had come to be looked on as natural. It was a world mastered by desire, whose aim was to find newer and wilder ways of gratifying its lusts." [Barclay, 187]

Over a ten-year period, political science professors at the University of Houston analyzed over 15,000 writings and speeches by the Founding Fathers to determine the primary source of ideas behind the Constitution. The three most quoted sources were the French philosopher Charles Montesquieu, English jurist William Blackstone, and English philosopher John Locke. But the Bible was quoted more than any of these: four times more than Montesquieu, six times more often than Locke, and twelve times more than Blackstone. Ninety four percent of the Founding Fathers' quotes were quoted, either directly or indirectly, from the Bible. [David T. Moore, *Five Lies of the Century*, Tyndale House Publishers, 1995, pp. 9-10]

DEATH & DYING: [*General*; *Deathbed quotes*; *Erroneous perspectives on*]

General

Some are like water, some are like the heat
Some are a melody and some are the beat
Sooner or later they all will be gone
Why don't they stay young?

It's so hard to get old without a cause
I don't want to perish like a fading horse
Youth's like diamonds in the sun
And diamonds are forever

So many adventures given up today
So many songs we forgot to play
So many dreams swinging out of the blue
Oh let it come true

Forever young
I want to be forever young
Do you really want to live forever
Forever, and ever?
[From the song Forever Young by Alphaville, 1984]

"There are no pockets in the shroud." – Old Spanish proverb. Note also that the suits made especially for the deceased to be worn in the casket customarily have no pockets.

Marianne Stokes 1908 painting, *Death and the Maiden* (La Jeune Fille et la Mort). It portrays a young girl's shock and panic as Death personified, sitting at the edge of her bed, informs her that her time has come, oh so early.

"In my opinion death is an insult; the stupidist, ugliest thing that can ever happen to a human being." [an unnamed physician cited in a medical journal, as cited in Burghardt, *Tell the Next Generation: Homilies and Near Homilies*]

‘Some people who think about what follows death become agnostic. W. R. Inge, the famed ‘Gloomy Dean’ of St. Paul's Cathedral, at age 93 told a London Daily Express interviewer:

I have tried to solve three problems: the problem of eternity, the problem of human personality and the problem of evil. I have failed. I have solved none of them, and I know no more now than when I started. And I believe no one ever will solve them . . . I know as much about the after life as you—nothing. I don't even know that there is one—in the sense in which the church teaches it. I have no vision of ‘heaven’ or a ‘welcoming God.’ I do not know what I shall find. I must wait and see.

Dean Inge did not have long to wait; eight months later he died.

Karl Marx ridiculed those who become preoccupied with ‘pie in the sky bye and bye’ while ignoring oppressed people here and now. But the greater danger at present is preoccupation with present injustices to the neglect of the reality of our lives after death. ‘If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men’ (1 Cor. 15:19).

Face the Reality of your Own Death

Although we prefer not to think about our own death, insurance agents remind us of our projected demise. Approximate estimates found the average life span of people in ancient Rome to be 22 years; in the Middle Ages, 35; a century ago in England and Wales, 41; in the United States in 1900, 49 and in 1945, 65.8. Now life expectancy is much longer, but no one knows whether he or she will attain the average. The brevity and uncertainty of life and the fear of death are existential realities that must be faced.

It is easier to envision someone else's body being buried than one's own. As difficult as it may be to imagine your spirit leaving your body at death, the failure to do so may be detrimental. . . .

.....

Christians need not despair as those who have no hope. We can face death with realistic confidence. Jesus died ‘so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death’ (Heb. 2:14-15).

You can experience freedom from the fear of death today. With your past forgiven and your future assured, you are free to live fully in the present! You need not be the slave of any power or phobia, whether economic, political, religious, cultic, or familial. ‘Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.’ (2 Cor. 4:16). Wesley said of the early Methodists: ‘They die well!’ The just not only live by faith; they die by faith.” [Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3:492-93]

In the British publication, *The Sun*, dated Nov. 5, 2016

SOUL SEARCHING Researchers claim that humans have souls which can live on after death. The idea that human consciousness lives on after death has been put forward by a number of well-respected scientists.

SCIENTISTS have claimed that death may not be as final as we once feared - and that humans have souls that can leave the body after their hosts kick the bucket.

It may sound like a supernatural myth, but the idea that human consciousness lives on after death has been put forward by a number of well-respected scientists.

And the British scientist at the forefront of the eerie theory claims that humans have souls which don't die along with the body.

We may not know exactly what consciousness is, but physicist Sir Roger Penrose believes that it's just a packet of information stored at a quantum - or sub-atomic - level.

Sensationally, he claims to have found evidence that this information, which is stored in microtubules within human cells, leaves the body after a person dies.

The researchers argue that humans have souls which leave the body upon death, and can live on without it forever.

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Sir Roger has argued that when a person dies temporarily, this quantum information is released into the universe, only to return to the body's cells if the host is brought back to life. He argues that this explains why people can have near-death experiences, and believes that this quantum information amounts to a soul leaving the body.

The physics expert said: "If the patient dies, it's possible that this quantum information can exist outside the body, perhaps indefinitely, as a soul."

Sir Roger claims to have found evidence that human consciousness can live on after a person dies.

And Sir Roger is not alone in believing this, since his theory is backed by researchers at the renowned Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich.

Experts there argue that our physical universe is just a perception, and that once our bodies die there is an infinite life beyond.

Dr Hans-Peter Dürr, former head of the institute, has said: "What we consider the here and now, this world, it is actually just the material level that is comprehensible. "The beyond is an infinite reality that is much bigger. The body dies but the spiritual quantum field continues. In this way, I am immortal." . . .

[<https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/2123380/researchers-claim-that-humans-have-souls-which-can-live-on-after-death/>]

"Near where I live in central London there used to be a bronze statue of a local man sitting on a bench overlooking the River Thames. A few meters in front of him is a bronze figure of a little girl, his daughter who had died in childhood. As he sits, in old age, his imagination plays tricks with him, and it is as if he sees his little daughter alive and playing there. That pair of statues always moves me to tears." [Christopher Ash, *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross*, 57]

In 455 BC, Aeschylus, the great playwright known as the Father of Greek Tragedy, died in a most unexpected way. He was said to have been killed by a tortoise which was dropped by an eagle that had mistaken his head for a rock suitable for shattering the shell of the reptile.

"When George Gillespie was lying on his deathbed in Edinburgh, with his pillow filled with stinging apprehensions, as is often the case with God's best servants and ripest saints, . . . [Samuel Rutherford] writes to him: 'My reverend and dear brother, look to the east. Die well. Your life of faith is just finishing. Finish it well. Let your last act of faith be your best act. Stand not upon sanctification, but upon justification. Die on your justification not on your sanctification.' . . . and the dying man answered: 'There is nothing that I have done that can

stand the touchstone of God's justice. Christ is all, and I am nothing." [cited in Worthy Is The Lamb, 338]

"When in the forest there is heard the crash of a falling oak, it is a sign that the woodman is abroad, and every tree in the whole company may tremble lest to-morrow the sharp edge of the axe should find it out. We are all like trees marked for the axe, and the fall of one should remind us that for every one, whether great as the cedar, or humble as the fir, the appointed hour is stealing on apace. I trust we do not, by often hearing of death, become callous to it. May we never be like the birds in the steeple, which build their nests when the bells are tolling, and sleep quietly when the solemn funeral peals are startling the air. May we regard death as the most weighty of all events, and be sobered by its approach. It ill behoves us to sport while our eternal destiny hangs on a thread. The sword is out of its scabbard—let us not trifle; it is furbished, and the edge is sharp—let us not play with it. He who does not prepare for death is more than an ordinary fool, he is a madman. When the voice of God is heard among the trees of the garden, let fig tree and sycamore, and elm and cedar, alike hear the sound thereof.

Be ready, servant of Christ, for thy Master comes on a sudden, when an ungodly world least expects him. See to it that thou be faithful in his work, for the grave shall soon be dugged for thee. Be ready, parents, see that your children are brought up in the fear of God, for they must soon be orphans; be ready, men of business, take care that your affairs are correct, and that you serve God with all your hearts, for the days of your terrestrial service will soon be ended, and you will be called to give account for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. May we all prepare for the tribunal of the great King with a care which shall be rewarded with the gracious commendation, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'" [Spurgeon]

It is sad to watch parents bury their children. I have seen it and done it. Small coffins are placed in the ground, but more than the body is buried. Parents also bury all the hopes and dreams they had for those children. The mother buries the lullabies she would have sung, the little clothes, the first day at school; the father buries the baseball glove and thoughts of playing catch—all the things they see other parents doing and had hoped to do with their own sons and daughters. These losses are expressed well by Eugene Field's poem 'Little Boy Blue':

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the toy soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

'Now, don't you go till I come', he said,
'And don't you make any noise!'
So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;

And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place—
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Who kissed them and put them there.

"The day may come when after a long fight with disease, we shall feel that medicine can do no more, and that nothing remains but to die. Friends will be standing by, unable to help us. Hearing, eyesight, even the power of praying, will be fast failing us. The world and its shadows will be melting beneath our feet. Eternity, with its realities, will be looming large before our minds. What shall support us in that trying hour? What shall enable us to feel, 'I fear no evil?' (Psalm 23:4). Nothing, nothing can do it but close communion with Christ. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Christ putting His right arm under our heads. Christ felt to be sitting by our side. Christ can alone give us the complete victory in the last struggle." [J.C. Ryle]

"Death doesn't really worry me that much, I'm not frightened about it... I just don't want to be there when it happens." -- Woody Allen

March 2, 2013 SEFFNER, Fla. (AP) — In a matter of seconds, the earth opened under Jeff Bush's bedroom and swallowed him up like something out of a horror movie. About the only thing left was the TV cable running down into the hole.

Bush, 37, was presumed dead Friday, the victim of a sinkhole — a hazard so common in Florida that state law requires home insurers to provide coverage against the danger. The sinkhole, estimated at 20 feet across and 20 feet deep, caused the home's concrete floor to cave in around 11 p.m. Thursday as everyone in the Tampa-area house was turning in for the night. It gave way with a loud crash that sounded like a car hitting the house and brought Bush's brother running.

Jeremy Bush said he jumped into the hole but couldn't see his brother and had to be rescued himself by a sheriff's deputy who reached out and pulled him to safety as the ground crumbled around him. "The floor was still giving in and the dirt was still going down, but I didn't care. I wanted to save my brother," Jeremy Bush said through tears Friday in a neighbor's yard. "But I just couldn't do nothing."

He added: "I could swear I heard him hollering my name to help him." Officials lowered equipment into the sinkhole and saw no signs of life, said Hillsborough County Fire Rescue spokeswoman Jessica Damico.

A dresser and the TV set had vanished down the hole, along with most of Bush's bed. "All I could see was the cable wire running from the TV going down into the hole. I saw a corner of the bed and a corner of the box spring and the frame of the bed," Jeremy Bush said.

At a news conference Friday night, county administrator Mike Merrill described the home as "seriously unstable." He said no one can go in the home because officials were afraid of another collapse and losing more lives. The soil around the home was very soft and the sinkhole was expected to grow.

Engineers said they may have to demolish the small, sky-blue house, even though from the outside there appeared to be nothing wrong with the four-bedroom, concrete-wall structure, built in 1974. "I cannot tell you why it has not collapsed yet," said Bill Bracken, the owner of engineering company called on to assess the sinkhole and home.

Engineers said there was an initial collapse followed by another one a short time later. The hole was 15 feet deep but grew to about 25 feet deep, and it was about 20 feet to 30 feet across. Florida is highly prone to sinkholes because there are caverns below ground of limestone, a porous rock that easily dissolves in water. A sinkhole near Orlando grew to 400 feet across in 1981 and devoured five sports cars, most of two businesses, a three-bedroom house and the deep end of an Olympic-size swimming pool.

More than 500 sinkholes have been reported in Hillsborough County alone since the government started keeping track in 1954, according to the state's environmental agency. Jeremy Bush said someone came out to the home a couple of months ago to check for sinkholes and other things, apparently for insurance purposes.

"He said there was nothing wrong with the house. Nothing. And a couple of months later, my brother dies. In a sinkhole," Bush said. Six people were at the home at the time, including Jeremy Bush's wife and his 2-year-old daughter. The brothers worked maintenance jobs, including picking up trash along highways.

J. Gresham Machen, one of the 20th century's great Christian heroes, was dying of pneumonia in a Bismarck, N.D., hospital on the first day of the new year, 1937. He was 54. Unconscious during most of that last day, during one of his lucid moments he dictated a telegram that turned out to be his last words: "I'm so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it."

The recipient of that telegram was a young colleague at Westminster Seminary who would prove to be one of the great Christian minds of the 20th century, John Murray. On May 8, 1975, Murray lay in bed at home in his native Scotland dying of cancer at age 76. As he passed through his last bout with intense pain, he prayed his last prayer, which contained his last words: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

In those two sets of last words, spoken nearly 40 years apart, by two men who did most to promote the 20th-century resurgence of biblical Christianity, we find reliance on the two major parts of Christ's atoning work. One of these is the subject of Christian forgetfulness, the other the object of Christian embarrassment. Machen died relying on what the

theologians call Christ's active obedience, and Murray died appealing to what the theologians call Christ's passive obedience.

The aspect of Christ's work we tend to forget is His active obedience—His obeying always, in every thought, feeling, motive, word, and action, the will of God. There was never so much as a moment when Christ did not love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, or when He did not love His neighbor as Himself. This representative obedience of Christ is the sole source of the righteousness by which a man may stand right in God's sight. In Christ God provides the Christ-righteousness He demands of man, but which man the sinner can never achieve. It is obtained, not by human effort, but by Spirit-given faith.

"Thy righteousness, O Christ, alone can cover me; no righteousness avails save that which is of thee."

The passive obedience of Christ is His submitting Himself to the wrath of God in the place of sinners. "God be merciful to me a sinner" is more literally, "God be propitiated toward me a sinner."

"To be propitiated" is "to turn away wrath." The way God justly turns His wrath away from us is by turning it toward His Son. Historically, theological liberals have considered propitiation unworthy of God. God's having wrath toward man and directing it away from him toward Christ the substitute seems a left-over of primitive ideas of an angry God. Increasingly, evangelicals are uncomfortable with propitiation, too, and push it aside in preference for proclaiming the cross as an undefined demonstration of how much God loves us. Both are embarrassed by propitiation and so miss the glory of grace—God's love providing what His justice demands by delivering up His only Son to a hellish death for us. It is in this way only that God can be and is merciful to sinners.

"Thy pains, not mine, O Christ, upon the shameful tree, have paid the laws full price and purchased peace for me."

Not a few Christians today think of doctrine as an unhelpful hindrance to Christian experience and an unneeded barrier to Christian unity. But doctrine matters when you're dying. I hope, when the time comes for me to put my foot into the chilly waters that must be crossed between this life and the life to come, that, by God's grace, I may die in faith. I hope I will be confessing the gospel of Christ's active and passive obedience, full of confidence that "he who dies believing, dies safely, through Thy love." Then on that last day:

"When from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the skies, ev'n then shall this be all my plea, Jesus hath lived hath died for me." [Last Words - *death bed confidence is rooted in doctrine* by William H. Smith. World Magazine, November 6, 1999, 33.]

"Let thy hope of heaven master thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die, who hopest to live by dying!" [William Gurnall]

The story is told of the Mexican bandit who robbed a Texas bank of \$250,000 and escaped across the river.

A month went by and the bandit thought he was safe. He was celebrating his good fortune at a local cantina (that's a bar, folks) when a Texas Ranger walked up and dragged him out into the dusty street.

After he realized he had a communication problem, the Ranger poked his head back into the bar: "Anybody here speak English?" he shouted. "I do, senior." came the reply. "Then come here." the Ranger ordered.

Alone in the street, the conversation between Ranger, translator and bandit began. "Did he rob the bank?" He did. "Does he still have the \$250,000?" Yes again. Then the ranger pulled out his Colt .45, held the barrel of the gun to the bandits head and cocked the trigger. "Make sure he understands this next question real good." The Ranger told the translator. "WHERE'S THE MONEY?"

In Spanish the frightened bandit blurted out that the money was hidden in a waterproof bag at the bottom of the well in the town plaza. The translator looked up at the Ranger: "He says he is not afraid to die!"

A visitor, strolling through a country graveyard, paused before one grave stone to read these words: "Pause, stranger, when you pass me by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be; So prepare for death and follow me." The visitor pondered that message, and then added his own beneath the chiseled words: "To follow you I am not content, Until I know which way you went." [Author unknown]

"Death is not a period, but a comma in the story of life." [Sparks, cited in Pulpit Helps, July 2003, 25]

Harvard biologist, Edward O. Wilson, conducted an insightful experiment with common ants. After noticing that it took ants a few days to recognize one of their crumpled comrades as having died, Wilson discovered that ants identify death among their members by smell and not by sight. As the dead ant's body begins to decay, other ants would invariably carry it out to a specified refuse pile. Wilson eventually pinpointed a trigger chemical called oleic acid. When ants smelled oleic acid on a felled member they would carry him away. Wilson found the instinct so strong that when he daubed oleic acid on small bits of paper the ants toted them to the ant cemetery. Finally, Wilson painted oleic acid on the bodies of live ants. Sure enough their nest-mates seized them—legs and antenna wriggling in protest—out to the refuse pile. These ants, alive but pronounced dead by their peers, would have to meticulously clean themselves off before returning. If they left even a trace of oleic acid on their bodies they would be carried away by more pall-bearer ants.

"I intend to life forever; so far so good." [Steven Wright]

"What happens if you get scared half-to-death twice?" [Steven Wright]

The Civil War Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864:

"By 1864 Lincoln and his generals had settled on a war of attrition: 'doing the arithmetic,' Lincoln called it, for the North could lose men and replace them, but if

Southern forces lost half as many they would likely stay in that depleted condition. The night before battle Northern soldiers were writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them on the backs of their coats, so the identity of their corpses the next day could be recognized more readily. U.S. Grant's forces at Cold Harbor, VA, had 7,000 casualties, most of them during a furious 8-minute assault against the Southern lines; Robert E. Lee's army lost 1,500. When the attack ended, an Alabama colonel noted that 'the dead covered more than five acres of ground about as thickly as they could be laid.' One blood-stained diary found in the pocket of a dead soldier had this final entry: 'June 3. Cold Harbor. I was killed.'" [World Magazine, June 3, 2000, p. 25]

"A man knows not the time of his death. Often it is so, when death falls upon a man, he thinks no more of it than the fishes think of the net before they are caught in it. All future contingencies are known to God only . . . that so His children might live by faith, that so they might live a life of holy dependence upon God continually." [Puritan pastor, Increase Mather, in a sermon preached at Harvard College in 1697, cited in World Magazine, January 8, 2000, page 37]

One of the old Saxon kings set out with an army to put down a rebellion in a distant province of his kingdom. When the insurrection had been quelled and the army of the rebels defeated, the king placed a candle over the archway of his castle where he had his headquarters and, lighting the candle, announced through a herald to all those who had been in rebellion against him that all who surrendered and took the oath of loyalty while the candle was burning would be spared. The king offered them his clemency and mercy, but he offer was limited to the life of that candle. [Clarence E. Macartney, cited in Pulpit Helps, June, 1998]

"Dear Father, help me grow old with grace, Not over-concerned with form or face. But as furrows deepen this brow of mine, To a greater faith may my heart be inclined. May my understanding of others grow; My caring increase as my steps grow slow. May love bloom forth as my skin tones fade, May I put behind me mistakes I have made. From the past recall only memories sweet, All bitterness trampled beneath my feet. May no day pass without kindly deed, Done for strangers or friend in need. May patience with self and others too, Increase in abundance as my days grow few. Help me prepare for they wonderful place, Dear Father, help me grow old with grace." [Reba Gibson, cited in Pulpit Helps, June, 1998]

February 18, 1546, Martin Luther died in Eisleben, where he had been born. "When I am to die," he had said, "I must boldly rely on Christ, submit my head to the stroke of death, and boldly trust the Word of God." [cited in "Prokope" Newsletter by Warren Wiersbe/Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Oct.-Dec., 1997]

Actual epitaphs from real tombstones:

In a Ribbesford, England, cemetery: "Anna Wallace The children of Israel wanted bread And the Lord sent them manna, Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife, And the Devil sent him Anna."

Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery: "Here lies Johnny Yeast Pardon me For not rising."

Uniontown, Pennsylvania cemetery: "Here lies the body of Jonathan Blake Stepped on the gas Instead of the brake."

In a Georgia cemetery: "I told you I was sick!"

Anna Hopewell's grave in Enosburg Falls, Vermont: "Here lies the body of our Anna Done to death by a banana It wasn't the fruit that laid her low But the skin of the thing that made her go."

Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York: "Born 1903--Died 1942 Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on the way down. It was."

In a Thurmont, Maryland, cemetery: "Here lies an Atheist All dressed up And no place to go."

And, Dr. Fred Roberts, Brookland, Arkansas: "Office upstairs"

An Old Man Died Today:

Gone is the winsome boy who spent hours in the woods after the chores were done. Gone is the jelly-faced kid who made the dog his constant companion. Silent is the laughter, faded are the tears. Gone are the sly winks from across the table, the worn ball cap and the scuffed up knees.

An old man died today and so did the days of his youth. His gangly teenage legs no longer walk with the neighbor girl to school. Gone are the dreams of a young man to achieve something lasting -- to be a good husband and father -- to experience the satisfaction of a job well done.

The years have slipped by and life has been both rich and troublesome. Both his body and character were strengthened and tested in the Appalachian lumber camps. His fledgling faith in Christ matured over the years as he grew in knowledge that was godly and wise. He listened patiently to the problems and opinions of countless customers in his barber shop. His wife and daughter stood by his side until the end.

Yes, an old man died today and left many good memories behind. A "cool" youthful generation missed a tremendous opportunity! Few saw him in the nursing care center -- none would slow down to pace themselves with his faltering steps, nor would they take a few minutes to listen to the stories of his journey and of God's faithfulness. A truly rich resource of wise counsel is now faded -- his chair and bed are empty!

An old man died today and a family grieves. But society deems itself relieved from a burden and young people are not even aware of the great loss! Yet the angels came with joy to carry him home to the Father!

"O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth; and I still declare Thy wondrous deeds Even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Thy strength to this generation, Thy power to all who are to come" (Psa. 71:17-18) "Whom have

I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psa. 73: 25-26) - [Shepherd's Care Internet devotionals, 8/6/98]

I received this advertisement on December 3, 1998 from "People Unlimited - The Infinite A liveness Company":

How Long Do You Want To Live? If you could live to the age of 100 in good health, would you want to? What about 150? What about 250? What about forever? The Choice Is Yours! If you haven't asked yourself these questions, you need to. If you have, you probably want to know more. Either way, join us in an upcoming lecture by International Speakers and Authors James R. Strole and Bernadeane. James and Bernadeane have appeared on numerous television and radio shows including Larry King, Joan Rivers and many others. They have been working in this specialized field of unlimited human life potential for over 25 years.

Where: Mustang Library, 10101 North 90th Street, Scottsdale
Time: 7:30 p.m. - Wednesday, December 16th - \$5 Door Fee
Join Us Right Here In Scottsdale For Our Weekly Meetings

Live Now, Live Forever - Weekly Meetings (Every Monday and Friday - 8:00 p.m.) - Holiday Inn, 7515 East Butherus, Scottsdale Airport. Phone 949-4344 for details.

"Don't Feel Sorry for Me"

The old saint lay on his dying bed,
With loved ones gathered around.
He said, "Don't feel sorry for me,
For blessings ahead abound."

"I've fought the good fight," he said,
"And my faith I've kept intact.
Salvation is not a fable,
But it's solidly based on fact."

I've walked with Christ for many years,
Until now my head is hoary.
Soon I shall close my eyes in sleep,
To awake in eternal glory."

"I'm better off than YOU are;
You have more of the race to run.
You're heading toward life's sunset,
But I face the rising sun."
[John F. Brand]

"There is a young girl in heaven now, once a member of this church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage

of tuberculosis. Fair and sweetly beautifully she looked, and I think I never heard such syllables as those which fell from that girls's lips. She had disappointments and trials, and troubles. But all these she had not a word to say about, except that she blessed God for them; they had brought her nearer to the Savior. And when we asked her whether she was not afraid of dying, [she replied], 'No.' The only thing I fear is this: I am afraid of living, lest my patience should wear out. I have not said an impatient word yet, sir; I hope I shall not. It is sad to be so very weak, but I think if I had my choice, I would rather be here [on her deathbed] than be in good health, for it is very precious to me. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I am waiting for the moment when He shall send His chariot of fire to take me up to Him.' I put the question: 'Have you not any doubts?' 'No, none, sir; why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ.' 'And have you not any fear about your sins?' 'No, sir, they are all forgiven; I trust the Savior's precious blood.' 'And do you think that you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die?' 'Not if He leave me, sir. But He will never leave me, for He said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*'" [Charles H. Spurgeon, cited in Pulpit Helps, April, 1997]

"For the Christian death should hold no terrors; it is like putting off old clothes or an exit from old age." [Edwin Blum, Dallas Sem. professor]

Many people were won to Christ through the witness of John Gilmour, a godly Englishman of days gone by. It was his practice to fill his pockets with gospel tracts to use as God directed him. One day he was walking in a little village when he came across an old Irishman who sold pots and pans for a living. Falsely assuming that the man would be unresponsive to the gospel, Gilmour thought to himself: "There's no use speaking to him." But prompted by the Spirit, he decided to greet the old man. So he said to him, "Good morning, how is business today?" "Oh," replied the Irishman, "I cannot complain." Pursuing his desire to witness for Christ, Gilmour said, "Well now, what a grand thing it is to be saved!" The old man looked intently at him and replied, "I know something better than that." "Something better than being saved? I would like to know what that is." With a warm smile, the old Irishman responded, "The companionship of the One who saved me, sir."

Death to the true Christian is just a passing from the bondage and captivity of Egypt into Canaan, the new land. It is like the Exodus of the children of Israel, there under the heel of the Pharaoh, the cure oppressor, there in bondage and serfdom; then, the Exodus, the going out, the crossing of the Red Sea and Canaan and all its amazing possessions. That is the way in which, according to the New Testament, the Christian should face the end [of life]. Not a terror, but just the folding up of the tent and moving out--an exodus, a crossing of the river and an entrance into the everlasting and eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. [Martyn Lloyd Jones]

Many years ago, someone approached John Wesley, the man who would be known to history as the founder of the Methodist Church, and asked him what distinguished his followers from the rank and file of mankind. Wesley pondered the question for a moment and then replied: "My people die well."

Death in ten thousand shapes hangs ever over our heads, and no man can elude him. [Homer, Iliad, 8th c. BC]

"All of my life I have been learning to live in Christ; now I am learning how to die in Christ." [Dr. Wesley Olsen in his letter of resignation to Western Seminary]

When Rabbi Bunam lay dying his wife burst into tears. He said: "What are you crying for? My whole life was only that I might learn how to die." [cited in Archetypes of Wisdom]

An old legend tells of a merchant in Bagdad who one day sent his servant to the market. Before long the servant returned. White and trembling and with great agitation he said to his master "down in the market place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd, and when I turned around I saw that it was death who had jostled me. "She looked at me and made a threatening gesture. "Master, please lend me your horse, for I must hasten away to avoid her. "I will ride to Samaria and there I will hide and death will not find me."

The merchant lent him his horse and the servant galloped away in a great haste. Later the merchant went down to the market place and saw death standing in the crowd. He went over to her and asked "why did you frighten my servant this morning? "Why did you make a threatening gesture?" "That was not a threatening gesture," Death replied. "It was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I have an appointment with him tonight in Samaria."

Each of us has an appointment in Samaria. But that is cause for rejoicing, not fear -- provided we have put our trust in Him who alone holds the keys to life and death.

As Gertrude Stein lay dying she whispered to someone at her deathbed: "what is the answer?" Getting no reply she then said, "then what is the question?" (cited in Archetypes of Wisdom)

The gravestone of the famous missionary reads: "William Carey: Born August 17, 1761; Died June 1834 -- A wretched, poor and helpless worm, on Thy kind arms I fall."

"Tomorrow we shall meet, Death and I--And he shall thrust his sword Into one who is wide awake. But in the meantime how grievous the memory Of hours frittered away." [Dag Hammarskjold, Markings, 6]

British scientists say they're working on a "Soul-Catcher" memory chip, which would record human memories and thoughts, and expect it to be working within 30 years. "With these chips, we wouldn't have to rely on holiday snapshots and our memories. We could simply play our experiences back to each other," says Chris Winter, head of British Telecom's artificial life team. "By combining this information with a record of a person's genes, we could recreate a person physically, emotionally and spiritually," he said. "This is the end of death--immortality in the truest sense." [From "Reuters," cited in Tribune Newspapers Parade section, December 29, 1996]

Deathbed quotes

March 1, 1981, Dr. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones died. He had pastored Westminster Chapel in London from 1939 to 1968. "Do not pray for healing," he wrote on a scrap of paper a few days before his death. (He'd lost the power of speech.) "Do not hold me back from the

glory." [cited in "Prokope" Newsletter by Warren Wiersbe/Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Oct.-Dec., 1997]

Henry David Thoreau, the writer who was known as a stubborn, arrogant individualist (and who is said to have loved a snowstorm more than Christ and would have nothing to do with the church) died on May 6, 1862. Shortly before his death, his aunt asked him if he'd made his peace with God. Thoreau responded to her with his final cynical words "I didn't know we'd ever quarreled."

D.L. Moody, at his deathbed turned to his sons who were at his bedside and said "If God be your partner, make your plans large."

"Bring down the curtain, the farce is done" (French philosopher and comic, Francois Rabelais, who died in 1553)

"Our God is the God from whom cometh salvation. God is the Lord by whom we escape death." (Martin Luther)

"I am abandoned by God and man! I shall go to hell! O Christ, O Jesus Christ!" (French philosopher and skeptic, Voltaire)

"I enjoy heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praises." (Augustus Toplady, author of the hymn "Rock of Ages," who died at age 38)

"I would give worlds, if I had them, if "The Age of Reason" had never been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! Stay with me! It is hell to be left alone!" (Thomas Paine, writer)

"I have pain--but I have peace, I have peace." (Richard Baxter)

"I am convinced that there is no hope" (Winston Churchill)

"Live in Christ, die in Christ, and the flesh need not fear death" (John Knox)

Before dying of a heart attack, Jewish novelist Italo Svevo told a nurse attempting to administer last rites "when you haven't prayed all your life, it's no use the last moment."

Billy Graham notes that when the great saint Joseph Everett was dying he said "Glory! Glory Glory!" and continued exclaiming, "Glory!" for over 25 minutes until he was whisked away by angels to the gates of heaven.

"When I lived, I provided for everything but death; now I must die and I am unprepared to die." (Cesare Borgia)

August Strindberg, a Swedish dramatist who died May 14, 1912, left a legacy of forgiveness and redemption by dying with a Bible clasped tightly to his chest saying "It is atoned for!"

"Lord help my poor soul" (Edger Allen Poe, who died in 1849 at age 40 after living a life of lies and drunkenness)

The famous french infidel, Voltaire, said to his doctor as he lay dying: "I will give you half of what I am worth if only you will give me 6 months life." So desperate were his cries when his time was gone that the nurse who attended him said, "for all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 131-32]

The last words of the English skeptic Thomas Hobbes were: "If I had the whole world, I would give it to live one day." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 132]

When one of the members of the rich Vanderbilt family was dying, the family was waiting in an outer room. When the lawyer and the doctor came out, one of the more outspoken members of the family stepped up to the lawyer and asked, "How much did he leave?" The lawyer replied, "He left it all. He didn't take any of it with him." [cited in McGee, James, 103]

Erroneous perspectives on

A poem from a bereavement support group newsletter:

"Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the softly falling snow. I am the gentle showers of rain, I am the fields of ripening grain.

I am in the morning hush, I am in the graceful rush of beautiful birds in circling flight, I am the starshine of the night.

I am in the flowers that bloom, I am in a quiet room. I am in the birds that sing, I am in each lovely thing.

Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there . . . I do not DIE.

DEBATE:

John Newton (1725-1807), author of "Amazing Grace," writes to a fellow pastor who is composing a tract against prevalent false doctrines:

You are likely to be engaged in controversy. . . . You are of the strongest side; for truth is great, and must prevail. . . . I am not therefore anxious for the [outcome] of the battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph, not only over your adversary, but over yourself. If you cannot be vanquished, you may be wounded. To preserve you from such wounds as might give you cause of weeping over your conquests, I would present you with some considerations, which, if duly attended to, will do you the service of a great coat of mail. . . . I may reduce my advice to three heads, respecting your opponent, the public and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish that before you set pen to paper against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. This practice will have a direct tendency to conciliate your heart to love and pity him; and such a disposition will have a good influence upon every page you write. If [he is a believer] . . . the Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever. But if [he is not a believer], . . . he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his. . . . If you write with a desire of being an instrument of correcting mistakes, you will of course be cautious of laying stumbling blocks in the way of the blind or of using any expressions that may exasperate their passions, confirm them in their principles, and thereby make their conviction, humanly speaking, more impracticable. . . . [John Newton, Works, Vol 1 (Banner of Truth, 1985), p. 269f.]

DECEPTION:

"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. If we wish to make it louder, we will bring up the volume. If we wish to make it softer, we will tune it to a whisper. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can roll the image, make it flutter. We can change the focus to a soft blur or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear." [Introduction to the classic TV show, "The Outer Limits"]

Back in the 1800s, there was a Mexican bandit by the name of Jose Rivera who was coming up from Mexico across the border in order to steal from the Texas banks. After robbing several banks, the bank owners got together and hired a prominent Texas Ranger to go back over the border into Mexico to capture or kill Jose Rivera—whatever it took to get the money back. So this big rugged Texas Ranger went down into Mexico and before long he followed Jose Rivera's tracks down to a small town in Mexico. The Ranger then found out that Jose was hanging out in the local saloon. So the Ranger prepared himself, pulled out his 6-guns and burst into the saloon. He pointed them in the direction of Jose Rivera and he said, "Jose, I'm a Texas Ranger I've come down here to recover the money you've stolen from the Texas banks and if you don't tell me where the money is I'm going to shoot you. There was a little Mexican man in the corner who said, "Senor, there is no use speaking that way to Jose. He does not speak English. He does not know what you are saying." The Ranger looked at the little man and said, "You tell Jose Rivera I'm a Texas Ranger and I'm here to get that stolen money back, and if he doesn't tell me where the money is I'll kill him. The little man turned to Jose and speaks to him in Spanish and tells him, "The big gringo is a Texas Ranger and he says he will kill you if you don't tell him where the Texas money is." Well, Jose says

to himself, "My life isn't worth the money, after all, I can always steal more." So, Jose tells his fellow-countryman, "You tell the Texan to go out of town to the north about ½ mile and there's a dry well of to the right. Behind the well is a hole covered by a large rock. If he looks under that rock, he will find all of the money." The little man over the in corner looked at the Texas Ranger and said, "Jose say, 'Go ahead and shoot!'"

"There is no idea so stupid that you can't find a professor who will believe it." (or we could add, "teach it") [H.L. Mencken, circa 1950, cited in Neil Postman, Technopoly, 57]

One night, while at sea, the captain of a ship saw what looked like the on-coming lights of another ship heading directly toward him. He had his signalman blink to the other ship, "Change your course 10 degrees south." The reply came back, "Change your course 10 degrees north!" The ship's captain answered, "I am a captain, change your course south!" To which the reply was, "I am a seaman first class. Change your course north!" The captain was infuriated and immediately signaled back, "I demand that you change your course, I'm on a battleship!" After a moment the reply came back, "And I say change your course north, I'm in a lighthouse."

Early on a crisp September morning in 1944, two cyclists taking cover in a small French town near the Luxembourg border decided that it was safe at last to venture out into the countryside. . . . The nighttime rumble of tanks had died away. So the men mounted up and swept along the road that passed the bivouac. They sniffed the smoke of cooking fires in the cold autumn air. They noted the usual scattering of grimy, mud-stained vehicles, partly hidden under tattered camouflage nets: a couple of trucks, some trailers, and a few big M-4 tanks with their mighty guns poking out from the cover of trees and netting.

Then, a young American sentry stopped the pair. He was friendly enough, but firm. They must explain where they were going and why. The Frenchmen replied as well as they could until, all at once, they stiffened and fell silent, their eyes wide in astonishment. For over the sentry's shoulder they saw four GIs in muddy battle jackets and dull-green helmets walk over to a monstrous tank and, with one man at each corner, simply pick it up, turn it around and set it down again. Thus . . . was the cover of the 603d Engineer Camouflage Battalion broken and the security of a neighboring armored division imperiled at a critical moment in the Allied offensive. Fortunately, no damage was done.

The 603d was one of four units that formed what was perhaps the most enigmatic outfit ever fielded in battle, a group called the 23d Headquarters Special Troops. The 23d's troops were "special" all right. They specialized in impersonating other troops. . . . With inflatable rubber guns and vehicles, with ever-changing shoulder patches, stencils to make phony signs, and with amplified recordings of heavy equipment in action, the 23d played role after role. . . .

The purpose of all that razzle dazzle was to fool the enemy and, by doing so, enable the troops that the 23d was impersonating to sneak into new positions, to launch a surprise attack or in some other way to catch the other side off guard. [cited in Rainey, Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem, 34]

There once was a man who took the daily train from New York to Connecticut every morning next to a man he had never seen. The other man had a box of paper clips on his lap,

and every few seconds he threw one out the train window, never saying a word. That evening the commuter went to the same car, hoping to see the paper clip man. There he was, silently throwing paper clips out the window. The commuter started sitting next to this man every day. The man never said a word, he just kept throwing paper clips out the window. Finally, the commuter could stand it no longer. "Why in the world do you always throw paper clips out the window?" The man looked carefully about, debating whether he could be trusted. Finally he whispered, "It scares the elephants away!" The commuter held back a grin as he patiently explained, "But there are no elephants in Connecticut!" "Exactly," the man nodded vigorously, "see how well it works!"

Thieves snort dead dog Charlie's ashes. Burglars tried to snort the contents of a bag marked "Charlie" when they broke into a house, but the light-coloured powder was the ashes of the homeowner's dog. The bag, alongside an urn, contained the ashes of Dee Blyth's dead Newfoundland dog, Charlie, who died in 1997. A police officer investigating the break-in at Chadwell Heath, Essex laughed when he saw the thieves had arranged the ashes into cocaine-style lines, Ms Blyth told The Sun newspaper. She said: "I'd love to see their faces when these thieves realise. It was horrible knowing they were in my house, but the idea of them trying to get high on a dead dog made me feel better. "I didn't realise the significance until the policeman started laughing - he couldn't wait to tell his mates back at the station." The thieves stole two televisions, a video recorder, a hi-fi and £2000 worth of jewellery. Police are trying to track down the thieves using DNA samples from the bag of ashes. Story filed: 09:51 Friday 13th October 2000

DEPRAVITY:

In 1854 A Briton by name of Holmon Hunt painted a famous piece of Christian art called "Light of the World." I'm sure most of you have seen it; some of you may have it somewhere in your home. It's a picture of Christ at night, holding a lantern standing outside of a home, knocking at the old wooden door. It's said that Hunt showed his picture to a friend one day and asked him, "What do you think?" "It is a beautiful picture, but I think you have forgotten something," said the friend. "There is no latch on the door." Mr. Hunt replied, "Ah, my friend, you have missed the point of the picture. The man at the door is the Lord Jesus Christ. The door is the entrance to the human heart and the latch is on the inside. Unless the one on the inside opens the door, Jesus will never come in." There's a theological problem with Holmon's viewpoint. The problem is related to total depravity. You see, to use Holmon's painting as an example, the guy on the other side of the door from Jesus is dead! He's not opening any door until, as it says in Ephesians 2, God gives him spiritually life!" [TAB]

"Every Baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toys, his uncle's watch . . . Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He's dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, but all children are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal . . ." [cited in MacArthur, Ephesians Commentary, 309]

"C.K. Chesterton once likened this world to the desert island site of a shipwreck. A sailor awakes from the deep sleep and discovers treasure strewn about, relics from a civilization he can barely remember. One by one he picks up the relics--gold coins, a compass, fine clothing--and tries to discern their meaning. According to Chesterton, fallen humanity is in such a state. Good things on earth still bear traces of their original purpose, but each is also subject to misinterpretation or abuse because of fallen, 'amnesiac' human nature." [cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 63)]

"Since the time of the French Revolution, the idea has gained wide acceptance that human nature is basically good. The 'evil' that crops out from time to time is due to a lack of education and understanding, or perhaps from psychological patterns inflicted by one's background and environment. What is needed, we are told, is education and perhaps some adjustment in one's environment--economic, social, political, psychological. Once a person 'understands,' and once artificial restrictions have been removed, the innate goodness of human nature will burst into flower." [Larry Christianson, The Christian Family, 95]

"Centuries ago in England, if a pickpocket was convicted, his right hand was cut off. If he was convicted a second time, his left hand was amputated. One pickpocket lost both hand, and continued his 'trade' by using his teeth! Physical surgery can never change the heart." [Wiersbe, Colossians, 103]

Robert Schuller goes so far as to deny that fallen human nature is truly evil: "By nature we are fearful, not bad. . . . Label it a 'negative self-image,' but do not say that the central core of the human soul is wickedness. If this were so, then truly, the human being is totally depraved." [Self Esteem, 65]

John Calvin, commenting on how an understanding of the believer's past position makes him even more thankful for God's grace, writes:

"For example, suppose someone is told: 'If God hated you while you were still a sinner; and cast you off, as you deserved, a terrible destruction would have awaited you. But because he kept you in grace voluntarily, and of his own free favor, and did not allow you to be estranged from him, he thus delivered you from that peril.' This man then would surely experience and feel something of what he owes to God's mercy."

On the other hand, suppose he hears, as Scriptures teaches, that he was estranged from God through sin, is an heir of wrath, subject to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, beyond every blessing of God, the slave of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin, destined finally for a dreadful destruction and already involved in it; and that at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgement, threatened all sinners; that he purged with his blood those evils, which had rendered sinners hateful to God; that by this expiation he made satisfaction and sacrifice duly to God the Father that as intercessor he has appeased God's wrath; that on this foundation rests the peace of God with men; that by this bond his benevolence is maintained toward them. Will the man not then be even more moved by all these things which so vividly portray the greatness of the calamity from which he was been rescued" [John Calvin, Institutes, 2.16.2]

Only the Christian has a free will. Weust agrees:

"The Christian's will has been made absolutely free. Before salvation it was not free so far as choosing between good and evil is concern. It was enslaved to the evil nature. But now it stands poised between the evil nature and the divine nature with the responsibility to reject the [temptations] of the former and obey the exhortations of the latter." [Romans, 98]

A certain man had a very serious psychological problem: he sincerely believed that he was dead. As much as his friends and family tried to convince him otherwise, he still maintained his incredible belief that he was dead. Finally, his wife persuaded him to see their family doctor. The doctor, upon his arrival, was certain that if his confused patient was confronted with the evidence that he was indeed alive, he would most certainly abandon his silly notion that he was dead. The doctor began his examination by asking the man "do dead people bleed?" "No, of course not, dead people don't bleed" the man replied. With that the doctor quickly pricked the man's arm with a needle. The man looked at his arm, astonished as blood oozed from the tiny wound. He then looked at the doctor and exclaimed "doctor, I was wrong all along; dead men do bleed!"

Man's very nature is fallen. Man is wrong at the centre of his being, and therefore everything is wrong. He cannot be improved, for, finally, nothing will suffice but a radical change, a new nature. Man loves the darkness and hates the light. What can be done for him? Can he change himself? Can he renew his nature? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" Can man change the whole bias of his life? Give him new clothing, provide him with a new house in new surroundings, entertain him with all that is best and most elevating, educate him and train his mind, enrich his soul with frequent doses of the finest culture ever known, do all and more, but still he will remain the same essential man, and his desires and innermost life will be unchanged. [D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Plight of Man and the Power of God, 147]

Note the effect of the fall and the "before and after of the believer" (cf. Colossians 1:21-22). Unregenerate man is morally incomplete because he stands condemned in his sin. Unregenerate man is spiritually incomplete because he has no fellowship with the living God. Unregenerate man is intellectually incomplete because he has no clue as to what true wisdom is all about.

The believer is morally complete because he has the righteousness of Christ. The believer is spiritually complete because he is in eternal fellowship with God. The believer is intellectually complete because he has the mind of Christ and the wisdom of God. [TAB]

DEPRESSION:

"I know that wise brethren say, 'You should not give way to feelings of depression.' ... If those who blame quite so furiously could once know what depression is, they would think it cruel to scatter blame where comfort is needed. There are experiences of the children of God which are full of spiritual darkness; and I am almost persuaded that those of God's servants who have been most highly favoured have, nevertheless, suffered more times of darkness than others. The covenant is never known to Abraham so well as when a horror

of great darkness comes over him, and then he sees the shining lamp moving between the pieces of the sacrifice. A greater than Abraham was early led of the Spirit into the wilderness, and yet again ere He closed His life He was sorrowful and very heavy in the garden. No sin is necessarily connected with sorrow of heart, for Jesus Christ our Lord once said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' There was no sin in Him, and consequently none in His deep depression. I would, therefore, try to cheer any brother who is sad, for his sadness is not necessarily blameworthy. If his downcast spirit arises from unbelief, let him flog himself, and cry to God to be delivered from it; but if the soul is sighing--'though he slay me, yet will I trust in him'--its being slain is not a fault. The way of sorrow is not the way of sin, but a hallowed road sanctified by the prayers of myriads of pilgrims now with God--pilgrims who, passing through the valley of Baca [lit: of weeping], made it a well, the rain also filled the pools: of such it is written: 'They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.'" [Charles Haddon Spurgeon, from the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1881, vol. 27, p. 1595]

"[Moods and despair] indicate that people are not wholly or ultimately made for this world. There is something eternal in us. We are to find the fulfillment of our passion for meaning and security, which is expressed in a distorted way by our typical immersion in these worldly projects, and a realm which is not subject to disappearance. A human being is not an absurdity, a feudal passion, doomed either to repression or the most poignant unhappiness. He is, rather, a wayward child of God, whose restlessness and anxiety and despair can and should drive him into the arms of his Father. His despair is indeed a sickness, but it is curable when he finds his true home." [Soren Kierkegaard, cited in Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason, 45-46]

Our blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Deep depression of spirit is the most grievous of all trials; all besides is as nothing. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to his God, "Be not far from me," for above all other seasons a man needs his God when his heart is melted within him because of heaviness. Believer, come near the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory as having once been brought far lower, in mental distress and inward anguish, than any one among us; and mark his fitness to become a faithful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Especially let those of us whose sadness springs directly from the withdrawal of a present sense of our Father's love, enter into near and intimate communion with Jesus. Let us not give way to despair, since through this dark room the Master has passed before us. Our souls may sometimes long and faint, and thirst even to anguish, to behold the light of the Lord's countenance: at such times let us stay ourselves with the sweet fact of the sympathy of our great High Priest. Our drops of sorrow may well be forgotten in the ocean of his griefs; but how high ought our love to rise! Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at the flood in spring tides, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord's feet, and there let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by his love, having no virtue or value; and only venturing to whisper to him that if he will put his ear to me, he will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of his own love which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at his feet for ever. [Title: Morning and Evening, Author: Spurgeon, Charles H. MORNING - April 12 "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." - Psalm 22:14]

“Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.” [Steven Wright]

“ I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would be not be one cheerful face on earth.” [Abraham Lincoln, cited in Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety Workbook, 1-9).

"I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to." [spoken in a sermon by C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Warren Wiersbe, Be Encouraged, 11]

Dr. John Henry Jowett was known in his day as "the greatest preacher in the English speaking world." He once confessed to his congregation: "You seem to imagine that I have no ups and downs, but just a level and lofty strength of spiritual attainment with unbroken joy and equanimity. By no means! I am often perfectly wretched and everything appears most murky." [cited by Warren Wiersbe, Be Encouraged, 11]

Dr. John Piper tells the following story:

“One of my heroes today is Greg Livingstone, the head of Frontier’s Mission to the Muslims. Greg’s wife . . . struggles with depression and is hospitalized nearly every six months. It’s like a rhythm in her life. Now picture yourself: You’ve got a wife and you’ve got grown kids, and you are responsible for 500 missionaries whose lives are broken, in the hardest places in the world--being threatened, being stabbed. And your wife is breaking your heart because she can’t cope with life six months out of the year. She’s right now . . . in Amsterdam; we’ve talked about these things; she’s doing great right now. And I pray, ‘Oh God, may it be over, this rhythm that she’s been in.’ But Greg has never quit. I just marvel, he’s never thrown in the towel and said, ‘I can’t lead an organization of 500 people and travel all over the world when my wife’s in the hospital.’ . . . God gives grace.” [“Persevering in Ministry,” Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

DEVOTION: [See also "discipleship"]

"When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own;
When I see thee as thou art,
Love thee with unsinning heart;
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe."

"He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day." [John Bunyan]

The Methodist preacher Thomas Collins (1810-1864), from 1838 to 1841 when he was between the ages of 28 and 31, shared the Durham, England circuit with two colleagues. The circuit consisted of a large chapel in the city and thirty preaching places scattered around the countryside. The three preachers shared a single horse. By 1841, these three preachers were

responsible for over 1000 members in the Methodist societies. In other words, his responsibilities were huge. But note this entry from his journal, indicating the way he managed his time:

“I will arise at quarter to six. Till half-past six shall be spent in devotion. Chosen divines will afterwards occupy me till eight. Breakfast and family worship may be allowed an hour. From nine to ten, Greek and Hebrew on alternate days. From ten to twelve, compose [sermons]. From twelve to one, read the Scriptures and pray. From one to two, dine. During the afternoon, visit among the people either in town or country.”

Another diary entry:

“When we are fully devoted to the work of God, then are we happy; then the Spirit comes and fills us with intelligence, purity, tenderness, energy, and bliss.”

His biographer remarks:

“Convinced that evangelistic power, not being of self, is only at the full when the man becomes the channel, instrument, and minister of the Spirit, Mr Collins most diligently marked the promises which pledge such Divine condescension, pleaded them, and in expectant faith yielded up himself for their fulfilment.” [Iain Murray, *Wesley and Men Who Followed* (Banner of Truth, 2003), p. 190-91. This quote is taken in turn from Samuel Coley, *Life of the Rev. Thomas Collins* (Hamilton, Adams, & Co, 1868).

When I was threatening to become cold in my ministry, and when I felt Sabbath morning coming and my heart not filled with amazement at the grace of God, or when I was making ready to dispense the Lord’s Supper, do you know what I used to do? I used to take a turn up and down among the sins of my past life, and I always came down again with a broken and contrite heart, ready to preach, as it was preached in the beginning, the forgiveness of sins. I do not think I ever went up the pulpit stair that I did not stop for a moment at the foot of it and take a turn up and down among the sins of my past years. I do not think that I ever planned a sermon that I did not take a turn round my study table and look back at the sins of my youth and of all my life down to the present; and many a Sabbath morning, when my soul had been cold and dry, for the lack of prayer during the week, a turn up and down in my past life before I went into the pulpit always broke my hard heart and made me close with the gospel for my own soul before I began to preach." [Puritan Thomas Goodwin, writing to his son, cited in Barclay, DSB: 1 Timothy, 46-47]

Lord, help me look into my life
And find the faults therein,
Then give me strength to
weed them out,
And keep me pure and clean.

Thy guiding hand alone can lead
Me on to daily live
A fuller richer life for Thee
My all to others give.

Keep me so busy with the task
Of keeping self in line,
I'll have no time for other's fault
Nor waste of precious time.

It's much too easy to observe
The other person's faults,
When all the while the thing I need
Is to heed what thou has taught.
[Author unknown]

"Give me the grace to do as you command, and command me to do what you will! . . . O holy God . . . when your commands are obeyed, it is from you that we receive the power to obey them." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, X, 31]

". . . the key to Christian living is a thirst and hunger for God. And one of the main reasons people do not understand or experience the sovereignty of grace and the way it works through the awakening of sovereign joy is that their hunger and thirst for God is so small." [John Piper, The Swan is not Silent: Sovereign Joy in the Life and Thought of St. Augustine, 13]

"We need to rethink our reformed soteriology so that every limb and every branch in the tree is coursing with the sap of Augustinian delight. We need to make plain that *total depravity* is not just badness, but blindness to beauty and deadness to joy; and *unconditional election* means that the completeness of our joy in Jesus was planned for us before we ever existed; and that . . . *irresistible grace* is the commitment and power of God's love to make sure we don't hold on to suicidal pleasures, but will set us free from by the sovereign power of superior delights; and that the *perseverance of the saints* is the almighty work of God to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of pleasures at God's right hand forever." [John Piper, The Swan is not Silent: Sovereign Joy in the Life and Thought of St. Augustine, 13]

"You are ever active, yet always at rest. You gather all things to yourself, though you suffer no need. . . You grieve for wrong, but suffer no pain. You can be angry and yet serene. Your works are varied, but your purpose is one and the same. . . You welcome those who come to you, though you never lost them. You are never in need yet are glad to gain, never covetous yet you exact a return for your gifts. . . You release us from our debts, but you lose nothing thereby. You are my God, my Life, my holy Delight, but is this enough to say of you? Can any man say enough when he speaks of you? Yet woe betide those who are silent about you!" [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, I, 4]

DISCERNMENT:

C. S. Lewis famously exhorts modern readers to beware of "chronological snobbery"—uncharitably criticizing ancient peoples according to modern standards and moral sensitivities without trying to understand the context of previous generations. Many moderns who assume that late-term abortions and even infanticide are a woman's moral right are often the same ones who are so quick to tear down the statues of courageous,

self-sacrificial, though flawed, forbears. As Alexander Pope insightfully observed in his Essay on Criticism:

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow.
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so (II, 238-39)

"Whatever you read, read the Bible first. Beware of bad books: there are plenty in this day. Take heed of what you read." [J.C. Ryle]

The late Dr. Walter Martin tells the following story:

"One day my teacher and mentor, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, and I were walking in the woods near his home. As was his habit, he carried his old shotgun with him. His property had persistent problems with grackles, relatives of both the blackbirds and the meadowlarks, who were pests and harmed his garden and killed his beloved bluebird's babies. With his shotgun, Dr. Barnhouse was ready to get a grackle at a moments notice. Across the path we saw the leaves rustle. We heard the raucous 'Caw' of the hated grackle. Still quick despite his advanced years, Dr. Barnhouse raised the shotgun and fired. A bird plopped to the ground, motionless. Dr. Barnhouse got to it first, and as I approached he turned. There were tears running down his cheeks. In his hands he held a lifeless bluebird." [cited in Witch Hunt, 237-38] - {the lesson is be careful of who you aim at, you might hit a friend rather than a foe}

A prominent pastor in the Charismatic faith movement preached a message to his congregation which was part of a tape series entitled "Believing in Yourself." He was trying to convince them that we need to come to the point where we are comfortable claiming our "god-hood." In his message he states:

The Father Son and Holy Ghost had a conference and they said, "Let us make man an exact duplicate of us." Oh, I don't know about you, but that does turn my crank! An exact duplicate of God! Say it out loud--"I'm an exact duplicate of God!" Come on say it! "I'm an exact duplicate of God!" Say it again, "I'm an exact duplicate of God." Say it like you mean it "I'm an exact duplicate of God."

When God looks in the mirror, He sees me! When I look in the mirror, I see God! You know, sometimes people say to me, when they're mad and want to put me down "You just think you're a little god!" Thank you! Hallelujah! You got that right! Who do you think you are? Jesus? Yep!

Kenneth Copeland has stated: "you don't have a god in you, you are one!"

This is not an example of a difference of opinion within orthodoxy; this is an example of heretical doctrine being proclaimed as orthodoxy.

The German Christians, in 1934, endorsed the action of Adolf Hitler as God's working in history. They wrote a statement that reflected their support of Hitler as God's man for the hour:

"We are full of thanks to God that He, as Lord of history, has given us Adolf Hitler, our leader and savior from our difficult lot. We acknowledge that we, with body and soul, are bound and dedicated to the German State and to its Fuhrer. This bondage and duty contains for us, as evangelical Christians, its deepest and most holy significance in its obedience to the command of God." [quoted by G.C. Berkouwer, The Providence of God, 176-77]

"The human mind will always set itself on something and Paul wished to be quite sure that the Philippians would set their minds on the right things. This is something of the utmost importance, because it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them" [Barclay]

"It is a tragedy of our time that the average Christian is either too easily persuaded or cannot be persuaded at all. Too few seem willing to take the time to think the issues through and check the Scriptures for themselves. Those who would escape the growing seduction must get back to the Bible and know what they believe and why rather than succumbing to the temptation of accepting facile answers provided by 'experts.'" [Dave Hunt, The Seduction of Christianity, 1985.

An ad recently ran in the L.A. Times:

SHRI MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI the most important spiritual figure in the world today. She will awaken in you the force that will change your life and change the world. This awakening explains and integrates all the great religions. It grants inner peace, health and joy. It is the last evolutionary step, promised by traditions that stretch back to the beginnings of human spiritual awareness. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD

"If seduction and darkness were again to begin through the wrath and decree of God (as will happen after our days, it is to be feared), and the devil were to begin to perform signs through some false prophet and perhaps cure a sick person, you would no doubt see the mob press to espouse the cause in such a way that no preaching or warning would be of any avail. . . . For in those who have no love for the truth, the devil will be powerful and strong. . . . If, then, these teachings [of a false prophet] contradict the chief doctrine and article of Christ, we should accord them neither attention nor acceptance though it were to snow miracles daily." [Martin Luther]

"The curse of the church has been her apathy to truth, in which she has too often left to her enemies that study of nature and of history and philosophy. . . . She has nothing to fear from truth, but she has everything to fear and she has already suffered nearly everything from ignorance." [B.B. Warfield]

It is no sin to doubt some things, but it may be fatal to believe everything. [A.W. Tozer]

Many Christians have the misconception that to win the world to Christ we must first . . . make unconverted sinners feel comfortable with the Christian message. . . . Give them something they want. Put on a show. Entertain them. Avoid sensitive subjects like sin and

damnation. . . . The strategy is to tantalize non-Christians rather than confront their unbelief. That is altogether incompatible with sound doctrine. It is compromise with the world. James called it spiritual adultery. [John MacArthur, Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses its Will to Discern]

DISCIPLESHIP: [General; Busyness; Living example of; Paradox of; Personal discipline; Sin and; Spiritual resources; Thoughts]

General

The Christian life isn't a past decision, it's a new direction.

True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. . . . Oh! but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up, and keep up, the world's crown. 'Demas hath forsaken us to embrace this present world' (2 Tim. 4. 10). [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 158]

"What is required is the renunciation of the ego and this is expressed perfectly in the phrase of Pascal: 'Entire and sweet renunciation; absolute submission to Jesus Christ and to my Spiritual Director.' People may laugh and scoff at you for being worthy of the title of 'free man' and for having to submit yourself to a Master. But this enslavement is really miraculous liberation. When you were 'free' you spent your whole time forging chains for yourself and putting them on, riveting them tighter and tighter each moment. During the years when you thought you were free you submitted like an ox to the yoke of your countless hereditary ills. From the hour of your birth not one of your crimes has failed to go on living, has failed to imprison you more and more every day, has failed to beget other crimes. The Man you submit yourself to does not want you to be free to be a slave. He breaks the circle of your fetters and against your half-extinguished and still smouldering desires He kindles and rekindles the fire of grace." [Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace? Audio book, tape 2 side 3, 1997]

Grandpa, Have You Seen God?

A small boy once approached his slightly older sister with a question about God. "Susie, can anybody ever really see God?" he asked. Busy with other things, Susie curtly replied, "No, of course not, silly. God is so far up in heaven that nobody can see him." Time passed, but his question still lingered so he approached his mother: "Mom, can anybody ever really see God?" "No, not really," she gently said. "God is a spirit and he dwells in our hearts, but we can never really see him." Somewhat satisfied but still wondering, the youngster went on his way. Not long afterwards, his saintly old grandfather took the little boy on a fishing trip. They were having a great time together—it had been an ideal day. The sun was beginning to set with unusual splendor as the day ended. The old man stopped fishing and turned his full attention to the exquisite beauty unfolding before him.

On seeing the face of his grandfather reflecting such deep peace and contentment as he gazed into the magnificent ever-changing sunset, the little boy thought for a moment and finally spoke hesitatingly: "Grandpa, I-I--wasn't going to ask anybody else, but I wonder if you can tell me the answer to something I've been wondering about a long time. Can anybody--can anybody ever really see God?" The old man did not even turn his head. A long moment slipped by before he finally answered. "Son," he quietly said. "It's getting so I can't see anything else." --Author unknown.

The Civil War Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864

"By 1864 Lincoln and his generals had settled on a war of attrition: 'doing the arithmetic,' Lincoln called it, for the North could lose men and replace them, but if Southern forces lost half as many they would likely stay in that depleted condition. The night before battle Northern soldiers were writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them on the backs of their coats, so the identity of their corpses the next day could be recognized more readily. U.S. Grant's forces at Cold Harbor, VA, had 7,000 casualties, most of them during a furious 8-minute assault against the Southern lines; Robert E. Lee's army lost 1,500. When the attack ended, an Alabama colonel noted that 'the dead covered more than five acres of ground about as thickly as they could be laid.' One blood-stained diary found in the pocket of a dead soldier had this final entry: 'June 3. Cold Harbor. I was killed.'" [World Magazine, June 3, 2000, p. 25]

Many years ago, the story is told of a 5 year old girl, Jennifer, who was waiting with her mother at the grocery checkout stand when her young eyes caught a glimpse of a pink foil box which held a set of faux pearls. "Please mommy, can I have them? Please?" she asked. Quickly her mother checked the back of the little foil box and looking into her daughter's pleading blue eyes replied, "\$1.95. That's almost two dollars. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you to do around the house and in a little while you'll have enough money to buy them. Your birthday's only a week away," she continued, "and you may just get another crisp dollar bill from Grandma."

As soon as the little girl got home she ran to her room and emptied her piggy bank. 17 pennies. After dinner was over, she did more than her share of chores. Afterward, she went to the neighbor's house and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for .10. Then, a few days later on her birthday, Grandma gave her another new dollar bill. She finally had enough money to buy the pearl necklace.

The day finally came when her mother brought her back to the store. Little Jennifer's eyes lit up as she reached for the pretty pink box with the glistening strand of pearls inside. Finally, they were hers and she cherished them. In fact, she wore them everywhere--to Sunday School, Kindergarten class, even to bed at night.

Jennifer's father loved her dearly. Every night when she was ready to go to bed he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night, after he finished, he asked her, "Do you love me?" "Oh yes Daddy. You know that I love you." "Then give me your pearls," He asked. "Oh Daddy, please not my pearls! But you can have Princess, the white horse from my collection. The one with the pink tail. Remember,

Daddy? The one you gave to me--she's my favorite." As he reached down to give his daughter a kiss, he looked at her and replied, "That's okay, honey. Daddy loves you. Good night."

About a week later, after the story time, Jennifer's father asked her again, "Do you love me?" "Oh yes Daddy--you know I do!" "Then give me your pearls." "Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her pajamas." Her father smiled down at her. "That's okay sweetie. Just remember, Daddy will always love you."

A few nights later, when the time came for her bedtime story, Jennifer's dad found her sitting on her bed. As he came close he noticed a single tear roll down her cheek as her chin trembled. "What is it Jenny? What's the matter?" he asked her. Without saying a word the little girl reached out her hand to her daddy. In it was the pearl necklace. With a quiver she said, "Here, Daddy, I want you to have this."

And with tears welling up in his own eyes, her dad reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls inside. With the echo of love in his heart he handed them to her. He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime store imitation pearls so he could give her genuine treasure. ***** What are you hanging on to?.....

God has not bowed to our nervous haste nor embraced the methods of our machine age. The man who would know God must give time to Him. [A.W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest]

How should we then live? Jonathan Edwards succinctly stated: "Resolved, that I will live so, as I shall wish I had done when I come to die."

Compare Edwards desire to that of renown atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair: "I hope I live my life in such a manner that when I die, someone cares--even if it is only my dogs. . . . I think I want some human being somewhere to weep for me." [From the diary of atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who disappeared in 1995, "World Magazine, January 8, 2000, page 31]

"I desire to have heaven and hell forever in my eyes--to live upon this tiny isthmus of life between those two great and boundless oceans." [John Wesley]

"When God wants to make an Oak He takes 100 years, when He wants to make a squash He takes 2 months"

"Self-dissatisfaction lies at the root of our noblest achievements" [F.B. Meyer]

Dr. Alan Redpath, who once pastored the famous Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, once stated: "When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and crushes him." [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 146]

"We may take comfort about our souls if we know anything of an inward fight and conflict. It is the invariable companion of genuine Christian holiness. . . . Do we find in our heart of hearts a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would? Are we conscious of two principles within us, contending for the master? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the great work of sanctification. . . . Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness, and indifference." [Bishop J.C. Ryle, Holiness, 82]

"The Christian life is very much like climbing a hill of ice. You cannot slide up. You have to cut every step with an ice ax. Only with incessant labor in cutting and chipping can you make any progress. If you want to know how to backslide, leave off going forward and you will go downward by necessity. You can never stand still." [C.H. Spurgeon]

Busyness

Fred Mitchell, a leader in world missions, used to keep a motto on his desk that read: "Beware of the barrenness of a busy life." [cited in Macdonald, Ordering Your Private World, 17]

"There is a great gulf between the Christianity that wrestles with whether to worship at the cost of imprisonment and death, and the Christianity that wrestles with whether the kids should play soccer on Sunday morning." [John Piper. *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd* (Swans Are Not Silent). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 164]

Living Example of

The following story was recorded by one of the ancient Bishops in the 4th century:

Phocus was a man who lived in the 4th century in Asia Minor. He lived in the city of Sinope and he had a little cottage outside the city gate. Travelers passed outside his door at all hours of the day and night as they went through the city gate. Motivated by the love of Christ he stopped as many as possible. Were they weary? Then let them rest themselves in his well-tended garden. Were they in need of a friendly word? He would then speak it to them in the dear Master's name.

But then, quite suddenly one day, life was all changed for Phocus. Orders went out from the Roman Emperor Diocletian that the Christians must be put to death. When the persecutors arrived in Sinopae, they had been given orders to find a man by the name of Phocus and kill him. About to enter the city one hot afternoon, they passed in front of the old man's cottage and garden by the gate. In his innocence he greeted them as if they were his warmest friends and invited them to come in and rest themselves. They consented. So warm and gracious was the hospitality that they had received, that when their host invited them to stay the night and go on their way refreshed the next day, they agreed to do so. "And what is your business?" said Phocus unsuspectingly. They then told him that they would answer his question if he would regard it as a secret, for it was obvious to them by now that he was a man to be trusted. Who were they? They were

soldiers of Rome who were searching for a certain man by the name of "Phocus" who was a Christian. And please, if their kind host knew him, if he would be so good as to identify him -- after all, this man was a dangerous follower of this "Jesus" of whom the Christians taught, and he must be executed immediately. "I know him well" said Phocus quietly. "And by the way, he's quite near." "But let's attend to it in the morning."

His guests having retired for the evening, Phocus sat thinking. Escape? That would be easy. He only need leave under the cover of darkness and by daybreak he could be at least 20 miles away. He knew that his fellow Christians would show him hospitality in hiding him. And when persecution had passed, he could then safely return and cultivate his little garden.

The decision to flee unto safety or stay unto death was apparently made without struggle or delay. We can only imagine what he was thinking. Out into his garden went Phocus, and he began digging into the night. Was there any earthly thing he loved more than that little plot of ground? The odor of the humus, the feel of the soil, the miracle of fertility? What were his thoughts as he went on digging? There was still time to run away. But the Savior didn't run. He didn't run from Gethsemane, and He didn't run from Calvary.

Perhaps he thought of his fellow Christians whom he might go for rest. Would not his coming endanger them? And as for these executioners who were now soundly sleeping under his roof, they were only men who were carrying out orders. And if they failed to find their man, perhaps their own lives would be taken and they would die in their sins. Deeper and deeper Phocus dug, and before long he was done. And there it was: his own grave.

Morning came, and with it the awakening of the executioners. "I am Phocus" he said calmly. They wouldn't believe it! They stood motionless in astonishment! And when they did believe it they obviously were reluctant to perform an execution without mercy on a man who had shown them nothing but mercy. But it was a duty, Phocus reminded them, that they were required to perform. And he was not bitter at them. Besides, death did not terrify him -- his heart was filled with the hope of heaven. Toward them he bore nothing but the love of Christ.

Moments later, it was all over. The sword had done its work. And the body of Christ's servant lay in the stillness of death, in the garden he loved so dearly.

There once was a poor and well-known Japanese Christian by the name of Toyohiko Kagawa. He was deeply burdened for the poor Japanese people in the slums of Kobe. He spent nearly all the years of his life in these slums, ministering to the people there. He was a small man with a frail body, and one of his lungs was diseased with tuberculosis. On a visit to the United States, one of the doctors there told him that he wouldn't live long; so he returned to Kobe saying "If my life is short, it will be full." He moved into a street in the heart of the slums so the people could easily get to him. So there, in the stench of the back streets, Toyohiko Kagawa lived. Every day he preached in the streets to the poor people. On one particular day he was preaching from John 3:16, and his theme was "God's love for

unworthy sinners." Kobe was not an easy place to preach God's Word -- Toyohiko was mocked and laughed. One man said "what does this little man, with funny talk know about God, and what does anyone know about whether God loves us or not!" As Toyohiko attempted to answer them, he coughed a hacking cough and spit up a large amount of blood. They laughed and said, "if God loves you, why doesn't He do something for you?" The persistent little man lifted his arm, wiped the blood from his mouth with his sleeve, and went on with the story of God's love. Gradually, in the crowded street, their voices were stilled. For stealing in on their pagan minds was the realization that right before their eyes in that little sick man was the very proof of what he was saying, for Toyohiko Kagawa was actually a demonstration of God's love.

Charles Thomas Stud (C.T.) was a pioneer missionary who died in 1931. He left England for China in 1885. A biographer tells the story of C.T. on the mission field with a comrade one night, trying to sleep under some very primitive conditions. In fact, it was so cold that night that they struggled to sleep through the involuntary shivering of their frigid bodies. The story goes on to say that, finally after succumbing to sleep, Stud's fellow missionary awoke in the middle of the night to find C.T. awake, huddled with he blankets in the corner shivering, reading his Bible by candlelight. When his friend questioned him as to why he was out of his bed on such a cold night, C.T. replied, "I felt something was wrong in my relationship to my Lord, so I am reading through the entire New Testament to check all the commands to me, in case I have unwittingly violated any of them."

"To be laughed at is not great hardship to me. I can delight in scoffs and jeers. Caricatures, lampoons, and slanders are my glory. But that you should turn away from your mercy, this is my sorrow. Spit on me, but, oh, repent! Laugh at me, but, oh, believe in my Master! Make my body as the dirt of the streets, but damn not your own souls!" [C.H. Spurgeon]

Paradox of

"A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passeth knowledge." [A.W. Tozer. Cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 160]

"It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place." [Fenelon, 17th c. French Saint, cited by John Piper "Persevering in Ministry," Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

Personal Discipline

Far too many in the church today carry rakes rather than shovels. Rakes skim the landscape culling dead leaves; shovels dig deep to where the treasure lies. Rakes are light and easy. Using a shovel requires determination and effort.

"Tomorrow we shall meet, Death and I--And he shall thrust his sword Into one who is wide awake. But in the meantime how grievous the memory Of hours frittered away." [Dag Hammarskjold, Markings, 6]

"In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are." [Max Dupree, cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 74]

"I resolve to endeavor to my utmost to act and think as if I had already seen the happiness of heaven and the torments of hell." [Jonathan Edwards]

The famous Greek mathematician, Euclid, wrote a formidable 13 volume text for the study of geometry. But Ptolemy I, King of Egypt, wished to learn the subject without laboring through so many books. As a king, he was accustomed to having his way made easy by servants, so he asked if there was a shortcut to mastering geometry. Euclid's reply to the throne was terse: "There is no royal road to learning." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 223]

"Many people have died climbing the Alps. At the foot of one of the many mountains that make up the Alps is a little grave--it's a grave of a man who tried to climb to the pinnacle of the mountain and fell from the precipice to his death. The tombstone at his grave-site is very simple; it gives his name and reads: "He died climbing." This should be the epithet of every Christian: "He died climbing." [John MacArthur]

Sin and

"It is true there is difficulty in entering into godliness. But his difficulty does not arise from the religion which begins in us, but only from the irreligion which is still there." [Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, cited in Leadership Journal, *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 37]

Spiritual Resources (see also: Christ, Sufficiency of)

Take one step at a time - every step under clear warrant and divine direction. Never venture to plan for yourself, except in simple dependence on God. It is nothing less than self-idolatry to conceive, that we can carry on even the ordinary matters of the day without his counsel. He loves to be consulted. Therefore take all thy difficulties to be resolved by him. Be in the habit of going to him in the first place before self-will, self-cleaning, self-wisdom, human friends, conveniences, expediency. Before any of these have been consulted go to God at once. Consider no circumstance too clear to need his direction. (Charles Bridges, *An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs*, 1865)

Lawrence of Arabia on one occasion brought some Arabs back to London and put them up in a plush hotel. They happened to be Bedouins who had never lived in anything other than tents. They were absolutely astonished with the city. The thing that most fascinated them

were faucets. In contrast to the scarcity of water in the desert, all they had to do was turn a little knob and they had water!

When Lawrence had packed them all up to leave he discovered they had taken all the faucets from all the sinks and put them in their bags.

The story is told of a young man who was sent to a remote African village. Upon his arrival he was shocked to see a village filled with gaunt faces and bloated bellies. The villagers were victims of extreme protein deficiency. The young man was filled with despair. How could he help these people? He received his answer when one of the villagers took him to a nearby stream to get water. As they came to the stream, the young man heard a series of plopping sounds coming from the water. It was fish. The stream was filled with them. The perfect answer to protein deficiency. For hours the man fished for the grateful villagers. Day after day they ate and the signs of malnutrition decreased and went away altogether. After a year had passed the man, feeling his job complete, left the villagers, vowing to return the next year. After another year had passed the man returned to find the villagers in the same condition as he had originally found them: gaunt faces and bloated bellies. What had happened? The answer was simple. He had fished for them; but he had never taught them how to fish for themselves.

Thoughts

Alexander Maclaren talked about two artists who were living in whitewashed rooms. One of those artists painted beautiful pictures of the resurrected Christ and all kinds of other lovely, uplifting pictures on his walls. The other artist painted lewd obscenities. But then Maclaren said that both of them had to live in the rooms they painted. Our thoughts fit us for our place. Our thoughts design the kind of world we live in. We go to our own place, Maclaren says, and our kind of place is determined by what we think about all day long [adapted from William H. Hinson, *The Power of Holy Habits*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1991]

DISCIPLINE: [*Personal Discipline*; *God's Discipline of Believers*]

Personal Discipline

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city (Prov. 16:32). "More dear in the sight of God and His angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self, which each man, with the help of Heaven, can secure for himself." Dean Stanley

"Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing." (Adolph Monod)

Procrastination: "It's the most perfect day to start any job: *tomorrow*; the most marvelous day that was ever invented. There's absolutely nothing a man can't do: *tomorrow*." [Words spoken by a hobo, played by Buddy Ebsen, to Opie Taylor in *The Andy Griffith Show*, Season 2 Episode 6 (Opie's Hobo Friend)]

Tell me, you that say all things under the sun are vanity, if you do really believe what you say, why do you spend more thoughts and time on the world, than you do on Christ, heaven and your immortal souls? Why do you then neglect your duty towards God, to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world, and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in, and smiles upon you; and so much dejected, and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah's gourd withers before you? –Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 104-105

It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; the truth is, whilst in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer, is to continue praying; for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray. [George Muller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller* (Muskegon, MI: Dust & Ashes Publications, 2003), 1:44.]

"The time is very short. A few more years of watching and praying, a few more tossings on the sea of this world, a few more deaths and changes, a few more winters and summers, and all will be over. We shall have fought our last battle, and shall need to fight no more. "The presence and company of Christ will make amends for all we suffer here below. When we see as we have been seen, and look back on the journey of life, we shall wonder at our own faintness of heart. We shall marvel that we made so much of our cross, and thought so little of our crown. We shall marvel that in 'counting the cost' we could ever doubt on which side the balance of profit lay. Let us take courage. We are not far from home. It may cost much to be a true Christian and a consistent holy man; but it pays." -J.C. Ryle

"Joshua's "early" rising shows that he was not slothful, a lover of his own ease, but one whose heart was in his work and who diligently applied himself unto the same. Therein he has left an example for each servant of Christ to follow. The minister of the Gospel is to be no slacker and shirker, but rather "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15). Whether he rises early or (as this writer) finds it more expedient to burn the midnight oil, he is in honor and duty bound to spend at least as many hours in his study each day as does the farmer in his field, the clerk in his office, or the laborer in the factory. He has no warrant to expect God to use him unless he be industrious and denies himself. [A.W. Pink, *Gleanings in Joshua*, Chapter 5, Standing at the Jordan. Available online at: http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Gleanings_Joshua/joshua.htm]

The Methodist preacher Thomas Collins (1810-1864), from 1838 to 1841 when he was between the ages of 28 and 31, shared the Durham, England circuit with two colleagues. The circuit consisted of a large chapel in the city and thirty preaching places scattered around the countryside. The three preachers shared a single horse. By 1841, these three preachers were responsible for over 1000 members in the Methodist societies. In other words, his responsibilities were huge. But note this entry from his journal, indicating the way he managed his time:

"I will arise at quarter to six. Till half-past six shall be spent in devotion. Chosen divines will afterwards occupy me till eight. Breakfast and family worship may be allowed an hour. From nine to ten, Greek and Hebrew on alternate days. From ten to twelve, compose [sermons]. From twelve to one, read the Scriptures and pray. From one to two, dine. During the afternoon, visit among the people either in town or country."

Another diary entry:

"When we are fully devoted to the work of God, then are we happy; then the Spirit comes and fills us with intelligence, purity, tenderness, energy, and bliss."

His biographer remarks:

"Convinced that evangelistic power, not being of self, is only at the full when the man becomes the channel, instrument, and minister of the Spirit, Mr Collins most diligently marked the promises which pledge such Divine condescension, pleaded them, and in expectant faith yielded up himself for their fulfilment." [Iain Murray, *Wesley and Men Who Followed* (Banner of Truth, 2003), p. 190-91. This quote is taken in turn from Samuel Coley, *Life of the Rev. Thomas Collins* (Hamilton, Adams, & Co, 1868).

"There is no holding one's own in the spiritual life without continually holding more." [Dr. John Henry Jowett]

Thou the Cross didst bear:

What bear I?

Thou the Thorn didst wear:

What wear I?

Thou to death didst dare:

What dare I?

Thou for me dost care:

What care I?

-- Laurence Houseman,

Alexander Whyte, one of Scotland's Greatest Preachers, once said that: "I would have all lazy students drummed out of the college and all lazy ministers out of the assembly. I would have laziness held to be the one unpardonable sin in all our students and in all our ministers."

If I rest, I rust.

Martin Luther (1483–1546)

It is better to wear out than to rust out.

George Whitefield (1714–1770)

David Brainerd worked to the point of exhaustion on behalf of the American Indians and died before he ever say the age of 30.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote: "If he is unwilling to pay the price of fatigue for his leadership, it will always be mediocre. . . . True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man,

and the more effective the leader he is, the higher the price to be paid." [above cited by MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 166]

Puritan Richard Baxter, wrote in his classic book "The Reformed Pastor":

"The ministerial work must be carried on diligently and laboriously, as being of such unspeakable consequence to ourselves and others. We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's death, to save ourselves and others from damnation, to overcome the devil and demolish his kingdom, to set up the kingdom of Christ, and to attain and help others to the kingdom of glory. And are these works to be done with a careless mind, or a lazy hand? O see, then, that his work be done with all your might! Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow. [Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, 112]

Donald Whitney in his book Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian life, writes:

"Godly people are disciplined people. It has always been so. Call to mind some heroes of church history--Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Susanna Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Muller--they were all disciplined people. In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can say that I've never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline." [page 15]

"So many professing Christians are so spiritually undisciplined that they seem to have little fruit and power in their lives. I've seen men and women who discipline themselves for the purpose of excelling in their profession discipline themselves very little "for the purpose of godliness." I've seen Christians who are faithful to the church of God, who frequently demonstrate genuine enthusiasm for the things of God, and who really love the Word of God, trivialize their effectiveness for the Kingdom of God through lack of discipline. Spiritually they are a mile wide and an inch deep. There are no deep, time-worn channels of communing discipline between them and God. They have dabbled in everything but disciplined themselves in nothing." [Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian life, 19]

"Kill yourselves with work and then pray yourselves alive again." [Adam Clark, cited by John MacArthur in cassette message GC 54-34, 1 Timothy, side a, 1986]

"If I have any message to give from my own bed of sickness it would be this: If you do not wish to be full of regrets when you are obliged to lie still, work while you can. If you desire to make a sick bed as soft as it can be, do not stuff it with the mournful reflection that you wasted time while you were in health. People said to me years ago, 'You will break your constitution down with preaching 10 times a week, and the like.' Well if I have done so I'm glad of it. I would do the same again. If I had 50 constitutions I would rejoice to break them all down in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. You young men that are strong, overcome the wicked one and fight for the Lord while you can. You'll never regret having done all that lies in you for our blessed Lord and Master. Crowd as much as you can into every day and postpone no work till tomorrow, whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your

might." [C.H. Spurgeon in 1876, cited by John MacArthur in cassette message GC 54-34, 1 Timothy, side a, 1986]

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He who seeks one thing, and but one, May hope to achieve it before life is done. But he who seeks all things, wherever he goes, Must reap around him in whatever he sows, A harvest of barren neglect. [William H. Hinson]

Frederick the Great of Prussia was walking on the outskirts of Berlin when he encountered a very old man proceeding in the opposite direction. "Who are you?" asked Frederick. "I am a King," replied the old man. "A King!" laughed Frederick. "Over what kingdom do you reign?" "Over myself," was the proud reply. [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 162]

Persistence: Consider your effort as a blow of an axeblade against a mighty oak tree. The first blow may not cause a tremor or hardly make a mark--or the second blow--or the third. Each blow in itself may seem inconsequential. Yet the accumulation of the blows will eventually cause the big oak to tumble.

William Barclay, commenting on the undisciplined life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, writes:

Coleridge is the supreme example of indiscipline. Never did so great a mind produce so little. He left Cambridge University to join the army; he left the army because he could not rub down a horse; he returned to Oxford and left without a degree. He began a paper called "The Watchman" which lived for ten numbers and then died. It has been said of him: "he lost himself in visions of work to be done, that always remained to be done. Coleridge had every gift but one--the gift of sustained and concentrated effort." In his head and in his mind he had all kinds of books, as he said himself, "complete save for transcription." "I am on the even," he says, "of sending to the press two octavo volumes." But the books were never composed outside of Coleridge's mind, because he would not face the discipline of sitting down to write them out.

Barclay concludes:

No one ever reached any eminence, and no one having reached it ever maintained it, without discipline. [cited in MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 65]

"I resolve to endeavor to my utmost to act and think as if I had already seen the happiness of heaven and the torments of hell." [Jonathan Edwards]

The undisciplined are like playwright George Kaufman, who was enduring a sales pitch from a gold-mine promoter. The salesman was praising the productivity of the mine in hopes of persuading Kaufman to buy shares in it. "Why, it's so rich you can pick up the chunks of gold from the ground." "Do you mean," asked Kaufman, "I'd have to bend over." The gold of godliness isn't found on the surface of Christianity.

Elton Trueblood demonstrates the relationship between discipline and freedom by saying:

We have not advanced very far in our spiritual lives if we have not encountered the basic paradox of freedom . . . that we are most free when we are bound. But not just any way of being bound will suffice; what matters is the character of our binding. The one who would be an athlete, but who is unwilling to discipline his body by regular exercise and abstinence, is not free to excel on the field or the track. His failure to train rigorously denies him the freedom to run with the desired speed and endurance. With one concerted voice, the giants of the devotional life apply the same principle to the whole of life. Discipline is the price of freedom. [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 21.]

Tom Landry, Coach of the Dallas Cowboys football team for nearly 30 years, said, "The job of football coach is to make men do what they don't want to do in order to achieve what they've always wanted to be."

For many years Admiral Hyman Rickover was the head of the U.S. Nuclear Navy. His admirers and his critics held strongly opposing views about the stern and demanding admiral. For many years every officer aboard a nuclear submarine was personally interviewed and approved by Rickover. Those who went through those interviews usually came out shaking in fear, anger, or total intimidation. Among them was ex-President Jimmy Carter who, years ago, applied for service under Rickover. This is his account of a Rickover interview:

I had applied for the nuclear submarine program, and Admiral Rickover was interviewing me for the job. It was the first time I met Admiral Rickover, and we sat in a large room by ourselves for more than two hours, and he let me choose any subjects I wished to discuss. Very carefully, I chose those about which I knew most at the time--current events, seamanship, music, literature, naval tactics, electronics, gunnery--and he began to ask me a series of questions of increasing difficulty. In each instance, he soon proved that I knew relatively little about the subject I had chosen.

He always looked right into my eyes, and he never smiled. I was saturated with cold sweat.

Finally, he asked a question and I thought I could redeem myself. He said, "How did you stand in your class at the Naval Academy?" Since I had completed my sophomore year at Georgia Tech before entering Annapolis as a plebe, I had done very well, and I swelled my chest with pride and answered, "Sir, I stood fifty-ninth in a class of 820!" I sat back to wait for the congratulations--which never came. Instead, the question: "Did you do your best?" I started to say, "Yes, sir," but I remembered who this was and recalled several of the many times at the Academy when I could have learned more

about our allies, our enemies, weapons, strategy, and so forth. I was just human. I finally gulped and said, "No, sir, I didn't always do my best."

He looked at me for a long time, and then turned his chair around to end the interview. He asked one final question, which I have never been able to forget--or to answer. He said, "Why not?" I sat there for a while, shaken, and then slowly left the room. [cited in Gordon MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 94-95.]

The greatest waste in the world is the difference between what we are and what we could be" [Ben Herbster]

"If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astonish ourselves." [Thomas Edison]

"Tomorrow we shall meet, Death and I--And he shall thrust his sword Into one who is wide awake. But in the meantime how grievous the memory Of hours frittered away." [Dag Hammarskjold, Markings, 6]

"Dr. V. Raymond Edman, late president of Wheaton College, used to remind [his] students, 'it is always too soon to quit.'" [Wiersbe, Be Complete: Colossians, 40]

The Workaholics 23d Psalm:

The Lord is my foreman, I shall not rest. He makes me mow down the green pastures. He leads me to generators beside rapid waters. He wears out my soul. He shoves me to conferences for my schedule's sake. Even though I walk through the Valley of relaxation, I fear no chance of rest; for my feelings of guilt, they haunt me. Thy whip and Thy Goad, they confront me. Thou dost prepare a work table before me in the presence of my comrades. Thou has filled my mind with worry; my workload overflows. Surely busyness and pressure will follow me all the days of my life, and I will fun to and fro in the house of the Lord forever. [Edward J. Vasicek, Kokomo, IN]

The Race (by D.H. Groberg)

I

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!" They shout at me and plead. "There's just too much against you now. This time you can't succeed!" And as I start to hang my head, in front of failure's face, My downward fall is broken by The memory of the race. And hope refills my weakened will As I recall that scene; For just the thought of that short race Rejuvenates my being.

II

A children's race--young boys, young men--How I remember well. Excitement, sure! But also fear; It wasn't hard to tell. They all lined up so full of hope; Each thought to win that race. Or tie for first, or if not that, At least take second place. And fathers watched from off the side, Each cheering for his son. And each boy hoped to show his dad That he would be

the one. The whistle blew and off they went! Young hearts and hopes afire. To win and be the hero there Was each young boys's desire. And one boy in particular Whose dad was in the crowd, Was running near the lead and thought: "My dad will be so proud!" But as they speeded down the field Across a shallow dip, The little boy who thought to win Lost his step and slipped. Trying hard to catch himself His hands flew out to brace, And mid the laughter of the crowd He fell flat on his face. So down he fell and with him hope--He couldn't win it now--Embarrassed, sad, he only wished To disappear somehow. But as he fell his dad stood up And showed his anxious face, Which to the boy so clearly said: "Get up and wind the race." He quickly rose, no damage done--Behind a bit, that's all--And ran with all his mind and might To make up for his fall.

So anxious to restore himself--To catch up and to win--His mind went faster than his legs: He slipped and fell again! He wished then he had quit before with only one disgrace. "I'm hopeless as a runner now; I shouldn't try to race." But in the laughing crowd he searched And found his father's face; That steady look which said again: "Get up and win the race!"

So up he jumped to try again--Ten yards behind the last--"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought "I've got to move real fast." Exerting everything he had He regained eight or ten But trying so hard to catch the lead He slipped and fell again! Defeat! He lay there silently--A tear dropped from his eye--"There's no sense running any more; "Three strikes: I'm out! Why try?" The will to rise had disappeared All hope had fled away So far behind, so error prone; A loser all the way. "I've lost, so what's the use," he thought. "I'll live with my disgrace." But then he thought about his dad Who soon he'd have to face. "Get up," an echo sounded low. "Get up and take your place; You were not meant for failure here. Get up and win the race." "With borrowed will get up," it said "You haven't lost at all. For winning is no more than this: To rise each time you fall." So up he rose to run once more, And with a new commit He resolved that win or lose At least he wouldn't quit.

So far behind the others now,--The most he'd ever been--Still he gave it all he had And ran as though to win. Three times he'd fallen, stumbling; Three times he rose again; Too far behind to hope to win, He still ran to the end. They cheered the winning runner As he crossed the line first place. Head high, and proud, and happy; No falling, no disgrace. But when the fallen youngster crossed the line last place, The crowd gave him the greater cheer For finishing the race. And even though he came in last With head bowed low, unproud, You would have thought he'd won the race To listen to the crowd. And to his dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well." "To me, you won," his father said. "You rose each time you fell."

III

And now when things seem dark and hard And difficult to face, The memory of that little boy Helps me in my race. For all of life is like that race, With ups and downs and all. And all you have to do to win, Is rise each time you fall. "Quit! Give up! You're beaten!" They still shout in my face. But another voice within me says: "GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

God's Discipline of Believers

"There is a rod of grace in the covenant. Children of God, you do not like it; it would be no rod if you did. However it is good for you when you come under the fatherly discipline of

God. Though He will never take His everlasting love from you nor suffer His faithfulness to fail, yet when you transgress, His rod will be sure to fall upon you. Sometimes its strokes will come upon you before you transgress to keep you from sinning.

I often hear of some of God's dearest servants suffering. I heard of one whom I am sure God loves very much. He is very useful in the Lord's kingdom and spends himself in his Master's work. He is also very prosperous; God has given to him great wealth that he discreetly and wisely uses. With all of that, however, he has had a very sharp affliction come upon him lately that is enough to break his heart. When I heard about it, I said, 'Yes, yes, God loves him; God loves him.'

If you are a child of God, note this truth, and accept it with joy: our heavenly Father never pampers His children. We may spoil our sons and daughters, but our Father never spoils His children. If He gives you great happiness and great success and makes you useful, He will every now and then give you a whipping behind the door. . . .

The true child of God cannot escape the rod, and would not if he could. He gets afraid when he does not sometimes feel it. He will not long have to be afraid about it, for it will come it due time." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 173-175]

DISCOURAGEMENT & DEPRESSION:

A.J. Gordon in his book, The Holy Spirit in Missions, said:

"It was 7 years before Carey baptized his first convert in India. It was 7 years before Judson won his first disciple in Burma. Morrison toiled 7 years before the first Chinaman was brought to Christ. Moffat declared that he had waited 7 years to see the first evident moving of the Holy Spirit upon the Bekiwanas of Africa. Henry Richards wrought 7 years in the Congo before the first convert was gained [there]." [Cited by John Piper, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts," Cassette Message on Isaiah 6:1-8, Jan. 1, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

Puritan missionary, David Brainerd, wrote in his diary:

Lord's day, December 16, 1744. Was so overwhelmed with dejection that I knew not how to live. I longed for death exceedingly; my soul was sunk into deep waters and the floods were ready to drown me. I was so much oppressed that my soul was in a kind of horror. I could not keep my thoughts fixed in prayer for the space of one minute, without fluttering and distraction. It made me exceedingly ashamed that I did not live to God. I had no distressing doubt about my own state, but I would have cheerfully ventured (as far as I could possibly know) into eternity. While I was going to preach to the Indians, my soul was in anguish. I was so overborne with discouragement that I despaired of doing any good, and was driven to my wits end. I knew nothing what to say, nor what course to take. [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 199]

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III

And now when things seem dark and hard And difficult to face, The memory of that little boy Helps me in my race. For all of life is like that race, With ups and downs and all. And all you have to do to win, Is rise each time you fall. "Quit! Give up! You're beaten!" They still shout in my face. But another voice within me says: "GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

I am very tired and frustrated. Yes, depressed. I'm tired of sacrificing my life for the church when it appears that so little sacrifice is present among the members of the church. I love the church and the people of the church. I'm not just "doing my job," it's much more than that. Yet, I wonder how many in the church really love and appreciate me. Sometimes I truly believe that they could basically "take or leave me and my ministry." As long as the church and I "perform" well and I preach good sermons they're satisfied. At least for now.

Why is it that the pastor is expected to be loyal and devoted to those within his church, but when it comes to the average church member, no such devotion exists? I feel that I have poured my life into the church--I've not sought my own will or well-being, I've tried to always seek the best for the church. It's really never been a matter of what's best for me in my own eyes.

I've always dreamed that I could guide a church established on the teaching of God's Word, and then true biblical love in the body would be realized. There would be a wealth of people who would stick beside me through thick and thin. After all, isn't that the way the church is supposed to be? When problems arose in the first century church, or when first century Christians grew tired of the same old ministry, the members didn't run off to the next church on the block. They couldn't. But in twentieth century America there's plenty of churches to "try out." It seems like the average Christian treats the local church like the average unbeliever treats marriage. It's "till death do us part" at the beginning of the partnership; it's divorce and on to a new partner after a year or two. It seems to be the Christian's "seven year itch." After a few years, or months, it's time to move on. A family comes in thinking everything's wonderful. But after a year or two, the bloom is off the rose and off they go. Don't they really care about the church? Don't they really care about me? Do they only care about themselves and what they are "getting out of a church" rather than what they can put into a church? [Letter to elders dated 10/22/97]

Letter from a young pastor to his mentor:

Dear Jim:

I'm through. yesterday I handed in my resignation to take effect at once and this morning I began work for the land company. I will not return to the pastorate. I think I can see into your heart as you read these words and behold not a little disappointment if not disgust. I don't blame you at all, I'm somewhat disgusted with myself. Do you recall the days in the seminary when talked of the future and painted pictures of what we were to do for the Kingdom of God? And we saw the boundless need for unselfish Christian service and longed to be out among men doing our part toward the world's

redemption. I'll never forget that last talk on the night before graduation: you were to go to the mission field and I went to the church. And we had grave dreams of usefulness (and you've realized yours). As I look back over these years, I can see some lives that I've helped and some things which I have been permitted to do, and some of them are worthwhile. But sitting here tonight I am more than half convinced that God probably never even intended me to be a minister. If He did I'm not big enough and brave enough to pay the price. And even if it leads you to write me down a coward, I'm going to tell you why I quit. In these years I have not found but a few earnest, unselfish, consecrated Christians. And I don't believe that I am specially morbid or unfair in my estimate. So as far as I know my own heart I'm not even bitter. But for all these years the conviction has been growing within me that the average church member cares precious little about the Kingdom of God and its advancement or the welfare of his fellow-man. He's a Christian in order that he may save his soul from hell and for no other reason. He does as little as he can and lives as indifferently as he dares. If he thought he could gain heaven without ever lifting his finger for others he'd jump at the chance. Never have I know but a small minority of any church that I have served to be really interested and unselfishly devoted to God's work. It took my whole time to pull and push and urge and persuade the reluctant members of my church to undertake a little something for their fellow man. They took a covenant to be faithful in attendance on the services of the church and not 1 out of 10 ever thought about attending a prayer time. A large percentage seldom attended church in the morning and a pitifully small number in the evening. It didn't seem to mean anything to them that they had dedicated themselves to the service of Jesus Christ. I'm tired. I'm tired of being the only one in the church from whom real sacrifice is expected. I'm tired of straining and tugging to get Christian people to live like Christians. I'm tired of planning work for my people and then being compelled to do it myself, or see it left undone. I'm tired of dodging my creditors when I wouldn't need to if I had what was due me. I'm tired of a vision of a penniless old age. I'm not leaving Christ. I love Him. And I'll still try to serve Him. Judge me leniently old friend, I certainly can't bear to lose your friendship.

Yours, William.

DIVORCE:

A leading evangelical journal brought together five divorced pastors recently and asked them to share their feelings, experiences, and views on divorce and the ministry. The journal's staff published the forum because they believed the growing problem of divorce among pastors needed to be faced openly and honestly. In fact, the article claimed that a recent survey of divorce rates in the U.S. showed that pastors had the third highest divorce rate--exceeded only by medical doctors and law enforcement personnel. The journal published the pastor's thoughts on divorce in an open-forum, round table discussion format. Along with the forum the journal published the responses of 7 well-known evangelical leaders to the divorced pastor's comments. Not one of those 7 leaders mentioned the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 or Titus 1.

DOCTRINE & THEOLOGY:

"Doctrine is intellectual, and Christians are generally anti-intellectual. Doctrine is ivory tower philosophy, and they scorn ivory towers. The ivory tower, however, is the control

tower of a civilization." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 140]

"But I will not become a heretic by renouncing the faith by which I became a Christian. I would rather be exiled, accursed, and burnt do death." [Martin Luther, page 146]

"If seduction and darkness were again to begin through the wrath and decree of God (as will happen after our days, it is to be feared), and the devil were to begin to perform signs through some false prophet and perhaps cure a sick person, you would no doubt see the mob press to espouse the cause in such a way that no preaching or warning would be of any avail. . . . For in those who have no love for the truth, the devil will be powerful and strong. . . . If, then, these teachings [of a false prophet] contradict the chief doctrine and article of Christ, we should accord them neither attention nor acceptance though it were to snow miracles daily." [Martin Luther]

The Rule of Faith in the Post-NT Church. The pervasive and decisive role that the "Rule of Faith"⁵⁵ (Latin *regula fidei*) played in the post-New Testament church. The Rule appeared as early as 1 Clement 7.2 in an undeveloped form and is found in virtually all the orthodox writings of the patristic era from varied geographical locales including Irenaeus (c. 130–200), Tertullian (c. 160–225), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215), Origen (c. 185–254), Hippolytus (c. 170–236), Novatian (c. 200–258), Dionysius of Alexandria (c. 200–265), Athanasius (c. 296–373), and Augustine (c. 354–430). Irenaeus and Tertullian were the first writers to discuss the Rule at length. Irenaeus identified it with the central governing sense or overarching argument of Scripture (Haer. I. 9–10).⁵⁶ Similarly, Tertullian called it the "reason" or "order" of Scripture (Praescr. 9).

A man was being interviewed for membership by the board of deacons at a local church and they asked him, "What do you believe?" He replied, "I believe what the church believes." They paused and looked at each other and then asked him, "Good, but what does the church believe?" The man quickly replied, "The church believes what I believe." Getting a little frustrated, they asked him, "What is it that you an the church believe?" To that he said, "We believe the same thing."

C.H. Spurgeon on the Pastor's College:

"Definite doctrines are held and taught. We hold by the doctrines of grace and the old orthodox faith, and have no sympathy with the countless theological novelties of the present day, which are novelties only in outward form: in substance they are repetitions of errors exploded long ago. . . . we find no failure in the number of earnest spirits who rally to our standard, believing that in truth alone can true freedom be found." [*Lectures to my Students*, iv]

"Plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in His immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest refreshed and invigorated. I know of nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead." [C.H. Spurgeon, January 7, 1855]

The ad begins "Does God speak to us through our dreams?". The title of the book is *Windows of the Soul* by Paul Meier and Robert Wise (published by Thomas Nelson). The ad copy reads:

Have you ever awoken from a strange dream and wondered what, if anything, it meant? Does God still speak through dreams as he did to Joseph, the wise men, and prophets? Noted Christian psychologist Dr. Meier teams with Dr. Robert Wise, an ordained minister, for a biblical look at the meaning and significance of dreams. An explanation of the dream process and step-by-step interpretation guide help you to gain scripturally sound insight and spiritual growth through your dreams. A compelling look at the "hieroglyphics of the soul." [quotes in original].

John Newton (1725-1807), author of "Amazing Grace," writes to a fellow pastor who is composing a tract against prevalent false doctrines:

You are likely to be engaged in controversy. . . . You are of the strongest side; for truth is great, and must prevail. . . . I am not therefore anxious for the [outcome] of the battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph, not only over your adversary, but over yourself. If you cannot be vanquished, you may be wounded. To preserve you from such wounds as might give you cause of weeping over your conquests, I would present you with some considerations, which, if duly attended to, will do you the service of a great coat of mail. . . . I may reduce my advice to three heads, respecting your opponent, the public and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish that before you set pen to paper against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. This practice will have a direct tendency to conciliate your heart to love and pity him; and such a disposition will have a good influence upon every page you write. If [he is a believer] . . . the Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever. But if [he is not a believer], . . . he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his. . . . If you write with a desire of being an instrument of correcting mistakes, you will of course be cautious of laying stumbling blocks in the way of the blind or of using any expressions that may exasperate their passions, confirm them in their principles, and thereby make their conviction, humanly speaking, more impracticable. . . . [John Newton, Works, Vol 1 (Banner of Truth, 1985), p. 269f.]

DOUBT:

"If a man will begin with certainties, he will end in doubts; but if he is content to begin with doubts, he will end in certainties." [17th c. philosopher Francis Bacon]

ECUMENICISM:

In Mother Teresa's book "Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations and Prayers," she wrote, "We never try to convert [anyone] to Christianity, but in our work we bear witness to the love of God's presence, and if Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, or agnostics become better men, we will be satisfied."

At the end of her life, Mother Teresa doubted the existence of God and heaven. In her private letters she wrote: "Lord, my God, you have thrown [me] away as unwanted and unloved. I call, I cling, I want, and there is no one to answer, no, no one. Where is my faith? There is nothing, I have no faith." (Mike Gendron newsletter, 2016)

On September 26th and 27th, 2015, Pope Francis was in Philadelphia on a Sunday. Who was the keynote speaker at the Pope's final Sunday service in Philadelphia? The keynote speaker, invited by the Pope himself, was Rick Warren — Southern Baptist pastor, the man behind the Purpose-Driven Church movement. Hundreds of Roman Catholic cardinals, bishops, and priests, and the Pope himself, filed into the hall where the service was held, in a great procession in all their regalia. When Rick Warren got up to speak, he called these men, "brothers in Christ." He said, "We (Evangelicals and Catholics) need to minimize our differences, we need to mobilize our members, we need to evangelize the lost." ["Myths of the Modern Megachurch," a transcript of Rick Warren's remarks to the Pew Forum's Faith Angle Conference on Religion, Politics, and Public Life, May 23, 2005, Key West, Florida, [a s v i e w e d o n 2 / 1 5 / 2 0 1 3 a t http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Myths-of-the-Modern-Megachurch.aspx](http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Myths-of-the-Modern-Megachurch.aspx). This extended excerpt was taken from The Trinity Review / May, June 2018]

Once again, the Evangelical church is returning to the pre-Reformation position. Let me quote Rick Warren, the man who is the acknowledged world-wide leader of the Purpose-Driven church movement:

You know, 500 years ago, the first Reformation with Luther and then Calvin, was about creeds...[the new reformation that we're bringing about through the Purpose-Driven church] will be about deeds.... The first one was about what the church believes.... This one will be about what the church does. The first Reformation actually split Christianity into dozens and then hundreds of different segments.... This [new reformation] is actually going to bring them together. Now, you're never going to get Christians, of all their stripes and varieties, to agree on all of the different doctrinal disputes and things like that, but what I am seeing them agree on are the purposes of the church.

And I find great uniformity in the fact that I see this happening all the time. Last week I spoke to 4,000 pastors at my church who came from over 100 denominations in over 50 countries. Now, that's wide spread. We had Catholic priests, we had Pentecostal

ministers, we had Lutheran bishops, we had Anglican bishops, we had Baptist preachers. They're all there together and you know what? I'd never get them to agree on communion or baptism or a bunch of stuff like that, but I could get them to agree on what the church should be doing in the world.

A Tale of Two Sisters The Tragedy of Ecumenical Unfaithfulness

With heart so kind and gentle,
And sympathetic eye;
With touching deep affection,
And loyal, tender tie—
Was LOVE betrothed to DOCTRINE
To hold him all her days,
And walk the path of gladness
United in His ways.

Her younger sister also
Had qualities so fair,
Of caring, selfless, kindness,
And warmth without compare;
Thus UNITY was drawn to
The husband of her youth;
And pledged herself forever
To be the bride of TRUTH.

But TIME, with bitter envy,
Across the testing years.
Pursued the slow erosion
Of happiness to tears;
Till LOVE begin to weary
Of DOCTRINE'S pleasant voice,
And UNITY grew cold to
The partner of her choice.

Then LOVE begin to notice
The charms of HERESY,
And awed by his opinions,
She wanted to be free;
And UNITY perceived that
Her virtues were desired
By many, many others
Whose ways she so admired.

At length, two precious unions,
So promising, so blest,
Were darkened by delusion,
Disloyalty, unrest;
Till came the day of sorrows,

And rendering vows of youth,
When LOVE divorced her DOCTRINE
And UNITY her TRUTH.
(Author unknown)

There is an apocryphal story of a debate that took place during the middle ages between the Roman Catholic Pope and a Jewish Rabbi. It was started when the Pope decided that all Jews were to leave the Vatican. This resulted in quite an uproar among the Jews. So the Pope made a deal. He would have a religious debate with their foremost Jewish Rabbi. If the Jews won, they could stay, if they lost they would have to leave. They chose a middle-aged Rabbi by the name of Moishe. Moishe agreed to debate on one condition, that neither he nor the Pope be allowed to talk during the debate. The Pope agreed. The day of the debate came. Moishe and the Pope sat opposite one another for a full minute staring each other in the eye. Finally the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Moishe looked back at him and raised one finger. The Pope waved his fingers in a circle around his head. Moishe then pointed to the ground. The Pope pulled a wafer and a glass of wine from his coat. Moishe pulled out an apple from his. The Pope then stood up and said, "I give up. This man is too good. He has won and the Jews can stay."

An hour later the cardinals gathered around the Pope inquiring about what had happened. The Pope said, "First I held up three fingers to represent the Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that we both believed in one God. Then I waved my finger around me to show him that God was transcendent, He was all around us. He responded by pointing to the ground showing me that God was also immanent, right here with us. I took the wine and wafer from my coat to show him that Jesus died on the cross for sin. He pulled out an apple to remind me that Adam and Eve brought sin into the world. He had an answer for everything. What could I do?"

Meanwhile, the Jewish community crowded around Moishe. What happened they asked? "Well," said Moishe, "First he said to me that the Jews had three days to leave. I told him that not one of us was leaving. Then he told me that this whole city would be cleared of Jews. I let him know that we were staying right here." "And then what happened?" someone asked. "I don't know," replied Moishe. "He took out his lunch and I took out mine."

"Prince of Peace Catholic Church and First Baptist Church of Plano, Texas took a giant step towards ecumenical unity earlier this year by exchanging pastors and pulpits for Sunday morning sermons. Roman Catholic priest, Jim Balint delivered two messages to over 1100 Southern Baptists at First Baptist Church on February 1st. His message was, 'That They May All Be One.'" [cited in "Proclaiming the Gospel" newsletter, PO Box 940871, Plano, TX 75094, 1998]

A chorus of voices keeps harping the unity tune. What they are saying is, "Christians of all doctrinal shades and beliefs must come together in one visible organization, regardless. . . . Unite, unite! Such teaching is false, reckless, and dangerous. Truth alone must determine our alignments. Truth comes before unity. Unity without truth is hazardous. Our Lord's prayer in John 17 must be read in its full context. Only those sanctified through the Word can be one in Christ. To teach otherwise is to betray the gospel. [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in The Berean Call, April 1996]

Chuck Colson has stated that believers are "on the front lines battling such issues as abortion, pornography, and threats to religious liberty." He goes on to say: "Our best weapon is the distinctiveness of Christian truth expressed in unity by all true believers . . . And let's be certain that we are firing our polemical rifles against the enemy, not against those fighting in the trenches alongside us in defense of the Truth." The above sounds good--until you realize that this was written in an essay published in Christianity Today entitled "Why Catholics are our Allies."

"Whatever their many differences over the centuries, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant evangelicals now find their core beliefs under fire throughout the world. Less able to afford the luxury of fighting each other, many in each of these wings of Christianity are beginning to ask: How much do we hold in common?" [From the publicity blurb of the book Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelical, Catholic and Orthodox in Dialogue, 1997]

"Hang 'unity' if the truth of the gospel is at stake." [Martin Luther]

C.H. Spurgeon on the Pastor's College:

"Definite doctrines are held and taught. We hold by the doctrines of grace and the old orthodox faith, and have no sympathy with the countless theological novelties of the present day, which are novelties only in outward form: in substance they are repetitions of errors exploded long ago. . . . we find no failure in the number of earnest spirits who rally to our standard, believing that in truth alone can true freedom be found." [Lectures to my Students, iv]

ENVY:

There were two seriously ill men who shared a single room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed happened to be by the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by the activity and color of the outside world.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his head: Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It didn't seem fair.

As the thought fermented the man felt ashamed at first. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window--that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit rooms the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room, he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence--deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take it away--no words, no fuss. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. [From a short story by G.W. Target, cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 50]

EPISTEMOLOGY:

"I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but rather, I believe in order that I may understand." [Augustine]

"This radical skepticism has penetrated our entire culture, from television to music to literature. The Christian at the end of the twentieth century is confronted with an overwhelming cultural consensus--sometimes stated explicitly but most often implicitly: Man does not and cannot know anything truly." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 135]

"The misologists--the haters of logic--use logic to demonstrate the futility of using logic." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 137]

"Further, in Christian epistemology, there is no dichotomy between faith (revelation) and reason (logic). . . . In the Christian worldview (Christian rationalism), knowledge comes through reason (i.e. logic), not from reasoning (as in pure rationalism). Unlike pure rationalism, Scripturalism stands upon the foundation of Biblical revelation. As stated in

Augustine's dictum: 'I believe in order to understand.'" [W. Gary Crampton, "Scripturalism: A Christian Worldview Part 1." The Trinity Review, Number 299, March-April, 2011]

ESCHATOLOGY:

"I and as many as are orthodox Christians in all respects acknowledge that there shall be a resurrection of the body and 1,000 years reign in Jerusalem." According to Edward Gibbon, the millennial reign of Jesus Christ was accepted by the church until the third century. Premillennialism was the universal belief of the early church. [cited in Message of the Christian Jew newsletter, May-June, 2001]

From the Didache - note how it speaks against postmillennialism and preterism; and for a great end-times apostasy:

1 Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour the hour in which our Lord cometh. 2 And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season. 3 For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. 4 For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began. 5 Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself. 6 And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead; 7 yet not of all, but as it was said The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. 8 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. [Didache 16:1-8]

EVIL:

"All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing..." [Edmund Burke]

Did God create Evil? This will make you think for a while. At a certain college, there was a professor with a reputation for being tough on Christians. At the first class every semester, he asked if anyone was a Christian and proceeded to degrade them and to mock their statement of faith. One semester, he asked the question and a young man raised his hand when asked if anyone was a Christian. The professor asked, "Did God make everything, young man?" He replied, "Yes sir He did!" The professor responded, "If God made everything, then He made evil." The student didn't have a response and the professor was happy to have once again proved the Christian faith to be a myth. Then another man raised his hand and asked, "May I ask you something, sir?" Yes, you may," responded the professor. The young man stood up and said "Sir, is there such thing as cold?" Of course there is, what kind of question is that? Haven't you ever been cold?" The young man replied, "Actually, sir, cold doesn't exist. What we consider to be cold, is really an absence of heat. Absolute zero is when there is absolutely no heat, but cold does not really exist. We have

only created that term to describe how we feel when heat is not there." The young man continued, "Sir, is there such a thing as dark?" Once again, the professor responded "Of course there is." And once again, the student replied "Actually, sir, darkness does not exist. Darkness is really only the absence of light. Darkness is only a term man developed to describe what happens when there is no light present." Finally, the young man asked, "Sir, is there such thing as evil?" The professor responded, "Of course. We have rapes, and murders and violence everywhere in the world, those things are evil." The student replied, "Actually, sir, evil does not exist. Evil is simply the absence of God. Evil is a term man developed to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. It isn't like truth, or love, which exist as virtues like heat or light. Evil is simply the state where God is not present, like cold without heat or darkness without light."

EVOLUTION:

"No rational man, cognizant of the facts, believes that the average Negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the white man. . . . It is simply incredible [to think] that . . . he will be able to compete successfully with his bigger-brained and smaller-jawed rival, in a contest which is to be carried on by thoughts and not by bites." [Thomas Huxley, cited in Hank Hannegraaf, *The Face that Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution*, 25]

"At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world." [Charles Darwin, cited in Hank Hannegraaf, *The Face that Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution*, 26]

"Since Darwin, we know that we do not exist for any purpose." [Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, eds., *Bioethics: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 4]

University of Chicago evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne states that science has demonstrated that, "the universe and life are pointless. . . . Pointless in the sense that there is no externally imposed purpose or point in the universe. As atheists this is something that is manifestly true to us. We make our own meaning and purpose."

He went on:

"Evolution is the greatest killer of belief that has ever happened on this planet because it showed that some of the best evidence for God, which was the design of animals and plants that so wonderfully matched their environment could be the result of this naturalistic, blind materialistic process of natural selection."

In a 1994 debate with Phillip Johnson, a leading figure in the intelligent design movement, the late evolutionary biologist William Provine insisted: "No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth. These are all conclusions to which Darwin came quite clearly."

Coyne has stated that evolution "says that there is no special purpose for your life, because it is a naturalistic philosophy. We have no more extrinsic purpose than a squirrel or an armadillo."

Duke University philosophy professor Alex Rosenberg shows the same inconsistency. He co-authored an article in 2003, "Darwin's Nihilistic Idea: Evolution and the Meaninglessness of Life," in which he dismissed morality as an illusion. However, Rosenberg assured us that we have nothing to fear, because nihilism has no effect on our behavior, since "Most of us just couldn't persistently be mean, even if we tried." Rosenberg needs to take some of my history courses — or just read the news — if he doesn't think many people could be mean to each other.

In a 2013 debate with William Lane Craig, Rosenberg objected to some of Craig's arguments as "morally offensive," because some of his relatives were murdered in the Holocaust. But if life is meaningless and morality is an illusion, why does it matter if Hitler killed millions? That would be just another meaningless event in the meaningless flow of history. Rosenberg apparently knows better.

For a biologist to be expertly trained in the theory of evolution is apparently not enough for some people. It's also necessary to agree with the politically correct science police that critical viewpoints must be silenced--completely. That's the only possible explanation for what happened to Richard Sternberg. He holds not one, but two Ph.D.'s in evolutionary biology, works for the National Institutes of Health, and in 2000 won a prestigious appointment as a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution. He also became editor of a scientific journal. In that role, he accepted for publication an article that spoke favorably of "intelligent design"--the belief that the complexity and diversity of life on earth cannot be explained by the operation of random processes alone. The article passed "peer review," as scientific journal articles must--but the same cannot be said for Mr. Sternberg. An investigation by the federal Office of Special Counsel has confirmed that Sternberg was subjected to "retaliation . . . in many forms," including the spread of lies about him both within and outside the Smithsonian. In fact, Sternberg says that he was virtually driven out of the building, because "they could not guarantee me that they could keep order." To allow free debate over this controversy would appear to be both more tolerant and more scientific. [Family Research Council Email Newsletter Dated August 19, 2005 Entitled "Federal Investigation Confirms Retaliation for Intelligent Design Article"]

"I am sure the day will come when evolution will be recognized to be the pernicious and harmful falsehood, deceit, and fairy tale that it really is. People will realize, at length, that a great and glorious Creator, the Almighty omniscient God has created the world and you and me. The most scientifically accurate statement on origins ever made is "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." – Dr. D. James Kennedy

EVANGELISM: [*General*; *Altar-Calls & Manipulation*; *God's Sovereignty*; *Misc. Quotes*; *Witnessing*] - See also "Discipleship;" "Love"

General

"Fundamentalist" = "not enough fun, too much damn and little mental"

"We think if we can but get men converted, it does not much matter how. Our whole anxiety is, not 'How shall we secure the glory of Jehovah?' but 'How shall we multiply conversions?'" [Andrew Bonar]

"Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies; and if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay, and not madly to destroy themselves. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for." [C.H. Spurgeon]

I would sooner pluck one single brand from the burning than explain all mysteries. To win a soul from going down into the pit is a more glorious achievement than to be crowned in the arena of theological controversy as *Doctor Sufficietissimus*. [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 83]

"Too many clergymen have become keepers of an aquarium instead of fishers of men--and often they are just swiping each other's fish." [Myron S. Augsburger]

"O God, defend me for the task of dropping buckets into empty wells, and growing old in drawing nothing up." [Willaim Cowper]

A letter printed in the Melbourne Australia Daily News following a "Billy Graham Crusade:"

"After hearing Dr. Billy Graham on the air, viewing him on Television, and reading reports about him and his mission, I am heartily sick of the type of religion that insists that my soul and everyone else's needs 'saving' (whatever that means). I have never thought that I was lost or that I daily wallow in the mire of sin--although this type of preaching insists that I do. Give me a practical religion that teaches gentleness and tolerance, that recognizes no barriers of color or creed, that remembers the aged and teaches children of goodness and not sin. If in order to save my soul I must accept such a philosophy which I recently heard preached, I prefer to remain forever damned." [cited by J. MacArthur in tape GC 80-43]

An illustration to be used in evangelism, as given by evangelist Larry Moyer:

"I draw three circles on a piece of paper. Inside the first, I write W; inside the second, C + W; and inside the third, C. Pointing to the first circle, I explain, 'there are some who trust in their works to get them to heaven.' Pointing to the second, I say, 'There are some who trust in Christ and their works to get them to heaven.' Indicating the third, I say, 'There are some who trust in Christ alone to get them to heaven. Where are you?'"

"Those who don't understand the gospel, thinking they are honoring God, usually point to the middle circle. Beginning with the first circle, I tell them, 'If you're trusting works to get you to heaven, you're saying that Jesus did not have to die on a cross.' Pointing to the second circle, I explain, 'If you're trusting Christ and your works, you're saying that His death was a big disappointment--you have to finish what He started.' Then pointing to the third, I say, 'If you're trusting Christ alone, you're saying His death was sufficient for your sins.' I have used this to lead scores to Christ and to help them see the difference between trusting Christ plus what they've done and trusting Christ period." [Moody Monthly, June 1988]

I remember hearing a preacher tell a story about a Christian women who worked as a nurse in a local hospital. A friend of hers who didn't know Christ was admitted to the hospital for a minor procedure.

The Christian nurse, with a rightful concern about her unsaved friend's spiritual condition kept encouraging her to start coming to church. "Why don't you come to church?" "You need to prioritize your life and get to church." After a day or so, the women said, "yeah, you're right. As soon as I'm well, I'm coming to church." The preacher went on to say that a few weeks after she left the hospital, the women was killed in an automobile accident before she ever made it to church.

Do you know what the real tragedy of that story is: The real tragedy is that the Christian nurse felt that inviting someone to church equals telling them about Jesus Christ. That's the tragedy. [TAB]

Altar Calls & Manipulation

The following is advice given to preachers on how to "properly" conduct an altar-call at the end of a service:

"You can't hatch eggs in a refrigerator! The successful invitation will have positive results only when extended in a warm, spiritual, bright, living atmosphere--an atmosphere which is created long before the invitation begins. . . . Preaching for evangelistic results need not necessarily include evangelistic preaching. The message is not as important as the atmosphere. . . In the actual extending of the invitation, I try first to use a stirring illustration or challenge as far before twelve o'clock as possible. The later the invitation is given, the less the results will be. Normally, the shorter sermon will be more conducive to better results. It is of significant importance to attempt to go as smoothly into the invitation as possible. Ideally, the congregation should not be aware when the transition is made." [Proclaim, Jan.-Mar. 1977, 40, as cited in Nettles, By His Grace and For His Glory, Baker Books: 1986, 412]

"Now about the form of a public invitation. If one is already acquainted with the congregation and knows who is saved and who is not saved, then he might make the invitation something like this. 'Let us all stand. In a moment we will be singing number ___. As we sing, if you are willing here and now to come to Christ and trust Him as your own personal Savior, I want you to walk down here and take my hand. And that will be a token to me and to these people and to God that here and now you admit yourself a sinner, you want God to forgive and save you, and you are willing to trust Him to do it now.' He might add: 'If you are not sure about how to be saved, will you come here and let me sit down with you and show you from the Bible exactly how to trust Christ? I will have a prayer with you and we will ask the Lord to save you; and He will, and you can know it before you leave here today.' [John R. Rice, Here are More Questions . . . Sword of the Lord, 1973, 381]

There is a danger here that people will equate their coming forward with their conversion (just as others have equated their baptism with their conversion). Where in the Bible does it say to "come forward?" Justification is an act of the will and of the heart, not an act of the feet! As one of Charles Finney's detractors pointed out, "The question is not, will he repent

and yield his heart to God, but will he go to the anxious bench; which is something different altogether. Thus a new issue is raised by which the other is obscured or thrust out of sight." [quote from J.W. Nevin, The Anxious Bench (1843), 30]

"Evangelism that focuses only on the promise of fulfilled needs is a deadly corruption of the biblical message. In his insightful biography of the late D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Iain Murray accurately observes,

'An evangelist must exercise care lest by a mere appeal to self-interest he induces a 'decision' which, far from being saving, is perfectly consistent with a person remaining in an unregenerate condition. A presentation of the gospel chiefly in terms of its ability to fulfil man's need of happiness and other blessings, and which fails to show that man's wrong relationship to God 'is much worse than everything else' in his condition, may well receive a considerable though temporary success. A salvation conceived 'not as something primarily that brings us to God but as something that gives us something' requires no real conviction of sin in order to its acceptance. ML-J was not surprised that such evangelism could be carried on with glibness and lightness and that its result was to add the unspiritual and the careless to the churches. The true convert always wants deliverance from the power as well as the guilt of sin.'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 156]

God's Sovereignty

When a man said to Spurgeon that if he believed like Spurgeon did that the elect alone could and would respond to the gospel, he would give up preaching, Spurgeon replied: "God has called me to preach his Word and if I knew that all the elect had yellow stripes down their backs then I would give up preaching the gospel and go lift up shirt tails." [Spurgeon]

A sinner who has been born again knows that he or she came to believe in Jesus Christ. He believed (it was his belief); he repented (it was his repentance). It wasn't like God zapped him or forced him to do something that he didn't desire. Yet, when he reflects more carefully, he sees that many different circumstances, family background, friends, something he read or heard, brought him to that place of faith. He begins to see that God was working in his life long before he came to the actual point of belief. It was though he had come to a single great doorway in an endless wall, over which was inscribed the words: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved . . . (Acts 16:31). And so, he voluntarily receives the invitation and enters the door by faith. To his astonished gratitude, he finds himself in a magnificent paradise stretching as far as he can see. Glancing back at the gateway through which he had entered, he is amazed that there is no door to be seen at all. Instead, on the wall are emblazoned the words: "Chosen in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). [Adapted from Henry Morris/Martin Clark, *The Bible Has the Answer*, 142]

"Some object that such a view [of God's sovereignty in salvation] will stifle evangelism. It did not stifle our Lord. But why preach to the dead? When Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus, and cried, 'Lazarus, come forth' (John 11:43), you might have made a similar complaint. Why speak to the dead? How could the lifeless corpse obey the command? Would you invent the doctrine that all of Lazarus had died but his will? . . . How absurd to

suggest that the free will of Lazarus decided to obey Christ, and that was how the dead man was revived! When he walked out of the tomb in grave clothes, Lazarus had indeed exercised his will in obeying Jesus' voice. But that could be done only as God quickened the whole man to life (ears to hear, mind to understand, will to obey the call). God gave him a new life! His response to Jesus was the result and evidence of God's sovereign act of resurrection." [Walter Chantry, Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic, 86-87]

"Free will has carried many souls to hell but never a soul to heaven." [C.H. Spurgeon]

In his book, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, J.I. Packer observes:

All Christians believe in divine sovereignty, but some are not aware that they do, and mistakenly imagine and insist that they reject it. What causes this odd state of affairs? The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the Church--the intruding of rationalistic speculations, the passion for systematic consistency, a reluctance to recognise the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men, and a subsequent subjecting of Scripture to the supposed demands of human logic. People see the Bible teaches man's responsibility for his actions; they do not see (man, indeed, cannot see) how this is consistent with the sovereign Lordship of God over those actions. They are not content to let the two truths live side by side, as they do in the Scriptures, but jump to the conclusion that, in order to uphold the biblical truth of human responsibility, they are bound to reject the equally biblical and equally true doctrine of divine sovereignty, and to explain away the great number of texts that teach it. The desire to over-simplify the Bible by cutting out the mysteries is natural to our perverse minds, and it is not surprising that even godly men should fall victim to it. Hence this persistent and troublesome dispute. The irony of the situation, however is that when we ask how the two sides pray, it becomes apparent that those who profess to deny God's sovereignty really believe in it just as strongly as those who affirm it. [pp. 16-17].

"The Kingdom of God is increasing at a rate of 180,000 people a day. That is more than one million people a week. It is estimated that 35,000 people a day are coming to Christ in each of the nations of China, India and Latin America alone. With this phenomenal growth, 3,500 new churches are springing up every week throughout the world. Christianity is multiplying at 3 times the world's population growth. . . . Throughout the continent of Africa some 20,000 people are born again every day. In 1990 only 3% of Africa was Christian. Today Africa is more than 40% Christian. . . . Twelve years ago you could not find 10 believers in Mongolia. Today thousands are born again and the Church in Mongolia is doubling every 90 days." [Hal Sacks, "What in the World is God Doing." The Bridge Builder Newsletter, published by El Shaddai Ministries, November 1995, vol. 3, issue 11]

Misc quotes

"I hate my eyes. I feel as though I could pluck them from their sockets because they will not weep as I desire over poor souls which are perishing." (C.H. Spurgeon)

A Calvinist once said: "Sometimes we don't present the Gospel well enough for the non-elect to reject it!"

"If I never won souls, I would sigh till I did. I would break my heart over them if I could not break their hearts. Thought I can understand the possibility of an earnest sower never reaping, I cannot understand the possibility of an earnest sower being content not to reap. I cannot comprehend any one of you Christian people trying to win souls and not having results, and being satisfied without results." [C.H. Spurgeon]

Witnessing

There once was a poor and well-known Japanese Christian by the name of Toyohiko Cagawa. He was deeply burdened for the poor Japanese people in the slums of Kobe. He spent nearly all the years of his life in these slums, ministering to the people there. He was a small man with a frail body, and one of his lungs was diseased with tuberculosis. On a visit to the United States, one of the doctors there told him that he wouldn't live long; so he returned to Kobe saying "If my life is short, it will be full." He moved into a street in the heart of the slums so the people could easily get to him. So there, in the stench of the back streets, Toyohiko Cagawa lived. Every day he preached in the streets to the poor people. On one particular day he was preaching from John 3:16, and his theme was "God's love for unworthy sinners." Kobe was not an easy place to preach God's Word -- Toyohiko was mocked and laughed. One man said "what does this little man, with funny talk know about God, and what does anyone know about whether God loves us or not!" As Toyohiko attempted to answer them, he coughed a hacking cough and spit up a large amount of blood. They laughed and said, "if God loves you, why doesn't He do something for you?" The persistent little man lifted his arm, wiped the blood from his mouth with his sleeve, and went on with the story of God's love. Gradually, in the crowded street, their voices were stilled. For stealing in on their pagan minds was the realization that right before their eyes in that little sick man was the very proof of what he was saying, for Toyohiko Cagawa was actually a demonstration of God's love.

A native once came to a tribe where a missionary had been working. The missionary didn't recognize the native and realized that he was from another area. The native came to him and asked "I want to know what you teach." The missionary said "have you ever heard the Gospel?" "No, I have only seen it" was the native's reply. And then he went on to describe a Christian he had met.

Edward Kimball, a Sunday School teacher, was impressed one day to share the good news with a Boston shoe clerk. After nervously pacing outside the store several times before entering, he found the young man in the storage room. Kimball shared God's love, and the clerk received Christ as his Savior. That was in 1858. The clerk's name was Dwight L. Moody.

Several years later, a pastor by the name of Fredrick B. Meyer was stirred by Moody's preaching and launched a nationwide preaching ministry. Through Meyer's ministry many were saved, including a former baseball player by the name of Billy Sunday. Sunday went on to be an effective evangelist.

Sometime later a Billy Sunday crusade was held in Charlotte NC. In the audience that night, a young man received Christ. His name was Billy Graham.

This all began with the simple witness of a Sunday School teacher, Edward Kimball.

There is a true story of a Russian Jew by the name of Boris Kornfeld who was incarcerated in one of Stalin's notorious prisons. Though trained as a doctor, Kornfeld's medical skills were largely wasted in a place where human life was a cheap and degraded commodity. Assigned a position in the prison hospital, most of the "medicine" he was allowed to practice involved the signing of false medical documents which allowed the guards to place prisoners in solitary torture chambers. The documents stated that the prisoners were physically strong enough to endure the punishment; Kornfeld knew, however, that these men would die.

Kornfeld despised Christianity. He had grown up embracing communism and hating the Christian religion of the Czars, who had persecuted the Russian Jews. Yet, though he had always been a committed communist, Kornfeld had been accused of some crime against the State and was now condemned to spend the rest of his life in prison. Now, disillusioned and betrayed by this atheist "religion" called communism, Kornfeld was a man without hope or faith.

While in prison, he encountered a fellow prisoner who told him about a Jewish Messiah who had come many centuries before to fulfill the promises God made to Israel. The man told Kornfeld that this Jesus had come to the Jews first, and now to call all of mankind to Himself. As the other prisoner recited the Lord's prayer to him, Kornfeld found himself strangely moved and attracted to this Christian message he had previously rejected.

Eventually, Kornfeld's Christian friend was taken away to an unknown fate. Yet, the Gospel message continued to creep slowly into Boris Kornfeld's heart. Over a period of months, Kornfeld began to feel changed and warmed. The hatred he felt toward the cruel guards and officers began to melt. His despair turned to hope. Yet, his conscience troubled him. Kornfeld knew he could no longer sign the false documents and be a party to sending his fellow prisoners to their deaths. He knew he couldn't change the fate of the doomed men, but he also knew he could no longer endure the strain on his soul. So, he refused to sign.

It was around this time that he caught an orderly stealing food from a dying man in the prison hospital. Before his conversion, Kornfeld would have turned a blind eye to the incident. Now, with a Christian sense of right and wrong, he knew he had to report the orderly's actions to the prison officials, even though the orderlies were known to take revenge against such "stoolies." The orderly received three days in the punishment block, then was released. He would get his even with the doctor somehow.

A few days later, Kornfeld was in the hospital checking on patients when he came upon a man who just had an operation for intestinal cancer. Even though the patient was groggy and incoherent from the anesthetic, Kornfeld began to talk to him. He told the patient about the change that had come over his heart after someone shared the gospel with him. He shared about the forgiveness and hope he felt in his heart, despite the cruelty and misery of the gulag. Even in his anesthetic fog, the patient clung to Kornfeld's words until he finally fell asleep.

Hours later, when the patient awoke, the man in the next bed told him the news that was being whispered all over the hospital. Dr. Kornfeld was dead. During the night, "someone"

had crushed his head with a mallet while he lay sleeping. The patient was stricken with grief. But, he was also filled with the conviction that Jesus was now alive within himself, that the life and faith that had been inside of Boris Kornfeld had somehow been transferred into his own being. The doctor had died but the patient had lived.

The patient's name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who would go on to become a world-renowned Christian author.

None of us can ever fully comprehend the impact that God allows us to have on the lives of others . . .

EXAMPLE:

A man was being tailgated by a stressed-out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman hit the roof, and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection with him. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects. He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping the guy off in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' bumper sticker and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car."

Puritan Richard Baxter, had great concern for The integrity of pastors in his day, and his words of three centuries ago are just as appropriate today as they were then:

Take heed to yourselves also because there are many eyes upon you. So there will be many who observe your fall. If you miscarry, the world will also echo with it. It is the same as the eclipses of the sun in broad daylight--they are seldom without witnesses. If you take the position of prominence in the churches, you may expect men's eyes will be upon you. Other men will sin without observation, but you cannot do so. [Richard Baxter in *The Reformed Pastor*, 36]

"A good example is the tallest kind of preaching"

"Example is the most powerful rhetoric." [Puritan Thomas Brooks]

Robert Louis Stevenson told the story of a veiled Muhammadan prophet who was said to be a great teacher and example to his people. The man always wore the veil over his face, as he claimed his countenance was so glorious that no one could bear the sight of his face. But as time went on the veil decayed and eventually fell away, revealing nothing but an ugly old man beneath. In drawing application to the Christian leader, Stevenson concluded that 'however high the truths the preacher [teaches], and however skillfully he might excuse the

blemishes of character, the time comes when the veil falls away and a man is seen by the people as he really is. It is seen whether beneath the veil is the ugly fact of unmortified egotism or the transfigured glory of Christlike character." [cited by Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 144]

Understand first how great a duty the profession of true religion is, that you may not think as some foolish people, that every man should conceal his religion, or keep it to himself. Observe, therefore, these reasons following which require it. Our tongues and bodies are made to exercise and show forth that acknowledgment and adoration of God which is in our heart. And as he denieth God with the heart who doth not believe in him and worship him in his heart, so he denieth God imputatively with his tongue and life, who doth not profess and honor him with his tongue and life, and so he is a practical atheist.

The public assemblies and worship of God, are purposely appointed by him, that in them we might make open profession of our religion. He that denieth profession, denieth the public faith and worship of the church, and denieth baptism and the Lord's supper, which are . . . appointed for the solemn profession of our faith.

Our profession is needful to our glorifying God. Men see not our hearts, nor know whether we believe in God or not, nor what we believe of him, till they hear or see it in our profession and actions.

Our profession is the means of saving others: They must see our good works that they may glorify God. [Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, 563]

"God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts!"

"It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place." [Fenelon, 17th c. French Saint, cited by John Piper "Persevering in Ministry," *Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997*, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

Andrew Carnegie said, "As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do." [cited in Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 67]

"Teaching is like putting nails in the wood; example is like hammering them deep." [Puritan Thomas Fuller]

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." [Mohandas Gandhi]

EXEGESIS:

The Challenge of Interpretation: ". . . there is often nothing so difficult to understand as a letter. Demetrius (*On Style*, 223) quotes a saying of Artemon, who edited the letters of

Aristotle. Artemon said that a letter ought to be written in the same manner as a dialogue, because it was one of the two sides of a dialogue. In other words, to read a letter is like listening to one side of a telephone conversation. So when we read the letters of Paul we are often in a difficulty. We do not possess the letter which he was answering; we do not fully know the circumstances with which he was dealing; it is only from the letter itself that we can deduce the situation which prompted it. Before we can hope to understand fully any letter Paul wrote, we must try to reconstruct the situation which produced it." [William Barclay, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, xi]

EXERCISE:

It is well documented that for every minute that you exercise, you add one minute to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$5000 per month. My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. Now she's 97 years old and we don't know where she is. The only reason I would take up exercising is so that I could hear heavy breathing again. I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to show up. I have to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing. I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me. I have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them. The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier. If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country. And last but not least: I don't exercise because it makes the ice jump right out of my glass.

FAITH: [General; Faith & Works]

General

An example of the error of philosophical fideism is found in Blaise Pascal's Pensees:

"Who then will blame Christians for not being able to give reasons for their beliefs, since they profess belief in a religion which they cannot explain? They declare, when they expound it to the world, that it is foolishness, stultitiam; and then you complain because they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not keep their word; it is through their lack of proofs that they show they are not lacking in sense." (201)

"Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. There was no one there." [Martin Luther King Jr.]

Does our faith have to be perfect in order for us to be saved? Does saving faith ever wrestle with doubt? Yes! Even John Calvin, no lightweight as a theologian or on the issues of faith and justification, said that:

"While we teach we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety. On the other hand, we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief. The Godly heart feels in itself a division because it is partly imbued with sweetness from its recognition of the diving goodness, partly grieves in bitterness from an awareness of its calamity; party rests upon the promise of the gospel, partly trembles

at the evidence of its own iniquity; partly rejoices at the expectation of life, partly shudders at death. we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety. On the other hand, we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief. since in the course of the present life it never goes so well with us that we are wholly cured of the disease of unbelief and entirely filled and possessed by faith. Hence arises those conflicts when unbelief, which reposes in the remains of the flesh, rises up to attack the faith that has been inwardly conceived." [The Institutes, cited in Paul Helm, Calvin and the Calvinists, 24-25]

Saving faith is not perfect faith. Remember, is the genuineness of our faith that's the issue. Have we believed in Christ? Are we believing in Him? The object of our faith saves us because that object is the perfect person and work of Jesus Christ. He's not looking for perfect faith; you can't get perfect faith from imperfect people. [TAB]

"Unbelief puts circumstances between itself and Christ, so as not to see Him. Faith puts Christ between itself and circumstances, so that it cannot see them." (F.B. Meyer. *The Shepherd's Psalm*. 1889. p. 17]

What about the present? What is that? It is the instant (and the succession of instances) when we experience faith. When I say that faith is profoundly future-oriented, I don't mean that it is experienced in the future. Faith is always experienced in the present. In fact, that is how I would define the present. It is the instant of experience. Faith is always experienced now. When I say it is profoundly future-oriented, I mean that deep inside this present experience of faith, the heart is picturing a future. When faith is in fullest operation, it pictures a future with God so powerful and so loving and so wise and so satisfying that it experiences assurance. Now.

The closest thing we have to a definition of faith in the New Testament is in Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the assurance (Greek hypostasis) of things hoped for." That word "assurance" can mean "substance" or "nature" as in Hebrews 1:3: "[Christ] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (hypostaseos)." Therefore, it seems to me, that the point of Hebrews 11:1 is this: When faith pictures the future which God promises, it experiences, as it were, a present "substantiation" of the future. The substance of the future, the nature of it, is, in a way, present in the experience of faith. Faith realizes the future. It has, so to speak, a foretaste of it — as when we are so excited about something and so expectant of it, we say, "I can already taste it!" [John Piper, excerpts from a revision of Future Grace, <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/how-is-future-grace-being-revised>, 3/7/2012]

"Faith is Either an Acute Fever or a Dull Habit!"

"You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone

who believes was purchased by Christ.” [Dr. John Piper, “For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death,” Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May. 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"Just as we have our senses, through which we hold communication with the physical universe, so faith is the spiritual sense or organ through which the soul comes into contact with and is affected by the spiritual world." [Andrew Murray, cited in Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 200]

"Never in any chapter of the four Gospels was Jesus astounded by anybody's righteousness. After all, he was entirely pure and holy himself. Never was he impressed with anyone's wisdom or education. Never did he say, 'Boy, Matthew sure is smart, isn't he? I really picked out a financial genius there.' But he was amazed by one thing: people's faith (Luke 7:9)." [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 39-40]

G. Campbell Morgan once defined saving faith as, "volitional surrender to intellectual conviction."

According to Alexander Maclaren: "The source and foundation of goodness and nobility of character is faith in Jesus the Lord."

"Faith is not in itself a meritorious act; the merit is in the One toward Whom it is directed. Faith is a redirecting of our sight, a getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focus." [A.W. Tozer]

"Charles Spurgeon illustrated the importance of faith's object by telling of two men in a boat. Caught in severe rapids, they were being swept toward a waterfall. Some men on shore tried to save them by throwing them a rope. One man caught hold of it and was pulled to safety on the shore. The other, in the panic of the moment, grabbed hold of a seemingly more substantial log that was floating by. That man was carried downstream, over the rapids, and was never seen again. Faith, represented by the rope linked to the shore, connects us to Jesus Christ and safety. Good works apart from true faith, represented in the story by the log, leads only to ruin." [cited in John MacArthur, Colossians and Philemon, 17]

During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the China Inland Mission was suffering great losses, and every telegram brought more tragic news of Christians being killed, property being confiscated, and workers scattered. The mission's founder, J. Hudson Taylor, was in Switzerland and under orders to rest because of ill health. His heart ached for his coworkers in China. When things were at their worst, he said, "I cannot read; I cannot think; I cannot even pray; but I can trust." [cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

"Faith is the refusal to panic." [Martin Lloyd Jones, cited in Focus on the Family Bulletin, October, 1995]

Sola Fide is the article by which the church stands or falls – Luther.

Faith & Works

Our works do not generate righteousness, rather our righteousness in Christ generates works.
~Martin Luther

Calvin on "faith and works" (justification and sanctification):

"Christ saves no one whom He does not sanctify at the same time. . . . Thus it is clear how true it is that we are justified not without works, yet not through works, since our sharing in Christ, which justifies us, sanctification is just as much included as righteousness . . . the Lord freely justifies His own in order that He may at the same time restore them to true righteousness by sanctification of His Spirit." [John Calvin, Institutes, III:16:1; III:3:19]

"But although works tend in no way to the cause of justification, yet when the elect sons of God were justified freely by faith, at the same time their works are esteemed righteous by the same gratuitous liberality. Thus, it will still remain true, that faith without works justifies, although this needs prudence and a sound interpretation; for this proposition, that faith without works justifies is true and yet false, according to the different senses which it bears. The proposition that faith without works justifies by itself is false, because faith without works is void." [John Calvin, Commentaries on Ezekiel 18:14-17]

"The church of Jesus Christ must deal with the soul-damning impression that a simple knowledge of the gospel is equal to acceptance of saving faith. We must deal with the deception and delusion that knowing the truth equals redemption. It's almost as if people think that what you don't deny you must believe. James will not permit any such impression." [John MacArthur, Dead Faith part 1 (cassette tape GC 59-15)]

"When a man lives without mercy to others in God's world, he simply shows off the fact that he himself has never responded aright to the immeasurable mercy of God. The mercy a man has shown others as fruit of a life touched by God's saving mercy will triumph over judgment. His own sins, worthy of judgement, are removed by God's working in his life, dissolves all the charges strict justice might bring against him. Thus, his showing of mercy is not a matter of heaping up personal merit to deserve salvation by his own good works. The mercy he shows is itself a work of God for which he can take no credit."

"How do you treat others? The answer will indicate the condition of your faith, whether pure or contaminated by doubt, your regard or disregard for God's revelation of the truth about humanity, your obedience to the royal law or the law of transgressors, your despair of joy at the judgement. How do you treat others? The answer may confirm or deny your Christianity?" [Ralph Turnbull]

In a letter from a missionary in West Africa he relates the story of a young man who was cast out of his family for embracing Christ and is forced to live on the streets to the neglect of his own pastor. The account was brought to the missionaries attention via letter by a man who attends the church where this situation occurred. Quoting the letter, this Christian brother expresses his concern:

"It seems as if this, our pastor, is not happy of his position now in Christ. This boy is finally driven [out] by his parents, he comes and sees the pastor in that first night. [The pastor] only prays with him and asks him to go; to where? Nobody knows. This boy has not yet received his baptism, which he as been requesting for so long. This boy has been sleeping outside for more than 2 weeks. The day I happened to see him about 2 a.m. while I was on town patrol I decided to take him along to my house to stay. The pastor was very angry to hear that I was lodging him. Brother, I will that you people should be praying hard for this church and our pastor. There is terrible confusion in the church."

It's one thing to DEFEND your faith with your words; it's another to DEMONSTRATE your faith with your works. [TAB]

"We are saved by faith, yet faith is one
With life, like daylight and the sun.
Unless they flower in our deeds,
Dead, empty husks are all the creeds.
To call Christ Lord, but strive not to obey,
Belies the homage that with words I pay."
[Maud Frazer Jackson, cited in Hiebert, James, 338]

N.T. scholar Ralph Turnbull, speaking on the character of dead faith, writes:

"It [results in] a say-so but not a do-so religion. It talks, but it does not walk. It makes a claim without producing a conduct to match. The lips move, but the feet do not stir from the old place of indifference to the will and love of the Lord. It professes to believe in Christ, it never attempts to do anything for Christ. It has no more life than a phonograph." [Proclaiming the New Testament, 5:36]

Late Princeton theologian, J. Gresham Machen, who spent much time earlier this c. battling those who sought to make God's Word less than sufficient, wrote a book entitled, What is Faith?. In it he describes the nature & behavior of true saving faith:

"Faith is the acceptance of a gift at the hands of Christ. . . . It is a very wonderful thing; it involves a change of the whole nature of man; it involves a new hatred of sin and new hunger and thirst after righteousness. Such a wonderful change is not the work of man; faith itself is given us by the Spirit of God. Christians never make themselves Christians; but they are made Christians by God. . . . It is quite inconceivable that a man should be given this faith in Christ, that he should accept this gift which Christ offers, and still go on contentedly in sin. For the very thing which Christ offers us is salvation from sin--not only salvation from the guilt of sin, but also salvation from the power of sin. The very first thing that the Christian does, therefore, is to keep the law of God: he keeps it no longer as a way of earning his salvation--for salvation has been given him freely by God--but he keeps it joyously as a central part of salvation itself. The faith of which Paul speaks is, as Paul himself says, a faith that works through love; and love is the fulfilling of the whole law. . . . The faith that Paul means when he speaks of justification by faith alone is a faith that works." [New York: Macmillan, 1925, 203-4]

Detrich Bonhoeffer, commenting on the relationship between faith and works, stated:

"We must never forget the indissoluble unity of the two (faith, obedience); we must place the one proposition that only he who believes is obedient alongside the other, that only he who is obedient believes. in the one case faith is the condition of obedience, in the other obedience is the condition of faith. 'Only those who believe obey' is what we say to that part of a believer's soul which obeys, and 'only those who obey believe' is what we say to that part of the soul of the obedience which believes. If the first half of the proposition stands alone, the believer is exposed to the danger of cheap grace, which is another word for damnation. If the second half stands alone, the believer is expose to the danger of salvation thorough works, which is another word for damnation." [cited in R. Martin, James]

"Saving faith is the opposite of worthless faith. Claims are matched by conduct. As it talks, so it walks. It proves its sincerity by its action. It believes to the point of commitment. It trusts to the point of dependence. It loves to the point of obedience. It does not attempt the impossible feat of taking Jesus as Savior of the soul while refusing to follow Him as Lord of the life." [Ralph Turnbull, Proclaiming the N.T., 5:37]

"True faith, of which we speak, cannot be manufactured by our own thoughts, for it is solely a work of God in us, without any assistance on our part. As Paul says to the Romans, it is God's gift and grace, obtained by one man, Christ. Therefore, faith is something very powerful, active, restless, effective, which at once renews a person and again regenerates him, and leads him altogether into a new manner and character of life, so that it is impossible not to do good without ceasing." [Luther]

"[If works] do not follow, it is a sure sign that there is no faith there; but only an empty thought and dream, which they falsely call faith." [Luther]

"It has been supposed by many ill-instructed people that the doctrine of justification by faith is opposed to the teaching of good works, or obedience. There is no truth in the supposition. We preach the obedience of faith Faith is the foundation, the foundation, and the fosterer of obedience. . . . We know nothing of election to continue in sin. It is for this that we have been called: we are 'called to be saints.' Obedience is the grand object of the work of grace in the hearts of those who are chosen and called." [Spurgeon, 12 Sermons on Commitment, 1117-18]

"Sin has twisted our vision inward and made it self-regarding. Unbelief has put self where God should be, and is perilously close to the sin of Lucifer who said, 'I will set my throne above the throne of God.' Faith looks out instead of in and the whole life falls into line." [A.W. Tozer]

FAITHFULNESS:

In 1672 John Bunyan was released from prison because of the Declaration of Religious Indulgence. Immediately he was licensed as the pastor of the church in Bedford, which he had been serving all along, even from within prison, by writings and periodic visits. A barn was purchased and renovated as their first building, and this was where Bunyan ministered

as pastor for the next sixteen years until his death. He never was wooed away from this little parish by the larger opportunities in London. The estimate is that, in 1676, there were perhaps 120 nonconformist parishioners in Bedford, with others no doubt coming to hear him from the surrounding villages.

"We do not half enough realize our Father's pity. We chastise ourselves bitterly if we do not understand or reach our ideals. We are ever fearful that He will not give us credit for the motives which underlie our sad and fitful experience. We try to make ourselves more fit for His love. And all the time He is tenderly regarding us, and knows so well how much of our failure accrues from temperament, disposition, and overstrain." [F. B. Meyer. "F. B. Meyer on the Psalms: Bible Readings (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 124)]

Years ago, a shepherd came in from the country district to the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. He brought with him a little dog. The man died while he was in the city, and was buried in Grey Friar's Churchyard. the little dog made it way in through the iron gates and lay down upon the grave of its master. It didn't lie there merely for a day or a week or a month—it lay there twelve years. Every day, at one o'clock, they fire the gun in the castle in Edinburgh. Then everyone looks at his watch to check the time. The little dog would run from the churchyard as soon as it heard the shot to a local baker who gave it a pie and some water. Then the dog would go back to the grave again. There it lay until he died. "Be faithful unto death." [cited by Walter B. Knight, "Knight's Treasury of Illustrations," 121]

"Let us see in this fact a standing pattern to all who try to do good to others, whatever their office may be. Let it be remembered by every minister and every missionary,—by every schoolmaster and every Sunday-school teacher,—by every district visitor and every lay agent,—by every head of a house who has family prayers,—and by every nurse who has the charge of children. Let all such remember Christ's example, and resolve to do likewise. We are not to give up teaching, because we see no good done. We are not to relax our exertions, because we see no fruit of our toil. We are to work on steadily, keeping before us the great principle, that duty is our's and results are God's. There must be ploughmen and sowers, as well as reapers and binders of sheaves. The honest master pays his labourers according to the work they do, and not according to the crops that grow on his land. Our Master in heaven will deal with all His servants at the last day in like manner. He knows that success is not in their hands. He knows that they cannot change hearts. He will reward them according to their labour, and not according to the fruits which have resulted from their labour. It is not "the good and successful servant," but the "good and faithful servant," to whom He will say, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [Ryle, J. C. (1859). Expository Thoughts on Mark (pp. 196–197). London: William Hunt]

FAMILY: [*General*; *Fathers*; *Mothers*] - See also "Parenting & Children"

General

Tertullian noted that, contrary to those born in pagan homes, "the children of believers were in some sense destined for holiness and salvation." (On the Soul, 39.4)

A little girl asked her father, "Where did the first humans come from?" The father answered, "It's in the Bible. God made the first two, Adam and Eve. They had children, their children

had children, and down it went all the way to today." A few hours later, the girl asked her mother the same question. Her mother answered, "A long time ago there were monkeys from which humans evolved." The confused girl returned to her father and said, "Dad, how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and mom said they developed from monkeys?" The father answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family and your mother told you about her's."

Two men met recently and struck up a conversation. One was telling the other about some problems he was having with one of his kids. After a while the other guy said, "You think you have family problems? Get a load of my situation. A few years ago I met a young widow with a grown-up daughter and we got married. Later, my father married my stepdaughter. That made my stepdaughter my stepmother and my father became my stepson. "Also, my wife became mother-in-law of her father-in-law. Then the daughter of my wife, my stepmother, had a son. This boy was my half-brother because he was my father's son, but he was also the son of my wife's daughter, which made him my wife's grandson. That made me grandfather of my half-brother. "This was nothing until my wife and I had a son. Now the sister of my son, my mother-in-law, is also the grandmother. This makes my father the brother-in-law of my child, whose stepsister is my father's wife. "I am my stepmother's brother-in-law, my wife is her own child's aunt, my son is my father's nephew and I am my own grandfather. You think you have family problems!" --Author unknown.

In his biography Pierre Loti tells how, as a small boy, he read stories of famous saints, and how he was inspired to become one of them. He read about Simeon Stylites who lived on top of a pillar for 40 years and he decided to imitate him. So young Pierre mounted a tall kitchen stool and announced his plans to remain on the kitchen stool for 40 years. His mother, however, had different plans. In his bedroom an hour later Pierre wrote in his diary, "Thus I discovered that it is exceedingly difficult to be a saint while living with your family." [adapted from Family Time With God, a devotional booklet published by Partners in Ministry, Wilmington, DE, June 4, 1996]

"It is difficult to see how Christianity can have any positive effect on society if it cannot transform its own homes." [John MacArthur, Colossians, 166]

In one of the popular "Chicken Soup" volumes, Dennis E. Mannering tells about an assignment he once gave to a class he teaches for adults. He gave them the assignment to "go to someone you love and tell them that you love them." At the beginning of the next class, one of the students began by saying, "I was angry with you last week when you gave us this assignment. I didn't feel I had anyone to say those words to. But as I began driving home my conscience started talking. Then I knew exactly who I needed to say 'I love you' to. Five years ago, my father and I had a vicious disagreement and never really resolved it. We avoided seeing each other unless we absolutely had to at family gatherings. we hardly spoke. So by the time I got home, I had convinced myself I was going to tell my father I loved him. Just making that decision seemed to lift a heavy load off my chest. At 5:30, I was at my parent's house ringing the doorbell, praying that dad would answer the door. I was afraid that if mom answered, I would chicken out and tell her instead. But . . . dad did answer the door. I didn't waste any time. I took one step inside the door and said, 'Dad, I just came over to tell you that I love you.' It was as if a transformation came over my dad. Before my eyes his face softened, the wrinkles seemed to disappear and he began to cry. He

reached out to me and hugged me and said ‘I love you too, son, but I’ve never been able to say, it.’ But that’s not even my point. Two days after that visit, my dad had a heart attack, and is in the hospital. I don’t even know if he’ll make it. So my message to all of you is this: Don’t wait to do the things you know need to be done. What if I had waited to tell my dad? Take the time to do what you need to do and do it now!" ["Do it Now!" *Condensed Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Copywrite 1996 by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hanson and Patty Hanson]

Fathers

"Well, what are you going to be, my boy, when you have reached manhood's years; a doctor, a lawyer, or actor great, moving throngs to laughter and tears? But he shook his head, as he gave reply, in a serious way he said, 'I don't want to be any of them, I want to be like my dad!'"

"He wants to be like his dad! You men, did you ever think, as you pause, that the boy who watches your every move is building a set of laws? He's molding a life you're the model for, and whether it's good or bad, depends on the kind of example set to the body who'd be like his dad."

"Would you have him go everywhere you go? Have him do just the things you do? And see everything that your eyes behold, and woo all the gods you woo? When you see the worship that shines in the eyes of your lovable little lad, could you rest content if he gets his wish, and grows to be like his dad?"

"It's a job that none but yourself can fill; it's a charge you must answer for; it's a duty to show him the road to tread ere he reaches his manhood's door. It's a debt you owe for the greatest joy on this old earth to be had; this pleasure of having a boy to raise who wants to be like his dad!" [author unknown]

Mothers

Mother Reclassification:

A woman, named Sue, renewing her driver's license at the County Clerk's office was asked by the woman recorder to state her occupation. She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself. "What I mean is," explained the recorder, "do you have a job, or are you just a" "Of course I have a job," snapped Emily. "I'm a mother."

"We don't list 'mother' as an occupation...'housewife' covers it," said the recorder emphatically. I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall.

The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient, and possessed of a high sounding title like, "Official Interrogator" or "Town Registrar." "What is your occupation?" she probed. What made me say it, I do not know... The words simply popped out. "I'm a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations." The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair, and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder

as my pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

"Might I ask," said the clerk with new interest, "just what you do in your field?" Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research, (what mother doesn't), in the laboratory and in the field, (normally I would have said indoors and out). I'm working for my Masters, (the entire family), and already have four credits, (all daughters). Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities, (any mother care to disagree?.) and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are more of a satisfaction rather than just money." There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove into our driveway, buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants - ages 13, 7, and 3. Upstairs I could hear our new experimental model, (a 6 month old baby), in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern. I felt triumphant! I had scored a beat on bureaucracy! And I had gone on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than "just another mother."

Motherhood.....What a glorious career! Especially when there's a title on the door.

Scottish preacher Ian Maclaren tells a story of a little lady from his congregation whom he called on one day. As they were talking she began to weep and wipe the tears with the corner of her apron. "What's disturbing you dear?" Dr. Maclaren asked her. "Oh, she said, sometimes I feel like I've done so little. And when I think about it, it makes my heart heavy. Really, I've done so little for Jesus. When I was a wee girl the Lord spoke to my heart and I surrendered my life to Him, and I want to live for Him oh so much! But I feel that my life is gone and I have not really done anything."

Ian Maclaren then asked her, "what have you done with your life?" "Oh nothing, she said. Really nothing. I've washed dishes. I've cooked 3 meals a day. I've taken care of my children. I've mopped the floor, mended the clothes--you know, everything that a mother does--that's all I've done." Pastor Maclaren sat back in his chair and asked, "where are your boys now?" "Oh, she spoke, you know. I named them all for the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You know them all. You know where Mark is, you ordained him. He went to China. He's learned the language and now he's off to minister to the people in the name of the Lord." "Where's Luke," Maclaren asked? "You know where Luke is, you sent him out. I received a letter from him the other day. He says that revival has broken out on his mission station in Africa. "And Matthew?" he asked. "Well, he's in China with his brother--they're working together." And then she volunteered, "and John, well he's only 19 and he came to me the other night to say that God has laid Africa on his heart." He said, "mother, I'm going to Africa, but don't you worry about it. The Lord has shown me that I'm to stay to care for you until you go home to glory, and then I can go to Africa."

Ian Maclaren then looked at that elderly saint and said, "your life has been wasted you say?" Through her tears she said "yes, I fear that it has been wasted." "You have been cooking and moping and washing--but," he said, "I would like to see the reward you receive when you are called home!" [cited by J. MacArthur, GC 54-38]

Back in 1970, Larry Christenson wrote: "Working wives and working mothers have become so much a part of our culture that we scarcely stop to consider what a departure this is from Divine Order, or the deleterious effect it has upon family life. . . . Nowhere does our enslavement to materialistic goals show itself more brazenly than in the naive notion that the wife must work in order to maintain a decent standard of living for the family. That cases of genuine necessity exist no sensible person would deny. But it is also evident that in many, perhaps the great majority of cases, the income of the wife goes toward luxuries which a family could do without." [The Christian Family, 127-28]

"Even secular anthropologists are recognizing the fearfully negative results in a world of working wives and mothers. Marvin Harris, writing in Why America Changed: Our Cultural Crisis (Simon and Schuster, 1981) lays many of the various troubles of our time at the feet of working women. He shows that the working woman is the child of consumptive materialism. The women's liberation efforts, he says, are created only to justify the materialism that took women into the money-making pursuit. These women have thereby impacted the home. He accuses them of undermining the husbands's role; driving male wages down by increasing the supply of workers; destroying 'the marital and procreative imperative' that hinges on women's being in the home raising children; shattering the traditional American domestic life and the way of love and sex; bringing an end to 'the lifetime, male-dominated, two parent, multi-child, breadwinner family;' creating black unemployment by filling up jobs with low-paid and unaggressive laborers, and thereby leading to an increase in the crime rate. In the August, 1981 issue of Psychology Today, he is quoted: 'Unwittingly, therefore, white women, responding to their own economic imperatives clothed in the rhetoric of sexual liberation, are steadily tightening the vise that holds the ghetto in its jaws' (p. 42)." [John MacArthur, The Family, 34]

FEAR AND ANXIETY:

"Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. There was no one there." [Martin Luther King Jr.]

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."

"Christ died. Ponder this price that you might not fear. Measuring by the sacrifice, the intensity of God's commitment to your fearlessness, your freedom, is immeasurable. Take it. Enjoy it. His liberating power will shine as you savor the liberty of life." [John Piper]

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS:

"In his book *The Crisis of the University*, Sir Walter Moberly cites the failure of evangelicals to penetrate university campuses with the gospel. To those who claim to follow Christ he says, 'If one-tenth of what you believe is true, you ought to be ten times as excited as you are.'" [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 106]

"In the Christian faith, we should be able to use the word 'feel' boldly and without apology. What worse thing could be said of us as the Christian church if it could be said that we are a feelingless people?" [A.W. Tozer]

James Dobson tells the following story:

"Determining the will of God by means of feelings or impressions reminds me of the day I completed my education at the University of Southern California and was awarded a doctoral degree.

I had the prize I sought so diligently. Driving home that day, I expressed my appreciation to God for His obvious blessing on my life, and I asked Him to use me in any way He chose. The presence of the Lord seemed very near at the moment.

Then, as I turned a corner, I was seized by a strong impression that conveyed this unmistakable message: *You are going to lose someone very close to you within the next 12 months. A member of your immediate family will die, but when it happens, don't be dismayed. Just continue trusting and depending on me.*

I had not been thinking about death and was greatly alarmed by the threatening thought. My heart thumped a little harder as I contemplated who might die. When I reached my home, I told no one about the experience.

One month passed without a tragedy. Two and three months sped by, and still death failed to visit my family. Finally, the anniversary of my morbid impression came and went without consequence. The impression had been invalid.

Through my counseling experiences, I have learned that my phony impression was not unique. Similar experiences are common, particularly among those who have not adjusted well to the challenge of living.

For example, a 30-year-old wife and mother came to me for treatment of anxiety and depression. In relating her history, she described an episode that had occurred in a church service when she was 16. Toward the end of the sermon, she 'heard' this alarming message from God: *Jeanie, I want you to die so that others will come to Me.* Jeanie was absolutely terrified. She felt as if she stood on the gallows with the hangman's noose dangling above her head. In her panic, she jumped from her seat and fled through the doors of the building, sobbing as she ran. Jeanie felt that she would commit a sin if she revealed her impression to anyone, so she kept it to herself.

For years she has awaited the execution of this divine sentence, wondering when the moment will arrive. Nevertheless, she appears to be in fine health today.

From these and other examples, I have come to regard the interpretation of impressions as risky business, at best." [Focus on the Family Bulletin "Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions," October, 1995]

Some time ago it was said that a church decided to implement as one its ministries an "Evangelical Interactive Help-line" for people with psychiatric problems. If you called their 1-800 number for assistance you would get a friendly pre-recorded voice that asked you to select from the following options: "If you are obsessive-compulsive, press 1 repeatedly." "If you are co-dependent, ask someone else to press 2." "If you have multiple personalities,

press 3,4,5,6.” “If you are paranoid, we know who you are. Just stay on the line until we trace the call.” Finally, “If you are an evangelical, just stay on the line and a still, small voice will tell you which number to press.”

FELLOWSHIP:

John Fawcett, an orphan at the age of twelve who became apprenticed to a tailor. Largely self-educated, Fawcett was converted by the preaching of George Whitefield at the age of sixteen, and in 1782, he wrote the words to "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," his most cherished hymn. Our hearts still resonate with melody to this beautiful hymn.

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

This glorious hope revives our courage by the way;
While each in expectation lives and waits to see the day.

From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin, we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object to share with the class that represented their religion. The first student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David." The second student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Mary. I'm a Catholic and this is a Rosary." The third student got in up front of the class and said, "My name is Tommy. I am Baptist, and this is a casserole."

Cf. Pliny the Younger's report to the Emperor Trajan (AD 111-112) that the Christians in Bithynia met on a fixed day before dawn and "recited an antiphonal hymn to Christ as God." [cited in Bruce, Colossians, 158]

Some 80 years later, the early church father, Tertullian, wrote that at the Christian's lovefeast, "after water for the hands, and lights had been brought in, each is invited to sing to God in the presence of the others from what he knows of the holy Scriptures or from his own heart." [cited in Bruce, Colossians, 158]

"The church is like Noah's Ark, if it wasn't for the storm outside we couldn't stand the stink inside." (European Theologian Reinhold Niehbur)

May the grace of Christ our Savior,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favor,
Rest upon us from above.
Thus my we abide in union,
With each other and the Lord,
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford."

[Benediction written by John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace"]

FEMINISM:

“Look at life for women before Christ. Classical scholars used to muse about ‘the glory that was Greece,’ but ancient Greece was glorious neither for slaves nor those near-slaves known as wives. An Athenian wife was not allowed to eat with her husband’s guests nor leave the house without male escort. Spartan women probably had more freedom, but were still kept ‘under lock and key’ according to the second-century biographer Plutarch. Greek men viewed women as inferior from birth (as in China today, baby girls suffered infanticide far more often than boys) and into adulthood. The great fifth-century dramatist Aeschylus had his chorus declare about women, ‘Evil are they and guileful of purpose, with impure hearts.’ Later, in Rome, husbands could divorce wives who went outside without a veil and could kill them for committing adultery. The historian Tacitus wrote that women were by nature cruel, and the humorist Juvenal thought that women were so low that ‘there is nothing a woman will not permit herself to do. Those customs and attitudes changed in Greece and Rome with the coming of Christianity.” [Marvin Olasky, “World Magazine,” July 19, 2003]

FOOLISHNESS:

The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits.

After a long life in the United States, Common Sense has died from heart failure. He is remembered for his selfless devotion to service in churches, schools, hospitals, homes, and businesses. Common Sense was credited with cultivating such valued principles as hard work, biblical standards, common courtesy, and the priority of God and family. A veteran of the Industrial Revolution, the Great Depression, and the Technological Revolution, Common Sense lived to see cultural and educational trends such as free sex, body piercing, moral relativism, revisionist history and legal abortion. Common Sense drastically declined from the ravages of Post-Modernism and while motorists tattooed their automobiles with “Darwin Fish” Common Sense drifted in and out of logic. He quietly passed away while State Colleges and Universities celebrated his absence. Upon his death Common Sense joined his parents, Mr. and Mrs. God-Fearer; his wife, Morality; his daughter, Chastity; and his son, Gentleman. Funeral arrangements were by Apathy and were closed due to lack of interest.

You know you have a problem when your dentist is Dr. Scholl!

Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.

Sign in a gas station: Coke -- 49 cents. Two for a dollar.

After interviewing a particularly short-spoken job candidate, I described the person to my boss as rather monosyllabic. My boss said, "Really? Where is Monosyllabia?" Thinking that he was just kidding, I played along and said that it was just south of Elbonia. He replied, "Oh, you mean over by Croatia?"

An actual tip from page 16 of the HP "Environmental, Health & Safety Handbook for Employees:" "Blink your eyelids periodically to lubricate your eyes."

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: Many deer were being hit by cars and he no longer wanted them to cross there.

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the individual behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

Police in Radnor, Pennsylvania, interrogated a suspect by placing a metal colander on his head and connecting it with wires to a photocopy machine. The message "He's lying" was placed in the copier, and police pressed the copy button each time they thought the suspect was telling a lie. Believing the "lie detector" was working, the suspect confessed.

There is a greater fool than these: "The fool has said in his heart, 'there is no God'" [Psalm 14:1]

There once was a man who took the daily train from New York to Connecticut every morning next to a man he had never seen. The other man had a box of paper clips on his lap, and every few seconds he threw one out the train window, never saying a word. That evening the commuter went to the same car, hoping to see the paper clip man. There he was, silently throwing paper clips out the window. The commuter started sitting next to this man every day. The man never said a word, he just kept throwing paper clips out the window. Finally, the commuter could stand it no longer. "Why in the world do you always throw paper clips out the window?" The man looked carefully about, debating whether he could be trusted. Finally he whispered, "It scares the elephants away!" The commuter held back a grin as he patiently explained, "But there are no elephants in Connecticut!" "Exactly," the man nodded vigorously, "see how well it works!"

A man attempting to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find an ill man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesman said that the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline and plugged his hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had. [True story received Sept. 1997]

A bank robber in the United States attempted to hold up a bank using a note that read "this is a stik-up." The teller informed him that bank policy required all robbers to sign for the money they are taking (including their address). He promptly signed his real name and included his current address.

A bank robber in Canada was arrested after heisting 6,000 dollars . . . police later informed him that the gun he had used was a rare collectors item worth \$100,000 dollars.

A couple of thieves attempted to break into a van parked along a city street during the night. After attempts to break-in by picking the lock failed, they left and returned with an axe and

broke a window . . . they were greeted by 7 undercover police officers inside during a stake-out.

A man burst into a gun store and attempted to rob it with a knife . . . he was immediately shot by the store's owner. [True Stories (taken from The Tonight Show on July 21, 1992)]

A woman who lost her husband after many years of marriage. Having no family and few friends she grieved alone in silence. Many months had passed. She could no longer stand the solitude. Her husband had a friend who happened to own a local pet store. A pet would help quell the loneliness and give her something she could care for, taking her mind off herself, she thought. So one Saturday afternoon she went to the store to look for a new companion.

She looked a puppies and kittens, even taking a peek in the reptile room at lizards and snakes. Then she happened into the aviary. That's it! she thought. A bird! A talking bird! That would be perfect.

The owner suggested a 3 year old Amazon parrot named "Danny Boy." "I real talker," he said. "And good natured, too. He never complains""

The woman purchased the bird and a cage. At last she had a companion she could talk to and who could even talk back! This was perfect. But there was a problem. Several days passed without the bird uttering so much as a "hello." Concerned, she dropped by the pet store. After relaying her concerns about her mute friend the owner asked her if she had purchased a mirror for the cage. "A mirror? Well, no. All I bought was the cage and the parrot" she told him. The owner replied, "That must be your problem. Danny Boy is probably not comfortable in his new surroundings. When he sees himself in the mirror he'll feel reassured and be talking in no time." The woman purchased a mirror for her parrot and put it in the cage.

A week passed and the bird still said nothing. Now she was really getting worried. "The parrot still isn't talking," she told the store's owner. "I'm really worried. All that money, the mirror--and still nothing." "Did you happen to get a ladder for the cage?" the store's owner asked. "A ladder? No. I didn't know I needed a ladder. That's supposed to help a parrot talk?" "I've seen it work before," the store owner answered. "Danny Boy may need more exercise. He'll climb up and down the ladder, he'll rest and admire himself in the mirror. He'll be talking before you know it."

So the woman bought the ladder and put into the cage next to the mirror. For a few days the parrot climbed up and down, but he seemed to tire of it and just sat on his perch saying nothing.

She again registered her complaint to the store owner: "So far," she said, "I've purchased a cage, a mirror, a ladder, and a parrot that's supposed to talk and doesn't. I'm getting very frustrated." "You mean you didn't buy a swing?" he asked. "A swing? No. I have a cage, a mirror, and a ladder--now you say he needs a swing, too?" The store owner nodded his head and replied, "Yes, a swing is indispensable. Parrots love to talk when they are happily perched on a swing."

The woman bought the swing. She attached it to the top of the cage near the ladder and coaxed the parrot up the ladder and onto it. He rocked back and forth for a while, but seemed to tire quickly -- and all this without a word.

For the last time the woman returned to the store. This time she was carrying a shoe box. "How's Danny Boy? Talking up a storm?" the man asked. "As a matter of fact, no," she replied. Shoving the box in his direction she removed the lid to reveal its contents: Danny Boy, dead as a door nail.

"I can't believe it," said the owner. "And Danny Boy never so much as uttered a single word?" "Actually, he said seven," the woman replied. As he lay on the bottom of the cage dying, he said *"Don't they sell birdseed at that store?"*

The following are questions actually asked of witnesses by attorneys during trials, and in certain cases, the responses given by insightful witnesses.

1. "Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?"
2. "The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?"
3. "Were you present when your picture was taken?"
4. "Were you alone or by yourself?"
5. "Was it you or your younger brother who was killed in the war?"
6. "Did he kill you?"
7. "How far apart were the vehicles at the time of the collision?"
8. "You were there until the time you left, is that true?"
9. "How many times have you committed suicide?"

Q: "She had three children, right?"

A: "Yes"

Q: "How many were boys?"

A: "None"

Q: "Were there any girls?"

Q: "You say the stairs went down to the basement?"

A: "Yes"

Q: "And these stairs, did they go up also?"

Q: "Mr. Slatery, you went on a rather elaborate honeymoon, didn't you?"

A: "I went to Europe, sir."

Q: "And you took your new wife?"

Q: "How was your first marriage terminated?"

A: "By death"

Q: "And by whose death was it terminated?"

Q: "Can you describe the individual?"

A: "He was about medium height and had a beard"

Q: "Was this a male or a female?"

Q: "Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition which was sent to your attorney?"

A: "No, this is how I dress when I go to work"

Q: "Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?"

A: "All my autopsies are performed on dead people"

Q: "All your responses must be oral, okay?" What school did you go to?"

A: "Oral"

Q: "You were shot in the fracas?"

A: "No, I was shot midway between the fracas and the navel"

Q: "Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?"

A: "No"

Q: "Did you check for blood pressure?"

A: "No"

Q: "Did you check for breathing?"

A: "No"

Q: "So, then, it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?"

A: "No"

Q: "How can you be sure, Doctor?"

A: "Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar"

Q: "But could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?"

A: "It is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere"

FORGIVENESS & RECONCILIATION: [*God to Man*; *Man to Man*]

God to Man

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a joyful Christian you ought to be! How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? Luther said, "Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven; if thou hast but forgiven me, smite as hard as thou wilt"; and in a similar spirit you may say, "Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, persecution, what thou wilt, thou hast forgiven me, and my soul is glad." (Spurgeon)

An anonymous Puritan years ago wrote this as he pondered, at least in part, 1 Peter 2:24:

"O Lord, No day of my life has passed that has not proved me guilty in Your sight. Prayers have been uttered from a prayerless heart; Praise has been often praiseless [noise]. My best services are filthy rags. Blessed Jesus, let me find a [shelter] in Your appeasing wounds. Though my sins rise to heaven, Your merits soar above them; Though unrighteousness weights me down to hell, Your righteousness exalts me to Your throne. All things in me call for my rejection, All things in You plead my acceptance. I appeal from the throne of perfect justice to Your throne of perfect grace. Grant me to hear Your voice assuring me: that by Your stripes I am healed, that You were bruised for my iniquities, that You have been made sin for me that I might be

righteous in You, that my grievous sins, my manifold sins, are all forgiven, buried in the ocean of Your concealing blood.

I am guilty, but pardoned; lost, but saved; wandering, but found; sinning, but cleansed. Give me perpetual broken-heartedness. Keep me always clinging to Your cross. Flood me every moment with descending grace, Open to me the springs of divine knowledge, sparkling like crystal flowing clear and unsullied through my wilderness of life." [cited in Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise* 260]

John MacArthur tells the true story:

"When I was flying down to El Paso TX (to speak at a conference there) . . . I was going through my Bible preparing some thoughts and I was sitting right next to a guy who was obviously an Arab. And He kept looking over, and looking at my Bible, and finally he got up his courage and he said to me, "Excuse me, Sir, may I ask you a question. I said, "Sure." He said, "I see you have a Bible. I am new in America," and, he said, "I am very confused about American religion. Now, I'm from Iraq where everybody in my country is Muslim. But you have so many religions." And, he said, "I just really have one question" (this is exactly what he said), "Could you tell me the difference between a Catholic, a Protestant and a Baptist?" That was his question! So, I told him--a little bit about Catholicism and salvation by works mingled with faith and grace, and why there was a Reformation and how Protestantism came into existence and that Baptists fitted into that latter category. And I said, "Now that you have asked me a question, can I ask you a question?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You're a Muslim?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You're committed to that?" "Yes." I said, "Well, do Muslims have sins?" "Oh many, many sins. We have so many sins I don't even know all the sins." I said, "Well, let me ask you another question. Do you do those sins? Do you commit those sins?" "All the time," he said. "I commit the sins all the time." I said, "Well, does it bother you?" "It bothers me. In fact, I'm flying to El Paso to do some sins." I said, "You are?!" He said, "Yes. I met this girl and we will do some sins." I said, "How does God feel about this?" "Oh, it's very bad," he said. "Very bad." I said, "Do you have a hell in Islam?" "Yes." I said, "Aren't you a little afraid?" He said, "I hope the God will forgive me." I said, "On the basis of what? Why should He do that? Are you special? You are willfully sinning. You're telling me you're going there to sin. Why would He forgive you?" He said, "Well, no reason, I just hope." I said, "Well" (and I didn't think of how he would hear this, but I said it in familiar language), "Well, I know Him personally, and He won't." This is true! You know, I was emphasizing the back half of that statement and he couldn't get past the front half! He looked at me and he said, "You know the God personally?!" (You know, what are you doing in coach? On Southwest--without even assigned seats!) "What do you mean you know God personally? Who are you?" I said, "I do know Him personally. And He will not forgive your sins; He is too holy to overlook your iniquities." And I said, "You have reason to be concerned. I would like to explain to you about Christianity." And I launched into the gospel. And his mind just opened up to grasp the essence of what it is Christians believe. . . . Well, our conversation went on a little longer (it's a fairly long flight down there). And I got him plugged into a church when he came back and when I got his address I was able to send him some tapes. I haven't heard from him, but I

know I messed up his week in El Paso." [cited in cassette message "The Theology of Faith" (part 3) delivered at Scottsdale Bible Church on 4/13/97]

I once heard a proverbial story about a young boy and his sister who went to stay with their grandparents on their farm. The boy brought along his slingshot to play with. He played in the woods with it, but decided that he was a pretty bad aim and after a while he headed back to the farm for dinner.

As he was walking back he saw his Grandmother's little pet lamb. Out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly. Not really meaning to, the rock hit the lamb leaving it fatally wounded. The boy was shocked and grieved. In a panic, he hid the dead lamb out in the woods, only to see his sister watching. She had seen it all, but said nothing. Later she told her brother that she would tell on him if he didn't do whatever she asked him to do.

After lunch the next day Grandma said to the boy's sister, "Let's wash the dishes." But she said, "Grandma, my brother told me he wanted to help in the kitchen. Then she whispered to him, "Remember the lamb?"

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but our granddaughter promised to help with supper." The boy's sister just smiled and said, "Well, that's all right because my brother told me he wanted to help. She whispered again, "Remember the lamb?"

On it went throughout the week. But after several days of doing both his chores and his sister's, the young boy couldn't stand it any longer. He came to his Grandmother and confessed the he had killed the lamb.

She knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing. But because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let your sister make a slave of you. . . ."

Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done--and you hear the whispers reminding you of your guilt--whatever it is, you need to know that God was standing at the window and He sees everything. He sees your entire life. And if you are in Christ you have been forgiven. Don't allow that which is in your past, that which you have repented of, to make a slave out of you.

Man to Man

On July 25, 1993, gunmen burst into St. James Anglican Church in Cape Town, South Africa, and opened fire into the congregation with automatic weapons, lobbing two hand grenades in among the people as well. The carnage was horrendous. One member of the congregation returned to the church, having rushed his dying wife to the hospital, to tell his three children of her death. As he stood in the church building holding these children who had just received the news, a television camera was pointed in their direction, and the journalist asked whether he had anything to say. The broadcast was aired live all over South Africa. Bishop Frank Retief, senior pastor of that church, recounts what happened next:

Looking into the face of the entire nation of South Africa, he said with tears in his eyes, "I do not know who you are. And I don't know why you have done this. But you need to know that we are Christians, and for Christ's sake I forgive you and I extend the hand of reconciliation to you and I appeal to you to give yourselves up and to become Christians yourself." [Cited in *Crying Out For Vindication: The Gospel According to Job*]

Some words are very difficult to pronounce. What is the hardest word to say in the English language? The hardest word to say is "Sorry."

A member of the KKK, Grand Dragon Larry Trapp of Lincoln, NE made headlines in 1992 when he renounced his hatred, tore down his Nazi flags, and destroyed his many boxes of propaganda. As Kathryn Waterson recounts in the book *Not By the Sword*, Trapp had been won over by the love of a Jewish Cantor and his family. Though Trapp had sent them literature mocking "big-nosed Jews" and denying the holocaust, though he had threatened violence in phone calls to their home, though he had targeted their synagogue for bombing, the cantor's family consistently responded with love and compassion. Diabetic since childhood, Trapp was confined to a wheelchair and rapidly going blind. The Jewish family invited Trapp into their home to care for him. "I couldn't help but love them back" he later said. He spent the last years of his life seeking forgiveness from those he had spent so much of his life trying to destroy. [From Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Audio book, tape 1 side 2, 1997]

A certain immigrant rabbi said: "Before coming to America I had to forgive Adolf Hitler. I did not want to bring Hitler inside of me to my new country."

"The first, and often the only person to be healed by forgiveness is the person who does the forgiveness. When we can forgive we set a prisoner free and then discover that the person set free was us. The only thing harder than forgiveness is the alternative." [Lewis B. Smedes, cited in Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Audio book, tape 1 side 2, 1997]

When somebody is a grouch or a killjoy; someone that loves to rain on someone else's parade, what do we call him? -- Especially at Christmastime? A Scrooge, right. Have you ever read the story or seen the movie "A Christmas Carol?" In the end Scrooge repents. Everyone forgives him. Everyone in the story that is. We don't. I find that interesting.

If I had an enemy whom I wanted to punish, I would teach him to be unforgiving. It has truly been said, the most miserable person in the world is one who will not forgive.

"The man who is truly forgiven and knows it, is a man who forgives." [D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, cited in *Prokope Newsletter*, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, April-June 1998]

"Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it; it is the petition for forgiveness." [William Temple, cited in *Prokope Newsletter*, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, April-June 1998]

The Puritan Thomas Manton said: "There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves, for they know how gently God hath dealt with them." [cited in MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7*, 395]

Charles H. Spurgeon had a pastor-friend, Dr. Newman Hall, who wrote a book entitled, *Come to Jesus*. Another preacher published an article in which he ridiculed Hall, who patiently endured the criticisms. However, when the derogatory article gained in popularity, Hall sat down and wrote a letter of protest. His answer was full of retaliatory invectives that outdid anything in the article which had attacked him. Before mailing the letter, Hall took it to Spurgeon for his opinion.

Spurgeon read it carefully, then, handing it back, asserted it was excellent and that the writer of the article deserved it all. "But," he added, "it just lacks one thing." After a pause Spurgeon continued, "underneath your signature you ought to write the words, 'Author of *Come to Jesus*.'" The two godly men looked at each other for a few minutes. Then Hall tore the letter to shreds. [cited by Swindoll in *Laugh Again*, 186-87]

I remember a true account I heard from a pastor about a very well-known seminary professor who attended his church. The seminary professor became embroiled in a very heated debate with one of the church leaders over, I believe, some sort of political situation. The animosity between the two men was so prominent that it was even reported by some of the local newspapers. Soon afterward, during a Lord's Supper service, the church leader stood up and apologized to the man he was at odds with--extending his hand to him and asking his forgiveness. The seminary professor refused. [TAB]

"Dear Abby: A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from high school. It was the custom in that affluent neighborhood for the parents to give the graduate an automobile. 'Bill' and his father had spent months looking at cars, and the week before graduation, they found the perfect car. On the eve of his graduation, his father handed him a gift-wrapped Bible. Bill was so angry that he threw the Bible down and stormed out of the house. He and his father never saw each other again. It was the news of his father's death that brought Bill home again. As he sat one night going through his father's possessions that he was to inherit, he came across the Bible his father had given him. He brushed away the dust and opened it to find a cashier's check, dated the day of his graduation--in the exact amount of the car they had chosen together." [cited in the *Arizona Republic*, "Dear Abby" column, 1994]

Prince Bismark was once asked by Count Enzenberg to write something in his album. The page on which he was to write contained the autographs of Guizot and Thiers. Guizot had written, "I have learned in my long life two rules of prudence. The first is, to forgive much; the second is, never to forget." Under this Thiers had written, "A little forgetting would not detract from the sincerity of the forgiveness." Bismark then added, "As for me, I have learned to forget much and ask to be forgiven much." [adapted from *Family Time With God*, a devotional booklet published by Partners in Ministry, Wilmington, DE, June 4, 1996]

A tragic song about a father and son who never reconciled:

Every generation, blames the one before; And all of their frustrations, come beating on your door.

I know that I'm a prisoner, to all my father held so dear, I know that I'm a hostage, to all his hopes and fears; I just wish I could have told him, in the living years.

Crumpled bits of paper, filled with imperfect thought; Stilted conversations, I'm afraid that's all we've got.

You say you just don't see it, He says it's perfect sense; You just can't get agreement, in this perfect tense; We all talk a different language, talking in defense.

Say it loud, say it clear, you can listen as well as you hear; It's too late when we die, to admit we don't see eye to eye.

So we open up a quarrel, between the present and the past; We only sacrificed the future, it's the bitterness that lasts.

So don't yield to the fortunes, you sometimes see as fate; It may have a new perspective, on a different day; And if you don't give up, and don't give in, you may just be OK.

Say it loud, say it clear, you can listen as well as you hear; Its too late when we die, to admit we don't see eye to eye.

I wasn't there that morning, when my father passed away; I didn't get to tell him, all the things I had to say; I think I caught his spirit, later that same year, I'm sure I heard his echo, in my baby's new born tears; I just wish I could have told him, in the living years. ("The Living Years" by Mike and the Mechanics; copyright 1988, Atlantic Recording Corporation)

FREE-WILL:

Adam was the only man who ever had free will in the usual sense of the term. Augustine asked the question, moreover: "Is God himself in truth to be denied free will because he cannot sin?" [Gordon Clark, *God and Evil*]

"Let us assume that man's will is free; let us assume that these questions have been answered in the affirmative; it would still remain to be shown that free will solves the problem of evil. This then is the immediate inquiry. Is the theory of free will, even if true, a satisfactory explanation of evil in a world created by God? Reasons, compelling reasons, will now be given for a negative answer. Even if men were as able to choose good as evil, even if a sinner could choose Christ as easily as he could reject him, it would be totally irrelevant to the fundamental problem. Free will was put forward to relieve God of responsibility for sin. But this it does not do."

Clark gives an illustration of a lifeguard on a beach:

"Picture a lifeguard on a beach who watches as a boy is taken under by a strong undercurrent. The boy struggles violently (a picture of man's enslavement to sin). The

lifeguard has the ability to rescue the boy and he may shout some words of advice, telling the boy to exercise his free will and swim to shore. But the boy drowns as the guard watches from shore. Would the Arminian conclude that the lifeguard has escaped culpability? This illustration shows that permission of evil does not relieve the lifeguard from responsibility. This is even more evident when we consider that the lifeguard (in this case, God) created the beach and the boy. An omnipotent lifeguard could have prevented the boy from entering the beach, or He could have prevented the undertow from occurring, or he could have made the boy a better swimmer, or He could have simply rescued him directly."

"Therefore, the idea of permission has no intelligible meaning."

"It is quite within the range of possibility for a lifeguard to permit a man to drown. This permission, however, depends on the fact that the ocean's undertow is beyond the guard's control. If the guard had some giant suction device which he operated so as to engulf the boy, one would call it murder, not permission. The idea of permission is possible only where there is an independent force, either the boy's force or the ocean's force. But this is not the situation in the case of God and the universe. Nothing in the universe can be independent of the omnipotent Creator, for in him we live and move and have our being. Therefore, the idea of permission makes no sense when applied to God." [Gordon Clark, *God and Evil*, pages 10, 16-17]

When Luther replied to Erasmus' work on free will, he said: "your book...struck me as so worthless and poor that my heart went out to you for having defiled your lovely, brilliant flow of language with such vile stuff. I thought it outrageous to convey material of so low a quality in the trappings of such rare eloquence; it is like using gold or silver dishes to carry garden rubbish or dung."

According to Arminianism, grace has the name, but free-will has the game. [Augustus Toplady]

Evil and the suffering which it brings upon us all are the consequences of mankind's exercise of the power of choice. Thus evil and suffering could be eliminated by preventing free choice. For God to do so, however, as we have already noted, would destroy mankind totally. God has a better solution - one that provides salvation while preserving free choice and thus the love which such choice alone makes possible.

And here we must honestly confront strict Calvinism's claim that Christ did not die for all, that He did not pay for the sins of all, and that man can choose only evil and is unable to repent and trust Christ without God extending irresistible grace to him. If that is the case, then even though evil may not be attributed to God, it is God who prevents His salvation from reaching all. Those in hell are there, according to strict Calvinism, 'not because they rejected Christ, for that is all they could do. They are there because God did not love them enough to extend the irresistible grace that would cause them to choose Christ. I can agree with the atheist that such a God is not loving and good. Nor is this the God of the Bible, but the invention of man. [Dave Hunt, cited in quotations, past and current newsletter]

Apart from God's quickening power, darkness is what man, by his "free choice," loves. (John 3:19, 20; Romans 3:10-18). Those in hell are there because of their sinfulness. Not just

because God has "prevented" His salvation from reaching all. As for God not being good. it would truly not be good of God to send anyone to eternal punishment, if Christ has paid the price for all of their sins. Agrees with the atheist? Hmmm, if the atheist were to be quickened by God's irresistible grace, said atheist would affirm that such a God is indeed loving and good. As well as merciful and gracious. The invention of man? Now all we have to do is figure out how man came up with such a God exalting concept of salvation (i.e., salvation being all of His doing, from start to finish). Ye Editor

If conversion be a quickening of one that is dead in sin, then fallen man hath no freewill to good. This is proved from Eph. 2:1: "You hath He quickened who were dead" etc. He doth not say half dead. as the man was that fell among thieves (Luke 10:30); but wholly dead, as to spiritual life. There is no manner of good in us (Rom. 7:18). And "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think" a good thought till Christ quickens us (2 Cor. 3:5). "Without Him we can do nothing" (John 15:5). From Him is our fruit found (Hos. 14:8); both the bud of good desires, the blossom of good purposes, and the fruit of good actions. Aaron's rod (a dry stick without a root) is a fit emblem; it budded, blossomed, and brought forth almonds; this was not done by any inward principle or power of nature, but it was solely and wholly the work of God. So Ezekiel's dry bones were made to live; nothing of that life was from themselves, but all from God. Thus it is in this spiritual life; we can contribute nothing whereby to dispose ourselves to will that which is truly good; we cannot so much as call Christ Lord, but by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). If there be no life, but through union with Christ, then till we be engrafted into that blessed and bleeding vine we cannot bring forth fruit unto God. And it is not any natural power or principle in us that can engraft us into Christ, for faith is the engrafting grace, and that is "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), the grace whereby the just live (Hab. 2:4), and whereby Christ dwells in our hearts (Eph.3:17). Till then we are dead, and have no freewill to good. [Christopher Ness]

"It is not irreligious, idle, or superfluous, but in the highest degree wholesome and necessary, for a Christian to know whether or not his will has anything to do in matters pertaining to salvation. Indeed, let me tell you, this is the hinge on which our discussion turns, the crucial issue between us; our aim is, simply, to investigate what ability "free will" has, in what respect it is the subject of Divine action and how it stands related to the grace of God. If we know nothing of these things, we shall know nothing whatsoever of Christianity, and shall be in worse case than any people on earth! He who dissents from that statement should acknowledge that he is no Christian; and he who ridicules or derides it should realize that he is the Christian's chief foe" [Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will]

"A man's free will cannot cure him even of the tooth ache, or a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in its power to cure his soul." [Augustus Toplady]

"The greatest judgment which God Himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is, to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free will." [Augustus Toplady]

"Look where you will, and you will generally find that free-willers are very free livers." [Augustus Toplady]

"I will go as far as Martin Luther, in that strong assertion of his, where he says, 'If any man doth ascribe of salvation, even the very least, to the free will of man, he knoweth nothing of

grace, and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ aright.' It may seem a harsh sentiment; but he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God, for that is one of the first principles taught us when God begins with us, that we have neither will nor power, but that He gives both; that he is 'Alpha and Omega' in the salvation of men." [Charles Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 1, p. 395, Free Will A Slave (1855)]

"Let all the 'free-will' in the world do all it can with all its strength; it will never give rise to a single instance of ability to avoid being hardened if God does not give the Spirit, or of meriting mercy if it is left to its own strength." [Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, p. 202]

"The Papists... hold that man, through his own free will, returns to God; and on this point is our greatest contest with them at this day." - John Calvin, Commentary on Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:19)"There is no such a thing as preaching Christ and him crucified unless you preach what is now-a-days called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else." [Charles Spurgeon, The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 1 (1856)]

"Not free-will but self-will would more appropriately describe man's condition since the fall." [Lorraine Boettner]

FRIENDSHIP:

"Frankly, the deepest pain you'll ever know and the deepest pain I'll ever know is not physical. It's not material. It doesn't have to do with our physical body and it doesn't have to do with our material or economic or circumstantial life patterns. The greatest pain we will ever know is relational. It is the potential of people to devastate us, to destroy us, to abuse us. And apart from internal personal guilt which has to be the greatest pain but that is personal and internal, the most serious pain we suffer in the world comes from unfulfilled and devastated relationships. No disease is as painful as rejection. No disease is as painful as false accusation. No disease is as painful as misrepresentation, betrayal [and] hatred." [John MacArthur, *The Sufficiency of God's Grace*, gty.org/resources/sermons/80-72/The-Sufficiency-of-Gods-Grace]

Real friends are those who, when you feel you've made a fool of yourself, don't feel you've done a permanent job.

If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day, so I never have to live without you." -Winnie the Pooh

"True friendship is like sound health; the value of it is seldom known until it be lost." - Charles Caleb Colton

"A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out."

"Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me and be my friend." -Albert Camus

"Strangers are just friends waiting to happen."

"Friends are the Bacon Bits in the Salad Bowl of Life."

"Friendship is one mind in two bodies." - -Mencius

"Friends are God's way of taking care of us."

"If all my friends were to jump off a bridge, I wouldn't jump with them, I'd be at the bottom to catch them."

"Everyone hears what you say. Friends listen to what you say. Best friends listen to what you don't say."

"We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere" - Tim McGraw

FRUSTRATION:

One definition of insanity is: "to do the same thing in exactly the same way over and over again while each time expecting to get a different result."

GAMBLING:

The National Council on Problem Gambling has issued the following facts related to gambling: 1) There are roughly 9 million problem gamblers in the U.S., 67% of them are men. 2) The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that 40 billion dollars per year is lost to business and industry because of compulsive gambling. 3) 90% of all people who gamble lose. 4) Most chronic gamblers will not admit that they have a problem. 5) For every compulsive gambler there are at least 12 other persons who are adversely affected by the gambler's activities. 6) 15% of wives of compulsive gamblers are battered. 7) More than 1/3 of high school and college students polled nationwide gambled before age 11. By age 15, more than 80% had placed bets. [Freedom's Alert, 2004]

"Legalized casino gambling encourages people to pin their hopes on games of chance that are stacked against them. Those who are determined to gamble will find some way to do so, but why lend government's imprimatur to predators' efforts to exploit people who can least afford to bear the inevitable losses?" [Cornell University economist Prof. Robert Frank, cited in Freedom's Alert Newsletter, Vol. 30, Issue 1 (March 2012)]

In an opinion survey released in January 2012, a majority of the New York economists who responded view casinos as regressive.

- A majority (59%) of those responding agreed with the statement that "a respectable body of economic thought holds that casinos are economically regressive." Only 19% disagreed with the statement, while another 22% said they were unsure.
- An even higher percentage (68%) of economists who responded said that they themselves believe that casinos are economically regressive.

"Casino gambling is not just economically regressive, it is sociologically destructive to the community," stated another survey respondent, Union College economist Prof. Mary O'Keefe.

Ample evidence shows that casino gambling is a failed economic policy. Scholarship suggests that casinos:

- have no long-term positive impact on statewide economic growth;
- depend disproportionately on lower-income people for their profits and thus impose on behalf of government a highly regressive and unfair tax;
- have employees, but the majority of jobs in casinos are low-wage and low-skill positions;
- located within a short driving distance of residents' household lead to higher incidences of problem and pathological gambling in nearby communities;
- cause a "leakage" of dollars from other taxable sectors, such as restaurants, bars, and hospitality venues, and thus may reduce revenues from sales and excise taxes;
- are unstable sources of revenue because they are highly sensitive to business cycles;
- and casino revenues are more expensive to administer than other kinds of taxes, in part due to high fixed costs, regulatory requirements and infrastructure maintenance. [Cited in Freedom's Alert Newsletter, Vol. 30, Issue 1 (March 2012)]

GOD: [Man's need; Man's understanding of; Nature and Attributes of; Foreknowledge; Providence of; Sense of humor; Sovereignty of; Theodicy; Triunity; Will of; Work in history; Wrath & judgment of]

Man's Need

Historian Will Durant once said: "The greatest question of our time is not communism vs. individualism; it is not Europe vs. America; it is not even the East vs. the West. It is whether man can bear to live without God."

Man's Understanding of

John Calvin wrote on the first page of his monumental theological work The Institutes: "Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God."

Dr. Hugh Ross answering the question, "Who created God?" - "[I]f explaining the natural realm's ability to support life, especially human life, requires extreme levels of complexity and design, then would not the cause of all this complexity and design need a cause that is even greater than Him? As Richard Dawkins puts it, the problem with Christianity is accounting for who "designed the Designer?"

The question of who created God was the heart of my debate with Lewis Wolpert at Imperial College in London. (You can listen to the debate here). In a nutshell, I explained that, today, physicists across the philosophical spectrum acknowledge that the space-time theorems are unassailable. If the universe contains mass and if general relativity reliably describes the movements of bodies in the universe, the theorems are valid. Those theorems establish that

space and time had a beginning at the origin of the universe. They imply that the causal agent of the universe is not subject to space and time—thus, that agent can create space-time dimensions at will.

Of course, any entity—such as the universe and everything subject to the laws and dimensions of the universe—that is constrained to a single dimension of time, where time cannot be stopped or reversed, must have a beginning. Ultimately, such entities must be traceable back to a creation event. However, an entity not constrained by time need not have been created.

The Bible declares in multiple passages that God created time (e.g., John 1:3; Colossians 1:16–17). Psalm 90 adds that God can arbitrarily compress or expand time as we know it. In my book *Beyond the Cosmos* (3rd edition), I include diagrams illustrating that this compression and expansion of time is only possible for beings with access to the equivalent of at least two dimensions of time. Scripture also declares that God has no beginning, no ending, and is not created (e.g., Psalm 90:2; Hebrews 7:3). These declarations could be true only of a Being who created time, rather than one who is subject to time.

Philosophers responding to Dawkins have pointed out that he made a category error. God is in a different category than the universe or humans in that He is not subject to the physical laws of the universe or to its space-time dimensionality." [http://www.reasons.org/articles/q-a-who-created-god]

"In thinking of ourselves what can only be thought of God, we are then unable to think of Him more highly than we think of ourselves. In being to ourselves what God ought to be to us, He is no more to us than we are to ourselves." [Karl Barth, cited by David Wells, *The Gospel Alternative*, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98, tape 3, side 1]

"God is like the sun. You cannot look at it. But without it you cannot look at anything else." (G.K. Chesterson)

After preaching a sermon on the redemption offered by Christ and the judgement of God for the unbeliever, Dr. James Kennedy was approached by a woman who was obviously upset. "My God would never do that," she declared, referring to the judgement. "Yes ma'am," Dr. Kennedy replied. "Your God would never do that because He is a figment of your imagination." [From "The Voice of the Martyrs" Tom White, May 2003, p. 2]

"When we speak of knowing God, it must be understood with reference to man's limited powers of comprehension. God, as He really is, is far beyond man's imaginations, let alone his understanding. God has revealed only so much of Himself as our minds can conceive and the weakness of our nature can bear." [John Milton - 1608-1674]

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. For this reason, the gravest question before the church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say

or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like." [A.W. Tozer *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 9.]

"The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the word, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, 13]

"Would you lose your sorrow? Would you drown your cares? Then go, plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in his immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief, so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, 14]

In a certain Catholic School the nun who was leading class placed a bowl of candy on a table for the kids and along with the bowl a sign that read, "only one per student, remember: God is watching!" On the other side of the room there was a plate of cookies. Next to the plate a student placed a sign that read: "Take all you want. God's is watching the candy." That illustrates what some people's view of God is like - even some theologians!

Nature and Attributes of

"[The genuine believer] cannot love a sinner as a sinner: "In whose eyes a vile person is condemned." He may love him as a creature; he may love his soul, or he may love him under some relation that he stands in to him. Thus, God loves the damned spirits as they are His creatures; but, as fallen angels, He hates them with an infinite hatred." [Puritan Matthew Mead, *The Almost Christian Discovered*, 75]

"One evangelical cliché has it that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. There is a small element of truth in these words: God has nothing but hate for the sin, but it would be wrong to conclude that God has nothing but love for the sinner. A difference must be maintained between God's view of sin and his view of the sinner. Nevertheless the cliché . . . is false on the face of it and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty psalms alone, we are told that God hates the sinner, his wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible, the wrath of God rests both on sin (Rom. 1:18ff.) and on the sinner (John 3:36).

Our problem, in part, is that in human experience wrath and love normally abide in mutually exclusive compartments. Love drives wrath out, or wrath drives love out. We come closest to bringing them together, perhaps, in our responses to a wayward act by one of our children, but normally we do not think that a wrathful person is loving.

But this is not the way it is with God. God's wrath is not an implacable, blind rage. However emotional it may be, it is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against his holiness. But his love . . . wells up amidst his perfections and is not generated by the loveliness of the loved. Thus there is nothing intrinsically impossible about wrath and love being directed toward the same individual or people at the same time. God in his perfections must be wrathful against his rebel image-bearers, for they have offended him; God in his

perfections must be loving toward his rebel image-bearers, for he is that kind of God." [D.A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Crossway, 2000), p. 68-69.]

"Yet I am convinced from Scripture that God's hatred toward the wicked is not a hatred undiluted by compassion, mercy, or love. We know from human experience that love and hatred are not mutually exclusive. It is not the least bit unusual to have concurrent feelings of love and hatred directed at the same person. We often speak of people who have love-hate relationships. There is no reason to deny that in an infinitely purer and more noble sense, God's hatred toward the wicked is accompanied by a sincere, compassionate love for them as well. The fact that God will send to eternal hell all sinners who persist in sin and unbelief proves His hatred toward them. On the other hand, the fact that God promises to forgive and bring into His eternal glory all who trust Christ as Savior-and even pleads with sinners to repent-proves His love toward them."

"There's no reason to wonder how God can love people whom He ultimately condemns, because you simply conclude that whoever He condemns He hates. [Some other Calvinists feel] that the non-elect are people whom God never loved in any sense. People who hold this view are quick to remind that God is angry with the wicked (Ps. 7:11); that He loved Jacob but hated Esau (Rom 9:13); and that He hates those who practice wickedness (Prov. 6:16-19). They conclude that such hatred and genuine love are mutually exclusive. Therefore according to this view, the love of God is limited to the elect alone. That view doesn't do justice to Scripture, either. It restricts God's love to a remnant, and pictures Him hating the vast majority of humanity. In terms of sheer numbers, it suggests that God's hatred for humanity overwhelms His love. That is not consistent with the God of Scripture, who is "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Exod. 34:6). It doesn't seem befitting for the One whom Scripture describes as "a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness" (Neh. 9:17). And it doesn't seem consistent with the truth of Psalm 145:8-9: "The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (emphasis added).

And what about "God so loved the world" (Jn. 3:16)? I realize that there are some good commentators who have tried to limit the meaning of the word "world" in this verse to the elect alone. As noted in chapter 1, however, that view seems to run contrary to the whole thrust of the passage. John Calvin correctly saw this verse as a statement that "the Father loves the human race." In fact, the whole point of verse 17 is to assert that Christ's advent was a search-and-rescue mission, not a crusade for judgment: "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him" (v. 17). The point is that God's primary purpose in sending Christ was born out of love, not a design to condemn. Christ's purpose in coming was to save, not to destroy. Inevitably, those who want to limit the meaning of "world" in verse 16 will suggest that "world" in verse 17 cannot include every individual in the world, unless this passage is teaching a form of universalism. The verse says Christ came so that the world might be saved through Him. Obviously not every individual in the world is saved. Therefore, they suggest, "world" in both verses must be limited to the elect alone, and the verse can only mean, "God so loved the elect." But "world" in this context seems clearly to speak of humanity in general. If we try to make the term mean either "every individual" or "the elect alone," the passage simply makes no sense. The word "world" here is a synonym for the human race. Humanity in

general is the object of divine love. And verse 17 simply means that Christ came to redeem this fallen race-not every individual, but humanity as a race. Titus 3:4 also speaks of God's love in these very terms: "The kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared" (emphasis added). The whole sweep of these texts seems to be saying that in a broad sense God's love is set on the whole human race, not just the remnant of elect individuals. Indeed, to make good sense of this passage, we must interpret the expression "world" in verses 16 and 17 as broadly as we understand the same word in verse 19: "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil." Clearly the word "world" has a universal and corporate aspect that envelops more than just the elect alone. God's love is for the world in general, the human race, all humanity." ["The God Who Loves" by John MacArthur]

An article in National Geographic several years ago painted an incredible picture of God's wings. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree.

Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked the bird over with a stick. Upon doing so, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had singed her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

Psalm 91:4 - He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

"The idea of a being who interferes with the world is absolutely impossible... A God who rewards and punishes is unthinkable because man acts in accordance with an inner and outer necessity, and would, in the eyes of God, be as little responsible as an inanimate object for the movements it makes." (Albert Einstein. Cited in [Archetypes of Wisdom](#))

John Piper, pondering a 4th of July fireworks show:

For fifteen minutes we were impressed and delighted by the bigness, beauty, and power of man-made light. . . . It gave us a sense of wonder. About ten minutes into the display, . . . I suddenly noticed a white light behind the trees to the southwest. What's that? I thought. A second later I could tell it was the moon. It was very large and looked full. It was politely waiting its turn. The moon was in no hurry to be noticed. It had been there before (Adam, Abraham, and Jesus looked on this same moon); and it would be there again when all the glitz was gone. It was quietly rising at its own pace, irresistibly and without human help. Yet hardly anyone was noticing. So it is with the glory of God and the glitz of sin. We are more amazed at sin, and we ignore the glory of God. This is truly amazing. The moon rises about 240,000 miles above the earth, which means it soars about 500,000 times higher than the highest fireworks. . . . The moon is 2160 miles in diameter (from San Francisco to Cleveland). . . . It has mountain ranges with peaks as high as Mount Everest. . . . The power of the moon is unimaginable. Nothing

on earth that man has ever made can compare. Every day the moon takes the oceans of the earth and lifts them quietly - millions upon millions upon millions of tons of water quietly and irresistibly lifted into the air. . . . But who sees the moon? Who stands in awe of the moon? Who looks at the moon on Independence Night when there are man-made fireworks to watch? Who notices the really great things in life? No wonder we are oblivious to the glory of God when there are such clear parables of our blindness built into everyday experience. . . . Read your emotional barometer. Do the amazements and delights of your life correspond to God's reality? Or do they rise and fall on the passing waves of human glitz? [John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life*, Multnomah, 1997, p. 235-36.]

“The word ‘holy’ is the little boat in which we reap the world’s end in the ocean of language. The possibilities of language to describe God come to an end - they spill over into a vast void of silence. Holiness carries us to the brink, and from there on all our experience of God is wordless. . . . Every time you try to define the word ‘holy,’ you simply wind up by saying this, ‘God is holy means, God is God.’ . . . God is one of a kind, *sui juneris*, in a class by Himself, and in that sense he is utterly holy, separate. . . . God is glorious! The glory of God, very simply, is the manifestation of His holiness. God’s holiness is His incomparable perfection in Himself, His glory is the display of that Holiness for His creatures and the members of the Trinity to behold. God is glorious means that God has gone public with his Holiness. His glory is the open revelation of His secret holiness (Lev. 10:3). When God displays holiness what we see is glory, because His glory is the visible manifestation of His holiness and his holiness is the invisible essence of His glory. Holiness is concealed glory. Glory is revealed holiness.” [John Piper, “Going Hard After the Holy God,” *Cassette Message on Philippians 3:2-16*, Jan. 8, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

In a certain Catholic School the nun who was leading class placed a bowl of candy on a table for the kids and along with the bowl a sign that read, “only one per student, remember: God is watching!” On the other side of the room there was a plate of cookies. Next to the plate a student placed a sign that read: “Take all you want. God’s is watching the candy.” That illustrates what some people’s view of God is like - even some theologians!

Foreknowledge

"But God's knowledge is a fixed quantity, because it is infinite. He knows everything from everlasting to everlasting and at each instant . . . He knew before it came to pass that Christ would be crucified upon Calvary. When that event occurred, it made no change in his knowledge. He was not better informed than he was before. He was no more certain of the crucifixion after the event than he was before it, because he had decreed that it should take place. He could not have foreknown that it would take place unless he had predetermined that it should." [Shedd. *Dogmatic Theology*, 285]

"The divine decree is the necessary condition of divine foreknowledge. If God does not first decide what shall come to pass, he cannot know what will come to pass. An event must be made certain before it can be known as a certain event. In order that a man may foreknow an act of his own will, he must first have decided to perform it. So long as He is undecided about a particular volition, he cannot foreknow this volition. Unless God had determined

to create worlds, he could not know that there would be one. For the world cannot create itself, and there is but one being who can create it." [Shedd. *Dogmatic Theology*, 313]

"In the formulation of the divine decree, there are no intervals; but only in the execution of it. Christ, the atoning lamb, 'was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times' . . . The decree that Christ should die for sin was eternal; the actual death of Christ was in time. There was an interval of . . . years between the creation of Adam and the birth of Christ; but there was no such interval between the decree to create Adam and the decree that Christ should be born in Bethlehem. Both decrees are simultaneous because both are eternal decisions of the divine will." [Shedd. *Dogmatic Theology*, 312]

"The word *proginoskein* (to foreknow) occurs in several texts: 'Whom he did foreknow (*proginosko*) he also did predestinate' (Rom. 8:29); 'God has not cast away his people, whom he foreknew (*proginosko*)' (11:2); Christ 'verily was foreknown (*proginosmenos*) before the foundation of the world' (1 Pet. 1:20). The noun *prognosis* occurs in two texts: 'Delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2:23); 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God' (1 Pet. 1:2). The terms *foreknow* and *predestinate* denote two aspects of the same thing. Romans 11:2 might read, 'God has not cast away his people whom he predestinated.' When one is distinguished from the other, as in 8:29, to 'foreknow' means to 'choose' or 'single out' for the purpose of predestinating. Foreknowledge, in this use of the word, is election. It is the first part of the total act of predestinating. The word *know* in this connection has the Hebraistic not the classical signification. [*The Grace of God and the Bondage of the Will*. S.M. Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge"]

"Let us say that God knows from eternity that Jones will choose soup from next Tuesday's lunch menu; how can Jones choose salad instead? If he does, God would have been mistaken. If God's knowledge is certain, Jones' choice of soup is somehow inevitable." [*The Grace of God and the Bondage of the Will*, S.M. Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 183]

Providence of

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.
[God Moves in a Mysterious Way by William Cowper]

Sense of humor

"Near King's Cross station in London, England, there is a cemetery containing a unique grave, the grave of the agnostic Lady Ann Grimston. She is buried there in a marble tomb marked by a marble slab. Before her death, she told a friend, 'I shall live again as surely as a tree will grow from my body.' A short time later, after her death, a tree began to grow from her grave! God does have a sense of humor and He will have the last word! [paraphrased from a story cited in Wiersbe, Be Complete: Colossians, 27]

Recently a Ft. Lauderdale advertising agency launched a billboard campaign (including the inside and outside of buses) that included 17 different messages from God (1998). This non-denominational campaign started in September sponsored by an anonymous client.

1. "Let's Meet At My House Sunday Before the Game " - God
2. "C'mon Over And Bring The Kids " - God
3. "What Part of "Thou Shalt Not.." Didn't You Understand?" - God
4. "We Need To Talk" - God
5. "Keep Using My Name in Vain And I'll Make Rush Hour Longer" - God
6. "Loved The Wedding, Invite Me To The Marriage" - God
7. "That "Love Thy Neighbor" Thing, I Meant It." - God
8. "I Love You...I Love You...I Love You..." - God
9. "Will The Road You're On Get You To My Place?" - God
10. "Follow Me." - God
11. "Big Bang Theory, You've Got To Be Kidding." - God
12. "My Way Is The Highway." - God
13. "Need Directions?" - God
14. "You Think It's Hot Here?" - God
15. "Tell The Kids I Love Them." -God
16. "Need a Marriage Counselor? I'm Available." - God
17. "Have You Read My #1 Best Seller? There Will Be A Test."-God

Story about a Jewish man who climbed to the top of Mt. Sinai. He looked up into the heavens and cried out, "Lord, what does a million years mean to you?" The reply booms from heaven, "But a second." Then the man asks, "And what does a million dollars mean to you?" The reply comes, "But a penny." The man pauses for a moment and then asks, "May I have a penny?" The Lord replies, "Yes, in a second."

Sovereignty of

God's sovereignty means that He is the King who is in complete control of His creation. His Kingship encompasses the doctrines of predestination and providence.

A true story that illustrates how God can do what he wants regardless of our cooperation:

Frank Hayes (1888–1923) was a jockey who, on June 4, 1923, suffered a fatal heart attack in the midst of a steeplechase at Belmont Park in New York State, USA. The thirty-five-year-old Hayes had never won a race before and in fact by profession was not actually a jockey but a horse trainer and longtime stableman. The horse, a 20-1 outsider called Sweet Kiss, was owned by Miss A.M. Frayling. Hayes apparently died somewhere in the middle of the race, but his body remained in the saddle throughout. Sweet Kiss eventually crossed the finish line in the lead with Hayes technically still atop her back, making him the first, and thus far only, jockey known to have won a race after death. Hayes' death was not discovered until Miss Frayling and race officials came to congratulate him shortly after the race. It was theorised that the fatal heart attack was probably brought on by Hayes' extreme efforts to meet the weight requirements, possibly followed by the excitement of riding to the front of the pack. After the discovery of Hayes' death, all further post-race regulations were waived by the Jockey Club, the result being declared official without the customary formality of weighing in. Hayes, dressed in his colorful racing silks, was buried three days later. It was claimed that Sweet Kiss was nicknamed "Sweet Kiss of Death" for the rest of her life. [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Hayes_\(jockey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Hayes_(jockey))]

Sovereignty means "that God is God in all of His Holy attributes, His works of creation, providence, and salvation. God is the first cause of all that exists, and nothing exists which is not foreordained by Him." [Ken Talbot in *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, 25]

"How exceedingly presumptuous it is only to inquire into the cause of the divine will, which is in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the cause of everything that exists. For if it has any cause, then there must be something antecedent on which it depends; which it is impious to suppose. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice, so that what He wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it. When it is inquired therefore why the Lord did so, the answer must be, Because he would. But if you go further and ask why he so determined, you are in search of something greater and higher than the will of God, which can never be found." [Calvin, Institutes, III, xxiii, 2]

The story is told of a king who had a close friend with whom he grew up. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation that ever occurred in his life (positive or negative) and remarking, "This is good!"

One day the king and his friend were on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. In preparing one of the guns, the friend had apparently done something wrong, for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his thumb was blown off. Examining the situation the friend remarked as usual, "This is good!" To which the king replied, "No, this is NOT good!" and proceeded to send his friend to jail.

About a year later, the king was hunting in a dangerous area. Cannibals captured him and took him to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake and bound him to it. As they approached to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. Being superstitious, they never ate anyone that was less than whole. So after untying the king, they sent him on his way.

As he returned home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend. He went immediately to the jail to speak with his friend. You were right," he said, "it was good that my thumb was blown off." And he proceeded to tell the friend all that had just happened. "And so I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long. It was bad for me to do this."

"No," his friend replied, "This is good!" "What do you mean, 'This is good'? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?"

"If I had NOT been in jail, I would have been with you."

"There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation--the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands--the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to disperse His alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth. And we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust." [C.H. Spurgeon from a sermon on Matthew 20:15. Cited by A.W. Pink, The Attributes of God, 32-33]

Chuck Swindoll tells the following story:

"I shall never forget [a letter I received] from a young woman who had reached the absolute end of her rope. She had checked into a motel, planning to take her life. Throughout the night she sat on the side of the bed and mentally rehearsed her

miserable existence. She had endured numerous failed relationships with men and had several abortions. She was empty, angry, and could see no reason to go on. Finally, just before dawn, she reached in her purse and pulled out a loaded pistol. Trembling, she stuck it in her mouth and closed her eyes. Suddenly the clock radio snapped on. Apparently the previous occupant had set the radio to come on at that precise time on that precise station . . . and the musical theme of "Insight for Living" filled the room. The uplifting sounds startled her. She tried to ignore it, but couldn't. She heard my voice and found herself strangely attracted to the message of new hope and authentic joy that she had never heard in her entire life. Before the 30 minute broadcast ended, she gave her life to Jesus Christ." [cited in Laugh Again, 167-68]

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will."
[Hymn by William Cowper]

"Our God is a God who not merely restores, but takes up our mistakes and follies into his plan for us and brings good out of them. This is part of the wonder of his gracious sovereignty. 'I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten... You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you.' (Joel 2:25-26). The Jesus who restored Peter after his denial and corrected his course more than once after that (see Acts 10; Gal. 2:11-14), is our Savior today and he has not changed. God makes not only the wrath of man to turn to his praise but the misadventures of Christians too." [J.I. Packer in "Knowing God"]

"Nothing in Scripture suggests that there is some kind of will or plan of God which is inviolable." [R.T. Forster and V.P. Marston, God's Strategy for Human History, 32]

"Our belief in God's wisdom supposes and necessitates that he has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would creation have been without his design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in grace? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at Providence! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance? No; he knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which he has laid in fair colours, in the blood of his dear Son, but he beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by his grace; he sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to

roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in his mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace! Grace! unto it." At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as he willed with his own; and that in every part of the work of grace he accomplished his purpose, and glorified his own name." [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning/Ephesians 1:11]

"The Gate of the Year" (a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins originally titled "God Knows"). The poem was published in 1908. It caught the public attention and the popular imagination when the then-Princess Elizabeth handed a copy to her father, King George VI, and he quoted it in his 1939 Christmas broadcast to the British Empire. The poem was widely acclaimed as inspirational, reaching its first mass audience in the early days of the Second World War. Its words remained a source of comfort to the Queen for the rest of her life, and she had its words engraved on brass plaques and fixed to the gates of the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle, where the King was interred. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother was also buried here in 2002, and the words of "The Gate of the Year" were read out at her funeral.

God Knows

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

So heart be still:

What need our little life

Our human life to know,

If God hath comprehension?

In all the dizzy strife

Of things both high and low,

God hideth His intention.

God knows. His will

Is best. The stretch of years

Which wind ahead, so dim

To our imperfect vision,

Are clear to God. Our fears

Are premature; In Him,

All time hath full provision.

Then rest: until

God moves to lift the veil

From our impatient eyes,

When, as the sweeter features

Of Life's stern face we hail,

Fair beyond all surmise

God's thought around His creatures

Our mind shall fill.

Theodicy

"Even that which is called evil, when it is regulated and put in its own place, only enhances our admiration of the good, for we value and enjoy the good more when we compare it with the evil." (Augustine)

"Reformed theologians . . . feel constrained to teach that sinful acts are under divine control and occur according to God's pre-determination and purpose, but only by divine permission, so that He does not efficiently cause men to sin." [Louis Berkhoff, Systematic Theology, 174]

Triunity

"Behold the blessed Three in One! It needs the Trinity to make a Christian, it needs the Trinity to cheer a Christian, it needs the Trinity to complete a Christian, it needs the Trinity to create in a Christian the hope of glory. I always like these passages which bring us so near to the Trinity!" [Spurgeon, cited in the Mt. Zion Bible Church newsletter, Feb. 13, 2015]

"Let us rejoice that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who cooperated to make man, do always cooperate to save him." [J.C. Ryle, cited in the Mt. Zion Bible Church newsletter, Feb. 13, 2015]

In approaching the things of God, we are, as C. S. Lewis described us in "The Poison of Subjectivism," "Flatlanders," two-dimensional creatures trying to understand three-dimensional objects. "Flatlanders attempting to imagine a cube," he wrote, "would either imagine the six squares coinciding, and thus destroy their distinctness, or else imagine them set out side by side, and thus destroy the unity. Our difficulties about the Trinity are of much the same kind."

Will of

If a man flings himself into the water and drowns, a spectator cannot be called the cause of that man's death. Non-prevention is not causation. The efficient and responsible cause of the suicide is the suicide's free will. In like manner, the non-elect himself, by his impenitence and unbelief, is the responsible cause of the inefficacy of Christ's expiation. God is blameless in respect to the limitation of redemption; man is guilty in respect to it. God is only the indirect and occasional cause if it; man is the immediate and efficient cause of it." [W.G.T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 664]

Outside the will of God, there's nothing I want. Inside the will of God there's nothing I fear.
~A. W. Tozer

According to C.S. Lewis, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "Thy will be done." [cited in Pulpit Helps, June, 1998]

"Inside the will of God there is no failure. Outside the will of God there is no success."
[Benard Edinger]

Different senses to God's will (cf. 1 Samuel 2:22-25 and Ezekiel 18:23,32):

For example, God meant to put the sons of Eli to death. Therefore he willed that they not listen to their father's counsel: "Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And he said to them, 'Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the Lord's people circulating. If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?' But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death" (1 Samuel 2:22-25).

Why would the sons of Eli not give heed to their father's good counsel? The answer of the text is "because the Lord desired to put them to death." This only makes sense if the Lord had the right and the power to restrain their disobedience—a right and power which he willed not to use. Thus we must say that in one sense God willed that the sons of Eli go on doing what he commanded them not to do: dishonoring their father and committing sexual immorality.

Moreover the word for "desired" in this clause, "the Lord desired to put them to death," is the same Hebrew word (*haphetz*) used in Ezekiel 18:23,32 and 33:11 where God asserts that he does not desire the death of the wicked. God desired to put the sons of Eli to death, but he does not desire the death of the wicked. This is a strong warning to us not to make one assertion, like Ezekiel 18:23 and assume we know the precise meaning without letting other scripture like 2 Samuel 2:25 have a say. The upshot of putting the two together is that in one sense God may desire the death of the wicked and in another sense he may not. [John Piper]

Work in history

The D-day invasion of Normandy serves as an example of God's intervention in history:

On June 6, 1944, the allied forces had to get onto the Continent. That meant a beach assault at Normandy. The allied commanders planned to attack on June 5, but the weather was intolerable. General Eisenhower, head of the allied command wrote, "If we had persisted in the attempt to land on June 5, a major disaster would almost surely have resulted."

The London Times of September 1944 wrote, "The German commanders were advised by their weather service that there could be no invasion in the period including June 6 because of continuous stormy weather. Therefore, D-Day forces found many German troops without officers, and other enemy coastal units were having exercises at the time of the landing."

This was the D-Day miracle! Even General Rommel, the brilliant Desert Fox, was not at his post. He was visiting his wife. June 6th was her birthday. Rommel was sure treacherous weather made an invasion impossible. The odds were 50 to 1 against moon, tide, and winds being right after the stormy weather.

General Eisenhower sensed God's hand in these dramatic events. Time magazine reported what he said in his hometown of Abilene, Kansas on June 4, 1952:

"This day 8 years ago, I made the most agonizing decision of my life. If there were nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an almighty and merciful God, these events did . . . The greatest break in the terrible outlay of weather occurred that allowed that great invasion with losses far below those we anticipated."

Afterward, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery felt compelled to say, "Such an historic march of events can seldom have taken place in such a short time . . . Let us say to each other, 'this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'" [cited in "The Allen Report" - Larry Allen, YWAM, 11/29/94]

Wrath & Judgment of

In August of 2013, the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Songs for the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to exclude "In Christ Alone" from its new hymnal, the chairwoman of the committee said the popular hymn mistakenly expressed "the view that the cross is primarily about God's need to assuage God's anger."

"Divine wrath must not be identified with petty jealousy, arbitrary vengeance, or other types of selfish vindictiveness. God's wrath is the reaction of his holy love against sin. Such righteous indignation is not the opposite of love; it is a part or aspect of faithful love." [Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:406]

"God's wrath is an integral constituent of his love. The wrath of God is the active manifestation of God's essential incapacity to be morally indifferent and let sin alone. It denotes the attitude of God in his holy love toward wilful sin. God's wrath is God's grace. It is his grace smitten with dreadful sorrow. It is his love in agony." [Robert Culpepper, Interpreting the Atonement, 133]

"What else can a just and loving God do with sinners who, contrary to every benefit of grace, persistently delight in pride, injustice, and hatred, but display his wrath (or as Scaer suggests, 'give them hell')." [Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:406]

A lawyer and two of his buddies were fishing on Caddo Lake in Texas. A lightning storm hit the lake and most of the fisherman immediately headed for the shore. But not our friend the lawyer. He was alone on the rear of his aluminum bass boat and his buddies were in the front. This gentleman stood up, spread his arms wide (crucifixion style) and shouted: "HERE I AM LORD, LET ME HAVE IT!" Needless to say, God delivered . . . The other two passengers on the boat survived. [From 1999 Darwin Awards]

GOLD:

As the apostle, on 1 Peter 1:7, mentions gold, and gold chemically examined and tried; and as this figure frequently occurs in the sacred writings; I think it necessary to say something here of the nature and properties of that metal. Gold is defined by chemists to be the most perfect, the most ductile, the most tenacious, and the most unchangeable of all metals. Its specific gravity is about 19 $\frac{2}{3}$. A cubic foot of pure gold, cast and not hammered, weighs 1348lbs. In its native state, without mixture, it is yellow, and has no perceptible smell nor taste. When exposed to the action of the fire it becomes red hot before it melts, but in melting suffers no alteration; but if a strong heat be applied while in fusion, it becomes of a beautiful green color. The continual action of any furnace, howsoever long applied, has no effect on any of its properties. It has been kept in a state of fusion for several months, in the furnace of a glass house, without suffering the smallest change. The electric and galvanic fluids inflame and convert it into a purple oxide, which is volatilized in the form of smoke. In the focus of a very powerful burning glass it becomes volatilized, and partially vitrified; so that we may say with the apostle, that, though gold is tried by the fire — abides the action of all culinary fires, howsoever applied, yet it perisheth by the celestial fire and the solar influence; the rays of the sun collected in the focus of a powerful burning glass, and the application of the electric fluid, destroy its color, and alter and impair all its properties. This is but a late discovery; and previously to it a philosopher would have ridiculed St. Peter for saying, gold that perisheth. Gold is so very tenacious that a piece of it drawn into wire, one-tenth of an inch in diameter, will sustain a weight of 500lbs. without breaking. One grain of gold may be so extended, by its great malleability, as to be easily divided into two millions of parts; and a cubic inch of gold into nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three millions, eight hundred and nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three parts; each of which may be distinctly seen by the naked eye!

A grain and a half of gold may be beaten into leaves of one inch square, which, if intersected by parallel lines, drawn at right angles to each other, and distant only the 100th part of an inch; will produce twenty-five millions of little squares, each of which may be distinctly seen without the help of glasses! The surface of any given quantity of gold, according to Mr. Magellan, may be extended by the hammer 159, 092 times! Eighty books, or two thousand leaves, of what is called leaf gold, each leaf measuring 3 3 inches square, viz. each leaf containing 10 89 square inches, weigh less than 384 grains; each book, therefore, or twenty-five leaves, is equal to 272 25 inches, and weighs about 4 8 grains; so that each grain of gold will produce 56 718, or nearly fifty-seven square inches!

The thickness of the metal thus extended appears to be no more than the one 282 020th of an inch! One pound, or sixteen ounces of gold, would be sufficient to gild a silver wire, sufficient in length to encompass the whole terraqueous globe, or to extend 25, 000 miles! Notwithstanding this extreme degree of tenuity, r thinness, which some carry much higher, no pore can be discerned in it by the strongest magnifying powers; nor is it pervious to the particles of light, nor can the most subtle fluids pass through it. Its ductility has never yet been carried to the uttermost pitch, and to human art and ingenuity is probably unlimited. Sulphur, in the state of a sulphuret, dissolves it; tin and lead greatly impair its tenacity; and zinc hardens and renders it very brittle. Copper heightens its color, and renders it harder, without greatly impairing its ductility. It readily unites with iron, which it hardens in a remarkable manner. The oxygenated muriatic acid, and the nitro-muriatic acid, dissolve gold. In this state it is capable of being applied with great success to the gilding of steel. The process is very simple, and is instantaneously performed, viz.:— To a solution of gold in the

nitro-muriatic acid add about twice the quantity of sulphuric ether. In order to gild either iron or steel, let the metal be well polished, the higher the better: the ether which has taken up the gold may be applied by a camel hair pencil, or small brush; the ether then evaporates, and the gold becomes strongly attached to the surface of the metal. I have seen lancets, penknives, etc., gilded in a moment, by being dipped in this solution. In this manner all kinds of figures, letters, mottoes, etc., may be delineated on steel, by employing a pen or fine brush.

The nitro-muriatic acid, formerly called aqua regia, is formed by adding muriatic acid, vulgarly spirit of salt, to the nitric acid, formerly aqua fortis. Two parts of the muriatic acid to one of the nitric constitute this solvent of gold and platina, which is called the nitro-muriatic acid. Gold was considered the heaviest of all metals till the year 1748, when the knowledge of platina was brought to Europe by Don Antonio Ulloa: this, if it be a real metal, is the hardest and weightiest of all others. The specific gravity of gold is, as we have seen, 19 $\frac{2}{3}$; that of platina is from 20 $\frac{2}{6}$ to 23: but gold will ever be the most valuable of all metals, not merely from its scarcity, but from its beautiful color and great ductility, by which it is applicable to so many uses, and its power of preserving its hue and polish without suffering the least tarnish or oxidation from the action of the air. [Adam Clarke, a Commentary and Critical Notes; Designed as a Help to a Better Understanding of the Sacred Writings, 1 Peter commentary, pages 735-737 PDF version]

GOSPEL:

“God usually exerts [regenerative] power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favorable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.” [J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," Princeton Theological Review 11 (1913)]

"A great many learned men are defending the gospel; no doubt it is a very proper and right thing to do, yet I always notice that, when there are most books of that kind, it is because the gospel itself is not being preached. Suppose a number of persons were to take it into their heads that they had to defend a lion, a full-grown king of beasts! There he is in the cage, and here come all the soldiers of the army to fight for him. Well, I should suggest to them, if they would not object, and feel that it was humbling to them, that they should kindly stand back, and open the door, and let the lion out! I believe that would be the best way of defending him, for he would take care of himself; and the best "apology" for the gospel is to let the gospel out. Never mind about defending Deuteronomy or the whole of the Pentateuch; preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. Let the Lion out, and see who will dare to approach him. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will soon drive away all his adversaries." [Spurgeon, from a sermon entitled "Christ and His Co-Workers"]

"There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one small candle." [Arthur Gordon]

The Gospel answers the question, "How can a sinful man who is destined for God's wrath be forgiven and restored to peace with God so that he may worship and enjoy Him forever?" [TAB]

"When you see that men have been wounded by the law, then it is time to pour in the gospel oil. It is the sharp needle of the law that makes way for the scarlet thread of the gospel" [Samuel Bolton, cited in Walter Chantry, Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic, 43]

"The Gospel has lost none of its ancient power. It is, as much today as when it was first preached, 'the power of God unto salvation.' It needs no pity, no help, and no handmaid. It can overcome all obstacles, and break down all barriers. No human device need be tried to prepare the sinner to receive it, for if God has sent it no power can hinder it; and if He has not sent it, no power can make it effectual." -- (Dr. Bullinger)

"God gave up his own Son as a ransom for us--the holy one for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, the righteous one for the unrighteous, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal. For what else could cover our sins except his righteousness? . . . O sweet exchange! O unfathomable work of God! The sinfulness of many is hidden in the Righteous One, while the righteousness of the One justifies the many that are sinners." [Epistle to Diognetus, X.2-5]

"Putting on your sinful person, He bore your sin, death, and curse. He became a sacrifice and a curse for you, in order thus to set you free from the curse of the law." [Martin Luther, cited in Integrative Theology, 2:379]

The Gospel is so simple that small children can understand it, and it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians will never exhaust its riches.

It was February 1941, Auschwitz, Poland. Maxmillan Kolba was a Franciscan priest put in the infamous death camp for helping Jews escape Nazi terrorism. Months went by and in desperation an escape took place. The camp rule was enforced. Ten people would be rounded up randomly and herded into a cell where they would die of starvation and exposure as a lesson against future escape attempts. Names were called. A Polish Jew Frandishek Gasovnachek was called. He cried, "Wait, I have a wife and children!" Kolba stepped forward and said, "I will take his place." Kolba was marched into the cell with nine others where he managed to live until August 14. This story was chronicled on an NBC news special several years ago. Gasovnachek, by this time 82, was shown telling this story while tears streamed down his cheeks. A mobile camera followed him around his little white house to a marble monument carefully tended with flowers. The inscription read: IN MEMORY OF MAXIMILLAN KOLBA. HE DIED IN MY PLACE. Every day Gasovnachek lived since 1941, he lived with the knowledge, "I live because someone died for me." Every year on August 14 he travels to Auschwitz in memory of Kolba. [Source: Victor Knowles, Peace on Earth Ministries. Adapted from Crossroads Family Circle]

The foolishness of the message (1 Cor. 1:21):

Probably the earliest depiction that we have of Christ dates from around 200 AD, and is actually a crude anti-Christian caricature. Found scratched into the wall of a

guardroom near the Circus Maximus in Rome, it shows a crucified man with the head of a donkey, and the slogan (in Greek) "Alexamenos worships his god". Most probably, it's a jibe directed by Roman soldiers at a Christian colleague. [http://www.catholica.com.au/peregrinus1/062_pere_print.php, accessed 12/28/12]

GOVERNMENT:

"Even Thomas Jefferson, who was suspected of being a nonbeliever, believed in Christianity as the national faith. A recently discovered handwritten history of a Washington parish recounts his exchange with a friend who happened to meet him on his way to church one Sunday morning carrying his large red prayer book. 'You going to church Mr. J. You do not believe a word in it.' 'Sir,' said Jefferson, 'no nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has been given to man and I as chief Magistrate of this nation am bound to give it the sanction of my example. Good morning Sir.'" (as cited in G. Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* [original source: Nicholas Von Hoffman, "God Was Present at the Founding," *Civilization*, April/May 1998, p. 39])

"If men are so wicked as we now see them with religion," Benjamin Franklin said, "what would they be if without it?" John Adams put it more tactfully: "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." And George Washington, in his Farewell Address, cautioned his countrymen not to "indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion": "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." [cited in G. Himmelfarb. *One Nation, Two Cultures*]

"When freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom." [Eric Hoffer, cited in Francis Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live*]

Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican form of government, and all the blessings that flow from them, must fall with them. [Jedidiah Morse, 1761-1826]

"Without God, there is no virtue, because there's no prompting of the conscience. Without God, we're mired in the material, that flat world that tells us only what the senses perceive. Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under." [Ronald Reagan, cited in "Freedom's Alert" Newspaper (The Christian Educational Voice for New York Families), Vol. 22, Issue 6, June 2004, 2]

"Freedom is never more than one generation from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States, where men were free." [Ronald Reagan, cited in "Freedom's Alert" Newspaper (The Christian Educational Voice for New York Families), Vol. 22, Issue 6, June 2004, 3]

“When Americans reach out for values of faith, family, and caring for the needy, they’re saying, ‘We want the Word of God. We want to face the future with the Bible. We’re blessed to have its words of strength, comfort, and truth.’ I’m accused of being simplistic at times with some of the problems that confront us. But I’ve often wondered: Within the covers of that single Book are all the answers to all the problems that face us today. If we’d only look there. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.” [Ronald Reagan, cited in “Freedom’s Alert” Newspaper (The Christian Educational Voice for New York Families), Vol. 22, Issue 6, June 2004, 4]

GRACE:

On Saturday, September 19, 1747, less than three weeks before he died, David Brainerd wrote about how God sustained him in a moment of despair:

Near night, while I attempted to walk a little, my thoughts turned thus, "How infinitely sweet it is to love God and be all for Him!" Upon which it was suggested to me, "You are not an angel, not lively and active." To which my whole soul immediately replied, "I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God, as any angel in heaven." Upon which it was suggested again, "But you are filthy, not fit for heaven." Hereupon instantly appeared the blessed robes of Christ's righteousness which I could not but exult and triumph in. [Cited by John Piper in *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd* (Swans Are Not Silent). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 37-38]

No poor creature stands in need of divine grace more than I do, and yet none abuses it more than I have done, and still do. How heartless and dull I am! --an anonymous Puritan

John Bradford, the English Reformer martyred under the persecution of bloody Mary in 16th century England. While awaiting his sentence in prison he concluded a letter to a fellow prisoner: "The sinful John Bradford; a very painted hypocrite; the most miserable, hardhearted, and unthankful sinner, John Bradford." Shortly afterward, he was brought to Newgate Prison to be burned at the stake. Though scheduled for four o'clock in the morning, the burning was delayed due to the large crowd that had gathered. He was chained to the stake at Smithfield with a young man, John Leaf. Before the fire was lit, he begged forgiveness of any he had wronged, and offered forgiveness to those who had wronged him. He subsequently turned to his fellow and said, "Be of good comfort brother; for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night!" A writer of his period recorded that he endured the flame "as a fresh gale of wind in a hot summer's day, confirming by his death the truth of that doctrine he had so diligently and powerfully preached during his life. His last words, as the fire was being lit were "Strait is the way and narrow is the gate, that leadeth to eternal salvation, and few there be that find it." John Bradford was exceedingly thankful for the greatness of God's grace. In fact, he is best remembered for his utterance, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford."

"I cannot pray," wrote Bishop Berkeley, "but I sin; I cannot preach, but I sin; I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of: and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ."

In the early 1990s Jeffrey Dahmer was convicted of the murder of 17 young men in which he had abused and then cannibalized them, storing their body parts in his freezer. His arrest caused a shakeup in the Milwaukee police department when the pleas of a Vietnamese teen went ignored after the young man escaped Dahmer's apartment naked and bleeding. The young man went on to be one of 11 corpses later found in the apartment. In November, 1994, Dahmer was himself murdered in prison, beaten to death by a fellow inmate with a broom handle. A few weeks before Dahmer's death he was interviewed on TV. The reporter asked him, "How could you have done such a thing?" Dahmer replied that at the time he didn't believe in God; nothing restrained him. He was accountable to no one. He began with petty crimes, experimented with small acts of cruelty, and kept going further and further—nothing restrained him. Dahmer then told of his recent conversion. He had been baptized in the prison whirlpool and was spending much of his time reading and studying the Bible. The camera panned to the prison chaplain who affirmed that Dahmer had repented and was now one of his most faithful worshippers.

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. Your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.

"It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place." [Fenelon, 17th c. French Saint, cited by John Piper "Persevering in Ministry," Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"I have known some Christians who come out from hearing certain apathetic sermons with their souls on fire with holy wrath. I feel, in casting my eye over many modern writings, as if I were about to die from breathing poisonous gas. We cannot endure the smell of false piety and human righteousness. Others may feed on philosophical morality, but nothing but the grace of God will do for us. Stray dogs may feed on any rubbish, but men of God must live on the grace of God and nothing else." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 130]

There is a principle within the devout believer that Spurgeon referred to as "Happy Self-Loathing" (Ezek. 36:31). Spurgeon declared: "Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 171]

"A present salvation must be by grace, and salvation by grace must be through faith. You cannot understand salvation by grace by any other means than through faith. This live coal from off the altar needs the golden tongs of faith by which to carry it." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 103]

"Grace, when it comes to us, is like a firebrand dropped into the sea, where it would certainly be quenched were it not of such a miraculous quality that it baffles the waters and sets up its reign of fire and light even in the depths." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 108]

"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." [John Newton at age 82, cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

"[Grace is] God's loving forgiveness, by which He grants exemption from judgement, and the promise of temporal and eternal blessing to guilty and condemned sinners freely, without any worthiness on their part, and based on nothing they have done or failed to do." [John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 27]

18th c. Englishman, John Newton ran away to sea early in his life, finally settling in Africa where he was enslaved by an African woman. He lived from the crumbs that fell from her table and wild yams which he dug out of the ground at night. His clothing was reduced to a single shirt, which he periodically washed in the ocean. He finally escaped slavery and fled to other African natives, where he lived the life of an infidel.

However, God wonderfully saved John Newton through an African missionary. Newton became a sea captain and later a minister of Jesus Christ. He went on to write many great hymns, including "Amazing Grace." He became the pastor of a church in England., and to this day the churchyard carries an epitaph that Newton himself wrote:

John Newton, Clerk,
once an infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa,
was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ,
Preserved, restored, pardoned,
And appointed to preach the faith
He had long labored to destroy.

[cited in MacArthur, Romans 6-7 Study Guide, Lesson 2]

John Newton once wrote, "I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I wish to be. I am not even what I hope to be. But by the cross of Christ, I am not what I was." [cited in MacArthur, Romans 6-7 Study Guide, Lesson 2]

The gravestone of the famous missionary reads: "William Carey: Born August 17, 1761; Died June 1834 -- A wretched, poor and helpless worm, on Thy kind arms I fall."

David Seamands ends his book "Healing Grace" with this story:

For more than 600 years the Habsburgs exercised political power in Europe. When Emperor Franz-Josef I of Austria died in 1916, he was the last of the extravagant imperial funerals. A procession of dignitaries and elegantly dressed court personages escorted the coffin, draped in the black and gold imperial colors. To the accompaniment of a military band's somber dirges and by the light of torches, the cortege descended the stairs of the Capuchin Monastery in Vienna. At the bottom was a great iron door leading to the Hapsburg family crypt. Behind the door was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna.

The officer in charge followed the prescribed ceremony, established centuries before. "Open!" He cried. "Who goes there?" responded the Cardinal. "We bear the remains of his Imperial and Apostolic Majesty, Franz Josef I, by the grace of God Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Defender of the Faith, Prince of Bohemia-Moravia, Grand Duke of Lombardy, Venezia, Styrgia . . ." The officer continued to list the Emperor's 37 titles. "We know him not," replied the Cardinal, "Who goes there?"

The officer spoke again, this time using a much abbreviated and less ostentatious title reserved for times of expediency. "We know him not," the Cardinal said again. "Who goes there?"

The officer tried a third time, stripping the emperor of all but the humblest of titles: "We bear the body of Franz-Josef, our brother, a sinner like us all!" At that, the doors swung open, and Franz-Josef was admitted.

In death all are reduced to the same level. Neither wealth nor fame can open the way of salvation, but only God's grace, given to those who will humbly acknowledge their need.

"For nothing good have I
Whereby Thy grace to claim.
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calvary's Lamb.
Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.
[Hymn, "Jesus Paid It All"]

John Calvin, commenting on how an understanding of the believer's past position makes him even more thankful for God's grace, writes: "For example, suppose someone is told: 'If God hated you while you were still a sinner; and cast you off, as you deserved, a terrible destruction would have awaited you. But because he kept you in grace voluntarily, and of his own free favor, and did not allow you to be estranged from him, he thus delivered you from that peril.' This man then would surely experience and feel something of what he owes to God's mercy." On the other hand, suppose he hears, as Scriptures teaches, that he was estranged from God through sin, is an heir of wrath, subject to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, beyond every blessing of God, the slave of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin, destined finally for a dreadful destruction and already involved in it; and that at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgement, threatened all sinners; that he purged with his blood those evils, which had rendered sinners hateful to God; that by this expiation he made satisfaction and sacrifice duly to God the Father that as intercessor he has appeased God's wrath; that on this foundation rests the peace of God with men; that by this bond his benevolence is maintained toward them. Will the man not then be even more moved by all these things which so vividly portray the greatness of the calamity from which he has been rescued" [John Calvin, Institutes, 2.16.2]

"Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon. This is plain, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15:10. Paul describes grace as the enabling power of his work: By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored harder than all of them, yet not 1, but the grace of God which is with me." Grace is not simply the pardon of Paul's sins, it is the power to press on in obedience. Therefore the effort we make to obey God is not an effort done in our own strength, but "in the strength which God supplies, that in everything God may get the glory." (1 Peter 4:11)." [John Piper, cited in Quotation Past and Current Newsletter, #7, December, 1998]

GREED:

Two men were just stranded on a desert island. One of the men began to panic, while the other just sat against a tree filing his fingernails. "We're going to die!" cried the first man. "I make \$100,000. a week" answered the second man calmly. "So what?! How does that help us now, with no food or water, we're going to die" said the first man. The second man answered with assurance, "You don't understand. I make \$100,000. a week and I TITHE. My Pastor WILL find me!"

One day a certain rich man who lived a miserable life visited a wise rabbi. The rabbi took the rich man by the hand and led him to a window. "Look out there," he said. The rich man looked into the street, "What do you see?" asked the rabbi. "I see men, women, and children," answered the rich man. Again the rabbi took him by the hand and this time led him to a mirror. Now what do you see?" "Now I see myself," the rich man replied. Then the rabbi said, "Behold, in the window there is a glass, and in the mirror there is a glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is the silver added then you cease to see others, and you see only yourself."

GRIEF & GRIEVING:

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing ... I just helped him cry."

GUILT:

Some saints can't enjoy a meal because the world is starving. They can't joyfully thank God for their clothing and shelter because the world is naked and homeless. They are afraid to smile because of the world's sadness. They're afraid to enjoy salvation because of the world's lost ones. They can't enjoy an evening at home with their families because they feel they ought to be out "saving souls." They can't spend an hour with an unforgiven one without feeling guilty if they haven't preached a sermon or manifested a "sober Christian spirit." They know nothing of balance. And they're miserable because of it. They have no inner incentive to bring people into a relationship with Christ which would make them feel as

miserable as they themselves feel. They think the Gospel is "good news" until you obey it and then it becomes an endless guilt-trip.

There are leisure centres, sports centres, sewing centres, diet centres, entertainment centres and guilt centres. This last group is usually called "churches." The endless harping on the string of guilt is part of the reason for all this gloom and uncertainty. [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 104]

GUNS, GUN CONTROL:

"This year will go down in history. For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun registration. Our streets will be safer, our police more efficient, and the world will follow our lead into the future." [Adolf Hitler, 1935, cited in Cheaper Than Dirt mail order catalogue, Nov. 2004]

HATE:

"Around 1220 an Italian wrote of meeting a Jew who had hit and insulted Jesus on the way to the Crucifixion and was thus condemned to wander the world for all time and receive insults and beatings. That legend of the Wandering Jew spread throughout Europe and was retold in hundreds of publications." [World Magazine, March/April 2002, page 16]

"Unfortunately, he was unable to turn the other cheek. In Dadeville, Ala., Mr. Gabel Taylor, 38, who had just prevailed in a Bible-quoting contest, was shot to death by the loser." [Cited in East Honolulu Newspaper, Sept. 1996]

"Self-love is the root of the hatred of others, 2 Tim. 3:2." -- Thomas Brooks

"It is a terrible text, and I will be honest with it if I can. One man says the word "hate" does not mean hate; it means "love less:" — "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less." It may be so; but I don't believe it is. At any rate, it says "hate" here; and until you give me another version of the Bible, I shall keep to this one. I believe that the term is correctly and properly translated; that the word "hate" is not stronger than the original; but even if it be a little stronger, it is nearer the mark than the other translation which is offered to us in those meaningless words, "love less." I like to take it and let it stand just as it is. The fact is, God loved Jacob, and he did not love Esau; he did choose Jacob, but he did not choose Esau; he did bless Jacob, but he never blessed Esau; his mercy followed Jacob all the way of his life, even to the last, but his mercy never followed Esau; he permitted him still to go on in his sins, and to prove that dreadful truth, "Esau have I hated." [Spurgeon, sermon 239, "Jacob and Esau"]

HEART:

"The heart is that which the devil strives hardest for. Never did he so strive for the body of Moses as he does for the heart of man." [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance]

HEAVEN & HELL:

“Have you never wondered why the Bible gives us such vivid depictions of heaven and hell? Do you ever sit down and imagine yourself joining in the praise and worship with a full heart of thanksgiving for what Jesus Christ has done for you? Do you imagine yourself hearing the Lord saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21)? Do you see yourself walking down the streets of gold, meeting and sharing fellowship with loved ones who have gone before and with the great Christians of the past?

“And do you also hold before your eyes the awesome reality of the eternal damnation of the lost? Part of our problem is that this world seems very real and solid, and the other world shady and unreal. Thus, we think to ourselves, "Yes, I would like the Lord to return ... but not before I get married, or before I finish this project at work, or before I go on this trip." But of course, it is really the other way about. It is heaven that is real and solid and substantial, while this world is shadowy and unsubstantial. [Duguid, Ezekiel in the NIV Application Commentary]

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." [C.S. Lewis]

SOUL SEARCHING Researchers claim that humans have souls which can live on after death BY GEORGE HARRISON 5th November 2016, 5:36 pm www.thesun.co.uk/living/2123380/researchers-claim-that-humans-have-souls-which-can-live-on-after-death/

The idea that human consciousness lives on after death has been put forward by a number of well-respected scientists. SCIENTISTS have claimed that death may not be as final as we once feared – and that humans have souls that can leave the body after their hosts kick the bucket. It may sound like a supernatural myth, but the idea that human consciousness lives on after death has been put forward by a number of well-respected scientists.

British physicist Sir Roger Penrose explains how the human conscious lives on after death And the British scientist at the forefront of the eerie theory claims that humans have souls which don't die along with the body. We many not know exactly what consciousness is, but physicist Sir Roger Penrose believes that it's just a packet of information stored at a quantum - or sub-atomic - level. Sensationally, he claims to have found evidence that this information, which is stored in microtubules within human cells, leaves the body after a person dies. The researchers argue that humans have souls which leave the body upon death, and can live on without it forever Sir Roger has argued that when a person dies temporarily, this quantum information is released into the universe, only to return to the body's cells if the host is brought back to life. He argues that this explains why people can have near-death experiences, and believes that this quantum information amounts to a soul leaving the body.

The physics expert said: "If the patient dies, it's possible that this quantum information can exist outside the body, perhaps indefinitely, as a soul."

Sir Roger claims to have found evidence that human consciousness can live on after a person dies. And Sir Roger is not alone in believing this, since his theory is backed by researchers at the renowned Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich. Experts there argue that our physical universe is just a perception, and that once our bodies die there is an infinite life beyond. Dr Hans-Peter Dürr, former head of the institute, has said: "What we consider the

here and now, this world, it is actually just the material level that is comprehensible. The beyond is an infinite reality that is much bigger. The body dies but the spiritual quantum field continues. In this way, I am immortal."

The eerie theory has been reinforced by other physicists, and by those who have lived through near-death experiences. Earlier this year, another remarkable claim about the afterlife was made by a terminally-ill violinist who survived 17 near-death experiences, and claims to have been to the other side. Paul Robertson died of heart disease on July 27, but believed he had seen death plenty of times already before he passed away. During one near-death experience, he claimed he was blocked from entering heaven by a group of laughing angels who smelled of aftershave. Another vision saw him bathed in the aura of an "Asiatic goddess", whilst he claims a further supernatural encounter made him believe he was a husky dog bounding through the Arctic. [www.thesun.co.uk/living/2123380/researchers-claim-that-humans-have-souls-which-can-live-on-after-death]

There is an apocryphal story about a man who had two visions, a vision of hell followed by a vision of heaven.

In the first vision, that of hell, he saw a large ornate banquet table with all kinds of lavish food and drink. It was a beautiful scene. But all those sitting around the table were emaciated with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks.. The food had not been eaten for their arms were like long forks – too long for them to bend their elbows to reach their mouths. They were frustrated and angry in their eternal attempt to satisfy their craving for that which was in front of them, but was impossible to consume. Satan sat at the head of the table laughing hysterically.

In the second vision, that of heaven, he saw a similar scene. There again was the banquet table with all kinds of food and drink. At the head of the table was the Lord, Jesus Christ. He was smiling. Around the table were the saints. They were robust and healthy, filled with joy. But how could this be? They, too, had arms like long forks, arms which were too long to feed themselves. But then, the man looked again. They were not feeding themselves. They were happily extending their arms across the table to feed one another.

John Brown (Scottish theologian and Gospel minister) likening the arrival of the Christian to heaven as a ship making to port following a long journey:

" . . . a vessel returning after a long voyage, and being received and welcomed by expectant friends. She has been absent for years—toiling and trafficking in every sea—touching at the ports, and trading in the markets of many lands. Thus approaching at last her desired haven—the harbor from which she set out, whence loving thoughts went with her as she started on her perilous way, and where anxious hearts are now wishing and waiting for her return. She is descried in the distance; the news spread; all is excitement; multitudes assemble—pier and quay, beach and bank, are crowded with spectators as the little craft pushes on, and every moment nears her destination. There she is, worn and weather-beaten, it is true—covered with the indications of sore travail and long service, and with many signs of having encountered both battle and breeze. But all is safe. Her goodly freight is secure and uninjured; her profits have been large; the merchandise she brings is both rare and rich. She is coming along a sunny

sea—leaping and dancing, as if she were alive. Her crew are on the deck, and, with straining eyes and palpating hearts, are looking towards the shore. A soft wind swells the sails; the blue heavens are bending over the bark, as if smiling on her course, while the very waves seem to run before her, turning themselves about as if with conscious joy, clapping their hands and murmuring a welcome. How she bounds forward! She is over the bar. She is gliding now in smooth water—passing into port, and preparing to moor, and drop her anchor for the last time. While she does, there comes a shout from the assembled spectators—the crowds that witness and welcome her approach, loud as thunder, musical as the sea. Gladness and greeting are on every hand—eloquent voices fill the air. The vessel has received an abundant entrance: her crew have been met with sympathetic congratulations; are surrounded by eager and glad friends, hailed with enthusiasm, embraced with rapture, and accompanied to their homes with exultation and song." [Brown, 2 Peter, 151-53]

"The greatest weakness of the western church today is arguably our failure to think about the long tomorrow—to take seriously the reality that heaven is our home. Out of this springs our love affair with this world and our failure to live now in light of eternity." [Randy Alcorn, In Light of Eternity]

"There is no need that the inhabitants of earth should remain so little acquainted with heaven. There is a ladder, such as Jacob saw, by which they may ascend and descend every hour. We ought daily in our thoughts to visit that delightful land and to make excursions through its glorious regions. The more we accustom ourselves to these flights the easier they will become. Why is it that we feel so little the impression of eternal glory, but because our thoughts are no more conversant with heaven? It is of the utmost importance that we should become more familiar with that blessed country. It would tend to wean us from this poor world, to support us under the trials of life and the delay of our hopes, to illumine us with the light of that land of vision, to transform us into the likeness of its blessed inhabitants, and to reconcile us to the self-denials and labors which we have here to endure for Christ." [Puritan Edward Griffin, cited in Pleasing People (Lou Priolo), p. 221]

A visitor, strolling through a country graveyard, paused before one grave stone to read these words: "Pause, stranger, when you pass me by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be; So prepare for death and follow me." The visitor pondered that message, and then added his own beneath the chiseled words: "To follow you I am not content, Until I know which way you went." [Author unknown]

Charles H. Spurgeon in training young ministers said to his students, "When you talk about heaven let your face light up with a heavenly glory. When you tell about hell, your everyday face will do."

A father was at the beach with his children when his four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

There is an apocryphal story of a man who visited heaven and hell. In hell he saw a huge banquet table filled with all kinds of delicious food. Satan sat at the head of the table, and

sitting around the table with him were thousands of lost souls. They appeared hideous and emaciated, scowls on their faces, fighting against each other. He wondered why they looked so pathetic when they had this beautiful feast at their disposal. Then, upon a closer look, he saw that their arms and hands appeared as long forks and spoons. But they were so long that none of the souls could feed themselves. They could only be tortured with the prospect of placing the food on their forks with no hope of reaching their mouths.

But when the man visited heaven he saw a similar banquet table with Christ sitting at the head of it. And around the table sat thousands of redeemed saints filled with joy. The man noticed that they too had arms and hands that appeared as long forks and spoons. But why were they so filled with joy, the man wondered? Certainly they must have the same problem feeding themselves as the others. But then he saw that instead of trying to feed themselves, these saints were feeding one another across the table.

Feeding and serving yourself will result in frustration and ruin. Feeding and serving others will result in boundless joy.

An old-time preacher, Joe Henry Hopkins, told this true story about heaven: "My mother said that just before her father passed away, he called the children around to tell them goodbye. They began to cry, and Grandpa said, "Don't cry. Why would you cry? There is Jesus, and there is mother with Him. And they are not crying--they are happy. They have come to take me Home.

"The safest road to hell is a gradual one. This safe road has a gentle slope, without turns, without milestones, without signposts, without warnings." [C.S. Lewis]

When the time of his crossing had come, D.L. Moody asked his daughter who stood by, "Is this death?" She said, "Yes, Father." He then said, "No, this is my coronation day!"

Light after darkness, gain after loss;
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,
Home after wandering, praise after tears.

Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain,
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast,
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last.

Near after distant, gleam after gloom,
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony, rapture of bliss--
Right was the pathway leading to this.

[Francis R. Havergal]

"God's wrath is an integral constituent of his love. The wrath of God is the active manifestation of God's essential incapacity to be morally indifferent and let sin alone. It denotes the attitude of God in his holy love toward wilful sin. God's wrath is God's grace.

It is his grace smitten with dreadful sorrow. It is his love in agony." [Robert Culpepper, Interpreting the Atonement]

"What else can a just and loving God do with sinners who, contrary to every benefit of grace, persistently delight in pride, injustice, and hatred, but display his wrath (or as Scaer suggests, 'give them hell')." [Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, 2:406]

"The fire of hell is not cleansing (hell is no purgatory), but punitive, so that the damned will not be morally improved by it." [John Theodore Mueller, Lutheran theologian of the early 20th c.]

"As a believer's life is very different from an unbeliever's life, so also a believer's death is very different from an unbeliever's death. The unbeliever prefers Heaven over Hell; the believer prefers Heaven over this earth. The unbeliever prefers Heaven only over Hell because he cannot imagine anything more blessed than this life. The believer prefers Heaven over earth, because the believer cannot imagine anything more blessed than life with God." [Anonymous. Cited by Ligon Duncan, *Fear Not: Death and the Afterlife from a Christian Perspective*, 15-16]

HEDONISM:

"Give me luxuries, and anyone can have the necessities" (Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900, Irish poet, novelist, and playwright. Wilde was finally convicted of sodomy and served two years hard labor)

Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, an early 19th century poet and painter from London, is an especially chilling example of hedonism in practice. He poisoned, among others, his mother-in-law for no clear reason and his sister-in-law for the insurance money. When the insurance company refused to pay because of suspicious reasons, Wainwright sued them. It took 5 years to resolve the case (Wainwright lost). Abandoning his wife, Wainwright then went to Italy where he insured and then poisoned his father-in-law to spite the insurance companies, after which he moved to Paris to live in luxury and devote himself to extravagant living.

Wainwright eventually returned to London, following a young woman with whom he had been in love though she did not love him. In 1837 he was recognized and arrested for forgeries he had committed years earlier and sentenced to life in a penal colony in Tasmania. Even in exile he tried (and failed) to poison two fellow inmates who had crossed him somehow. Wainwright died in 1852.

Before he was shipped to Tasmania, a friend visited him in jail in London and asked him about the murder of his sister-in-law. Wainwright's reply was, "yes it was a dreadful thing to do, but she had very thick ankles." [cited in Archetypes of Wisdom]

"At the root of the misuse of those instincts [which are God-given, i.e. the desire to survive by ingesting food] is what philosophers call the hedonistic fallacy. This comes from the Greek word "hedone," pleasure. It has been observed that if we pursue pleasure we fail to get it. Pleasure is a by-product of many activities. . . . The problem arises because of the

mysterious tendency in our nature: we try to separate the pleasure from the act that gives it and go after it for its own sake. Unfortunately, it does not work for long . . . because the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake is always ultimately unsatisfying . . . and (becomes) addictive." [Richard Holloway, Seven to Flee, Seven to Follow, London: Mowbray, 1986, 33-35]

HERESY & FALSE TEACHING:

"If seduction and darkness were again to begin through the wrath and decree of God (as will happen after our days, it is to be feared), and the devil were to begin to perform signs through some false prophet and perhaps cure a sick person, you would no doubt see the mob press to espouse the cause in such a way that no preaching or warning would be of any avail. . . . For in those who have no love for the truth, the devil will be powerful and strong. . . . If, then, these teachings [of a false prophet] contradict the chief doctrine and article of Christ, we should accord them neither attention nor acceptance though it were to snow miracles daily." [Martin Luther]

Today we can hardly escape today the subject of terrorism. This isn't anything new. In fact, most of us have watched it from afar as young adults and even as children. Years ago terrorism was something that struck other places; it was something that happened in Ireland or Israel—not in the United States.

Of course, all that has changed. What we once watched happen in other countries has happened to us. Consequently, the U.S. has been engaged in military battles in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Terrorism is now a global threat. By their very design, terrorists have the attention of the entire world.

This has become a new way of waging warfare. We now fight against a hidden enemy. We don't know where he will strike or how. That uncertainty is what makes terrorism so effective. One cannot cross a border without being reminded of it. The entire air-industry has been affected and we now wait in lines and submit ourselves to all manner of scrutiny, all in fear of terrorism.

As the root of the word itself implies, terrorism is quite effective. Due to modern technology and the media, it promotes its own cause as attacks carried out in time are broadcast round the world in living color. We see the blood; we see the grief; we see the danger.

Three things in particular make terrorism effective. First, terrorists are anonymous. They wear no uniform and they operate clandestinely. They come out from the shadows. Second, they are serious—deadly serious. They are so serious that they are more than willing to die for their cause. How can you put fear into an enemy who's not afraid to die? How can you threaten someone who's willing to blow himself up for his cause? Third, they are ambitious. By that I mean, they are self-propagating. They spread their philosophy through their homes, through their mosques, through their governments. They train their young from the time they are born to follow in their bloody footsteps of horror.

Terrorists must be exposed, they must be defeated, they must be silenced. We need to protect the innocent from their deadly mission.

However, these insurrectionists are not alone. Might I suggest to you that Satan has a network of spiritual terrorists working on an entirely different level. These are apostates and false teachers. Men and women who operate clandestinely from both within the church and outside of it. Satan's Al-Quida has as its goal the destruction of the church. Satan's Al-Quida works to blow up truth in order to establish a reign of error. Deadly error. It's a spiritual war that's being waged in terrorist fashion.

These spiritual terrorists are dangerous for the same three reasons. They're anonymous, serious, and ambitious.

They're anonymous in that they like to slip in under the radar. In some cases they want to be recognized as no different from the rest of us, as real Christians. In other cases they come parading themselves as the new orthodoxy or a new movement of God's Spirit. At other times they come heralding the same old heresies that have been condemned by the church long ago. This spiritual terrorism comes clothed in the garments of a shepherd, in sheep's clothing.

They're also serious. They are willing to take their error to the grave and hell. They want to bring as many others with them as they possibly can. Jude calls them "dreamers."

And they are ambitious. They promote themselves well. Like Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23, they travel about on sea and land to convert whom they can to their error and when they do they make that one twice the son of hell as themselves.

John MacArthur, whom I am indebted for this concept of "terrorists in the church" has spoken in this regard:

"As I look at the evangelical church I see parts of the city of God smouldering in destruction from the bombs of Satan's spiritual terrorists that have been planted here and there to blow people to bits and to blow the terrorists themselves into eternal hell, as long as their targets in the church are destroyed. In fact, having thought all this through every time I see an image of a terrorist, it appears to me as a metaphor for what's going on in the church." [John MacArthur, Terrorists in the Church, cassette message on Jude 8-16]

The terrorists hidden in the church are far more dangerous. Islamic Al Quida can kill the body; Satan's Al-Quida destroys the soul.

Note some of the things that characterize them: 1) They turn God's grace into licence (v. 4); 2) They deny Christ's Lordship (v. 4); 3) They are dreamers, that is, they claim visions and new revelation (v. 8); 4) They are ignorant about truth, they "revile things they don't understand" (v. 10); 5) They have no fear, they care only for themselves (v. 12); 6) They are grumblers and fault-finders who follow after their own lusts as they flatter others for the sake of gaining an advantage (v. 16); 7) They cause divisions, they are worldly-minded and devoid of the Spirit (v. 19).

We could say that the theme of Jude is waging a war for truth. This short epistle (25 verses) is about fighting a war. Not a war waged with firearms and air power, but a spiritual war waged against false doctrine. In fighting that war we are to contend earnestly for the faith (v. 3).

Charles Finney's soteriological heresies:

"The doctrine of imputed righteousness, or that Christ's obedience to the law was accounted as our obedience, is founded on a most false and nonsensical assumption. After all, Christ's righteousness could do no more than justify himself. It can never be imputed to us . . . It was naturally impossible, then, for him to obey in our behalf. This representing of the atonement as the ground of the sinner's justification has been a sad occasion of stumbling to many." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, pp. 320-22; cited in an article written by Michael Horton]

Speaking of his evangelical pastor at the time, Charles Finney wrote:

"I could not receive his views on the subject of atonement, regeneration, faith, repentance, the slavery of the will, or any of their kindred doctrines." [Charles Finney, Memoirs, 46]

"A nature sinful in itself, a total inability to accept Christ and to obey God, condemnation to eternal death for the sin of Adam and for a sinful nature,—and all the kindred and resultant dogmas of that peculiar school, have been the stumbling block of believers and the ruin of sinners." [Charles Finney, Memoirs, 444]

"I could not but regard and treat this whole question of imputation as a theological fiction, somewhat related to our legal fiction of John Doe and Richard Roe." [Charles Finney, Memoirs, 60]

"'Christ our righteousness' is Christ the author or procurer of our justification. But this does not imply that He procures our justification by imputing His obedience to us."

In Finney's Systematic Theology, under the subheading "Foundation of the justification of penitent believers in Christ. What is the ultimate ground or reason of their justification? 1. It is not founded in Christ's literally suffering the exact penalty of the law for them, and in this sense literally purchasing their justification and eternal salvation." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, 373]

"Gospel justification is not to be regarded as a forensic or judicial proceeding." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, 360]

"There can be no justification in a legal or forensic sense, but upon the ground of universal, perfect, and uninterrupted obedience to law. This is of course denied by those who hold that gospel justification, or the justification of penitent sinners, is of the nature of a forensic or judicial justification. They hold to the legal maxim, that what a man does by another he does by himself, and therefore the law regards Christ's obedience as ours, on the ground that He obeyed for us." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, 362]

"By sanctification being a condition of justification, the following things are intended: 1) That present, full, and entire consecration of heart and life to God and His service, is an unalterable condition of present pardon of past sin, and of present acceptance with God. 1) That the penitent soul remains justified no longer than this full-hearted consecration continues. If he falls from his first love into the spirit of self-pleasing, he falls again into bondage to sin and to the law, is condemned, and must repent and do his 'first work,' must turn to Christ, and renew his faith and love, as a condition of his salvation. Perseverance in faith and obedience, or in consecration to God, is also an unalterable condition of justification, or of pardon and acceptance with God. By this language in his connection, you will of course understand me to mean, that perseverance in faith and obedience is a condition, not of present, but of final or ultimate acceptance and salvation." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, 368-69]

". . . that, being once justified, he is always thereafter justified, whatever he may do; indeed that he is never justified by grace, as to sins that are past, upon condition that he ceases to sin; that Christ's righteousness is the ground, and that his own preset obedience is not even a condition of his justification, so that, in fact, his own present or future obedience to the law of God is, in no case, and in no sense, a sine qua non of his justification, present or ultimate. Now this is certainly another gospel from the one I am inculcating. It is not a difference merely upon some speculative or theoretic point. It is a point fundamental to the gospel and to salvation . . ." [Charles Finney, Systematic Theology, 369]

"If you must make a choice between heresy and schism, always choose heresy." [Peter James Lee, the Episcopal bishop of Virginia who voted to approve the appointment of openly homosexual bishop Gene Robinson, cited in World Magazine, February 14, 2004]

In Foxes book of Martyrs, the story is told of a Christian man who was to be burned at the stake because he would not bow down to a wafer and worship it as God incarnate (as the Roman Church demanded of him). So they bound him to a stake and piled wood and straw around him. The executioner stood by and awaited word to put the torch to the kindling while a priest stood nearby and preached a sermon. The priest took for his text the first two verses of 1 Timothy 4 and applied them to the martyr who was to die as a heretic. Having finished the sermon, the priest asked: "Have you anything to say before being burned? Will you recant and receive the absolution of the Church?" The man replied, "I have nothing to say except that I wish you would read out loud the next verse following the two you have read." The priest looked at the passage which said "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." But instead of reading the words out loud, the priest gave the signal to put the torch to the coals. He then took his Bible and threw it into the fire.

Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, under a pretense of honouring Him: Luke xxii. 48, 'Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Antichrist is a true adversary of Christ, though he pretend to adore him; as those that murdered the present prophets would by all means beautify the tombs of the prophets deceased, and bear a respect to their memories, Matt. xxiii. 30. He pretendeth to be his servant, yea, a servant of servants, but is really his enemy. The apostle telleth us of some that were 'enemies to the cross of Christ,' Phil. iii. 18. Who to appearances such friends to the cross as the rabble of nominal

Christians? But they are opposers of His spiritual kingdom, the virtue and power of the cross. You have crucifixes everywhere, painted, carved, gilded; they are ready to worship the cross with a holy worship; they set it up in their temples, altars, wear it in their bosoms, and wherever they meet it show it reverence, adorn it with gold, silver, and precious stones. Their popes and prelates have it carried before them; and are not these friends of the cross? No; they live a worldly, sensual life, and all their religion tendeth thereunto; therefore enemies of the cross of Christ, because they mind earthly things. This is right antichrist-like, to betray Christ under a colour of adoration. [Thomas Manton (1620-1677), cited in Quotations Past and Current Newsletter, 1999]

Richard Andrews & Paul Schellenberger, wrote a book: The Tomb of God: The Body of Jesus and the Solution to a 2,000 Year-Old Mystery. The advertising blurb for the book states: "Applying mathematical logic to the mystery, the authors turn up evidence of a long-suppressed secret challenging Christian dogma--that Christ's body actually rests in a Rennes-le-Chateau tomb [in SW France]! This fascinating study illuminates the real secret maintained over the centuries by the Templars and others, revealing at the same time a 'heretical' Christian teaching stressing responsibility over blind faith." [From Barnes and Noble circular, 1997]

John Dominic Crossan, co-chair of the Jesus Seminar, recently asserted: "After the crucifixion, Jesus' corpse was probably laid in a shallow grave, covered with dirt, and subsequently eaten by wild dogs--the story of Jesus' entombment and resurrection was the result of wishful thinking." [cited in Hank Hanegraaff CRI Newsletter, March, 1999]

Someone sent me a story about a recent article in "Charisma" Magazine about a NYC pastor who charges people \$365 for personal prophecies. The article in Charisma says: "Self-proclaimed prophet E. Bernard Jordon says he has a word from God for those who are struggling to find direction in life." [from PsychoHeresy Awareness Newsletter, 1999]

"[Martin] Luther believed strongly that the Evil One always attacked the church from without by persecution and from within by false teachers. Of the false teachers' use of the Bible, he wrote, 'Others tear it to pieces, scourge and crucify it, and subject it to all manner of torture until they stretch it sufficiently to apply to their heresy, meaning, and whim.'" [cited in The Coming Evangelical Crisis, John Armstrong, Ed., p. 54]

"It is indeed true that the refutation of heretics gives greater prominence to the tenets of Your Church and the principles of sound doctrine. . . so that those who are true metal may be distinguished from the rest." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, VII, 19]

"Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid your price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God." [Fred Price, Ever Increasing Faith Messenger, June 1980, 7]

"If there's any part of hell Jesus did not suffer, you'll have to suffer it. But, thank God, Jesus suffered it all, for you!" [Charles Capps, Authority in Three Worlds, 143]

"He is suffering all that there is to suffer. There is no suffering left apart from Him. His emaciated, poured out, little, wormy spirit is down in the bottom of that thing. And the Devil thinks he's got Him destroyed." [Kenneth, Copeland, cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis, 383]

Have you ever heard of "The People's Temple Christian Church?" Have you ever heard of "Jim Jones?"

One of the most frightening discoveries about the People's Temple Church was that a large majority of its members had been raised in Christian homes of one sort or another. Most of those who joined the church did so because they believed it offered a higher experience of Christian living.

Yet the so-called church dissolved overnight when nearly 1000 of its members followed their leader in a mass suicide at Jonestown in the jungles of Guyana S. America.

Jim Jones didn't look like a wolf to the sheep. He looked like a shepherd.

While every false teacher may not be a Jim Jones, every false teacher is dangerous in their own right. [partially adapted from, John MacArthur, Matthew 1-7]

Dr. Robert Thomas, professor of New Testament at The Master's Seminary, warns:

"People don't often go heretical all at once. It is gradual. And they do not do so intentionally most of the time. They slip into it through shoddiness and laziness in handling the word of truth. . . . All it takes to start the road to heresy is a craving for something new and different, a flashy new idea, along with a little laziness or carelessness or lack of precision in handling the truth of God. All around us today are startling reminders of doctrinal slippage and outright failure. In case after case someone who should have known the truth of God better failed in upholding that truth."

Dr. Thomas continues on the importance of precision in teaching the Bible:

Precision . . . is a compelling desire to master the truth of God in more definitive terms, to facilitate a more accurate presentation of that truth to others and to safeguard against doctrinal slippage that leads to error and false doctrine. . . . Everyone will not appreciate precision and willingly assent to its importance. We live in a world that would have us to be satisfied, in certain cases, with rough estimate, particularly when it comes to theological matters. It takes a lot of patience and 'thick skin' to put up with the criticism and outright opposition that will come when God's servant insists on accuracy. . . . There are too many 'ball-park' interpreters and expositors today. The theological atmosphere of evangelicalism is saturated with a dense fog of uncertainty and misplaced emphasis in handling the Word of God. Many churches are on the rocks because of careless hermeneutics, ignorance of biblical languages, and unsystematic theology. Rough estimates as to what this or that passage means will not do. We need qualified expositors who will take the time and make the necessary sacrifices to do their homework well and bring clarity to the minds of God's people as they read and study God's holy Word." [quoted in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 130-132]

Apostate and incompetent pastors abound, and are becoming the norm rather than the exception. In his book, Preach the Word!, Robert L. Reymond, professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, identifies the problem:

"I say it with sadness, but in my opinion it is true nonetheless that a time when opportunities for the church of Jesus Christ to make real advances were never better, a theological illiteracy which invites the rise of wholesale heresy pervades the church, traceable both to apostate clergymen and to a distressing lack of theologically articulate spokesmen among evangelicals capable of correcting the maladies that afflict the church.

Do not misunderstand me. There is no paucity of preachers. But the burning question is, how many are really theologically qualified to minister in this day?"

He then admonishes preachers to:

"Covenant with God to learn all that you can from His inscripturated revelation to His church about what men are to believe concerning Him, His Christ, and His great salvation . . . and what duty God requires of them, and to preach what He teaches you to the dear church for whom Christ died, for the improvement of its health and the equipping of His children for those good works which God Himself has decreed for it. And while it will ever be the case that it is He alone who can give the increase, bathe your entire labor for Him in the fervent prayer that you may be used to plant His word and to water it in the souls of needy men." [cited in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 133]

On the "Openness of God" theological trend we are now facing:

According to Greg Boyd, commenting on Acts 2:23, "God predestined and foreknows an event while not predestining and foreknowing the individuals involved in the event." As Brent Kelly points out, this violates the law of non-contradiction (that "A" cannot be both "B" and "Non-B" at the same time and in the same sense). Kelly states that "it is logically impossible for God to know something and predestine it to occur without using people if people are inherently involved in the event, as in this text (Acts 2:23-24)." As it relates to the law of non-contradiction, "God ('A') would have had to guess the event ('B') while 'B' was not involving people while saying at the same time 'B' is really 'Non-B' because people are inherently involved." [quotes are from Brent Kelly, "Absolutely Free?" A paper delivered to the 2001 Evangelical Theological Society]

An example of bad theology in understanding the issue of atonement, judgment, and sin:

"There are two types of people on planet earth. Those who are going to heaven with everlasting life and those who will spend their forever life in the Lake of Fire. Neither the sins of Noah nor the sins of anyone who has lived on planet earth will be mentioned at the time of their evaluation ceremony at the end of the Age. God has promised, 'As far as the east is from the west so far have I removed your sins from you.' Psalm 103:12. Nor will the sins of unbelievers be mentioned at the time of the Great White Throne

Judgement at the end of time. (The Lord Jesus Christ was judged for all the sins of the unbelievers and believers). The only issue will be the rejection or acceptance of the promised Messiah as the God-Man Savior." [Young People's Letter from God 5: Tower of Babel and New Languages, Special Promises to Abraham and His Seed. Study Guide by Angeline Grysen, 2002, page 5. Materials used by Barachah Church, R.B. Thieme]

HERMENEUTICS:

"Scripture, they say, is fertile and thus bears multiple meanings. I acknowledge that Scripture is the most Rich and exhaustible fount of all wisdom. But I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which anyone may fasten to it at his pleasure." (John Calvin, commentary on Galatians 4:22)

Words mean things and a single word, even a single letter, can totally change the meaning of what we are trying to say. Here's a perfect illustration: one single letter, one which happens to be the smallest in our English alphabet is the difference between the words "salvation" and "salivation."

The challenge of interpretation: ". . . there is often nothing so difficult to understand as a letter. Demetrius (*On Style*, 223) quotes a saying of Artemon, who edited the letters of Aristotle. Artemon said that a letter ought to be written in the same manner as a dialogue, because it was one of the two sides of a dialogue. In other words, to read a letter is like listening to one side of a telephone conversation. So when we read the letters of Paul we are often in a difficulty. We do not possess the letter which he was answering; we do not fully know the circumstances with which he was dealing; it is only from the letter itself that we can deduce the situation which prompted it. Before we can hope to understand fully any letter Paul wrote, we must try to reconstruct the situation which produced it." [William Barclay, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, xi]

Robert Traina in his Methodical Bible Study (p. 181) speaks of three dangers in biblical interpretation:

Misinterpretation. Assigning the wrong meaning to a passage.

Subinterpretation. The failure to ascertain the full meaning of a passage.

Superinterpretation. Attributing more significance to a passage than is implicit in it.

HINDUISM:

"It is wrong to deny yoga's Hindu origins. Yoga has been shamelessly rebranded to make it more acceptable to western culture, but this is based on a lie." [Ramesh Rao, Human Rights Coordinator for the Hindu American Foundation, *The Guardian*, Dec. 2, 2010]

HOLINESS:

In 1957, a monastery in Thailand was being relocated and a group of monks was put in charge of moving a giant clay statue of Buddha. In the mist of the move, one of the monks noticed a crack in the figure, so the work was immediately halted before more damage

occurred. That night, one of the monks went to check on the statue. He aimed his flashlight all over the figure, but suddenly noticed a reflective gleam from the crack. His curiosity aroused, he procured a hammer and chisel and began widening the split. As he knocked off piece after piece of clay, the stature grew brighter and brighter—and after house of work the clay was all gone, and in its place stood a golden image of Buddha. Many historians now believe that the original statue had been covered with a layer of clay by Thai monks several hundred years earlier, to hide its worth before an attack by the Burmese army. All of the monks present on that occasion died in the battle, and it was not until 1957 that its great value was discovered. [cited in "Pulpit Helps", August 2003, 11]

"Salvation is generated by God in an order that puts our holiness as a consequence and not a cause. Thus, merit is forever disowned." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 46]

"There can be no participation in Christ's life without a participation in his death, and we cannot enjoy the benefits of his death unless we are partakers of the power of his life.. We must be reconciled to God in order to be holy, and we cannot be reconciled without thereby becoming holy." [cited in MacArthur, Freedom From Sin (study guide to Romans 6-7), 22).

Robert Murray McCheyne spoke at the ordination of young Dan Edwards in the 1860s. He said something like this: "Mr Edwards, . . . do not forget the inner man, the heart. The cavalry officer knows that his life depends upon his saber, so he keeps it clean. Every stain he wipes off with the greatest care. Mr. Edwards, you are God's chosen instrument. According to your purity, so shall be your success. It is not great talent; it is not great ideas that God uses; it is great likeness to Jesus Christ. Mr. Edwards, a holy man is an awesome weapon in the hand of God." [cited in MacArthur, Found: God's Will, 37]

"The word 'holy' is the little boat in which we reap the world's end in the ocean of language. The possibilities of language to describe God come to an end they spill over into a vast void of silence. Holiness carries us to the brink, and from there on all our experience of God is wordless. . . . Every time you try to define the word 'holy,' you simply wind up by saying this, 'God is holy means, God is God.' . . . God is one of a kind, *sui juneris*, in a class by Himself, and in that sense he is utterly holy, separate. . . God is glorious! The glory of God, very simply, is the manifestation of His holiness. God's holiness is His incomparable perfection in Himself, His glory is the display of that Holiness for His creatures and the members of the Trinity to behold. God is glorious means that God has gone public with his Holiness. His glory is the open revelation of His secret holiness (Lev. 10:3). When God displays holiness what we see is glory, because His glory is the visible manifestation of His holiness and his holiness is the invisible essence of His glory. Holiness is concealed glory. Glory is revealed holiness." [John Piper, "Going Hard After the Holy God," Cassette Message on Philippians 3:2-16, Jan. 8, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"The happiest state of a Christian is the holiest state. As there is the most heat nearest to the sun, so there is the most happiness nearest to Christ. No Christian enjoys comfort when his eyes are fixed on vanity—he finds no satisfaction unless his soul is quickened in the ways of God. The world may win happiness elsewhere, but he cannot. I do not blame ungodly

men for rushing to their pleasures. Why should I? Let them have their fill. That is all they have to enjoy." [Spurgeon]

HOLLYWOOD & THE MEDIA:

"Only the morally courageous are worthy of speaking to their fellow-men for two hours in the dark and only the artistically incorrupt will earn and keep the people's trust." [Frank Capra in his 1971 autobiography]

Billy Joel once said, 'If the Devil were going to go into business, it would be the music business.'" [Behind the Music VH1 television special on Cat Stevens, 2000]

"I think television is having a detrimental effect on Christians. They are no longer sensitive to sin! Television has brought the night club into the home along with violence and sex, things which Christians looked upon ten years ago with abhorrence. They are gradually becoming desensitized, and I can cite case after case where Christians now watch these things on television without feeling any twinge of conscience." [Bill Graham, around 1960. cited in Walter B. Knight, [Knight's Illustrations](#), 362]

"In the 1920's the Ku Klux Klan urged the nation to adopt family values and to return to old time religion. Similarly, Adolf Hitler launched a family value regimen. Fanatics in the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazi Party, the Hezbollah, or any other intolerant organizations, refer to themselves as religious warriors. In the modern United States, new proponents of family values continue this tradition of fear and intolerance." [Hugh Downs, radio commentary, cited in 700 club "Culture Wars" video, 1993]

"The most odious of all demons are those that mask our innate divinity" [Hugh Downs, cited in 700 club "Culture Wars" video, 1993]

"Their followers (evangelicals) are largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command" [Michael Weisskopf, Washington Post, Feb. 1993]. Weisskopf later defended his comments saying they were "universally accepted." [cited in 700 club "Culture Wars" video, 1993]

"Conservatives are seen as right-wing fanatics, that they're nuts. Religious people are in the closet" [Hollywood industry publicist, cited in 700 club "Culture Wars" video, 1993]

HOLY SPIRIT: [[General](#); [Discernment and](#); [Walking in](#)]

[General](#)

F.B. Meyer--later to be one of Great Britain's and the world's most beloved preachers--as a boy, enjoyed visiting the Polytechnic, a science museum in London. One of the exhibits he like most was a diving bell. It had no floor, but there were seats attached to the rim at its base. At various times throughout the day, visitors were allowed to enter the diving bell and occupy those seats. It was then lowered into a deep tank of water. What fascinated Meyer was the fact that no water ever came up into the bell, even though its occupants could have easily reached down and dipped their fingers into it. How was this possible? Air was pumped into the diving bell from above, providing positive pressure keeping the water from entering.

If a vacuum had existed, the water would have rushed in. Meyer then made this application: "If you are full of the Holy Spirit, the flesh-life is underneath you, and though it would surge up, it is kept out." [cited in [Pulpit Helps](#), June, 1998]

A.W. Tozer once said, "When a person, yielding to God and believing the truth of God, is filled with the Spirit of God, even his faintest whisper will be worship."

[Discernment and](#)

James Dobson tells the following story:

"Determining the will of God by means of feelings or impressions reminds me of the day I completed my education at the University of Southern California and was awarded a doctoral degree.

I had the prize I sought so diligently. Driving home that day, I expressed my appreciation to God for His obvious blessing on my life, and I asked Him to use me in any way He chose. The presence of the Lord seemed very near at the moment.

Then, as I turned a corner, I was seized by a strong impression that conveyed this unmistakable message: *You are going to lose someone very close to you within the next 12 months. A member of your immediate family will die, but when it happens, don't be dismayed. Just continue trusting and depending on me.*

I had not been thinking about death and was greatly alarmed by the threatening thought. My heart thumped a little harder as I contemplated who might die. When I reached my home, I told no one about the experience.

One month passed without a tragedy. Two and three months sped by, and still death failed to visit my family. Finally, the anniversary of my morbid impression came and went without consequence. The impression had been invalid.

Through my counseling experiences, I have learned that my phony impression was not unique. Similar experiences are common, particularly among those who have not adjusted well to the challenge of living.

For example, a 30-year-old wife and mother came to me for treatment of anxiety and depression. In relating her history, she described an episode that had occurred in a church service when she was 16. Toward the end of the sermon, she 'heard' this alarming message from God: *Jeanie, I want you to die so that others will come to Me.* Jeanie was absolutely terrified. She felt as if she stood on the gallows with the hangman's noose dangling above her head. In her panic, she jumped from her seat and fled through the doors of the building, sobbing as she ran. Jeanie felt that she would commit a sin if she revealed her impression to anyone, so she kept it to herself.

For years she has awaited the execution of this divine sentence, wondering when the moment will arrive. Nevertheless, she appears to be in fine health today.

From these and other examples, I have come to regard the interpretation of impressions as risky business, at best." [Focus on the Family Bulletin "Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions," October, 1995]

Walking in

Several years ago, off the coast of NJ, some engineers were building a bridge over the mouth of a river which emptied into the Atlantic Ocean. And as they were putting down the pilings on their way across the river, they came to a place where they found the massive hulk of an old wooden ship buried deep into the soft sand at the bottom of the river. They realized that in order to keep the configuration of the bridge going along at the proper route, they had to remove that hulk. And so they tried to apply every mechanical means that they could to somehow pry it loose from the bottom of the river; but all to no avail. At this point a young engineer offered his suggestion. He asked if he might have permission to design a means to remove the old wooden hulk. What he then did was to call for barges to be brought in, and from these barges to the hulk of the ship chains were attached at low tide. As the tide came in from the mouth of the river and the barges began to move upward, the ship became loosened. When the tide went out again, they re-tightened the chains as tightly as they could. The next time the tide came in, it lifted the barges and the ship was loosened a little more until finally it was completely pried free.

The account went on to say that what the machinery of men could not accomplish, the tides had accomplished.

Application: What we cannot do in the flesh, God can do by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Some time ago oil was discovered on Indian land in Oklahoma. The Indian tribe on whose land the oil was discovered became wealthy overnight.

One of the tribesmen bought himself a Rolls Royce. He drove it around for a week or so, but when it ran out of gas he assumed it was broken or that he had worn it out. Not wanting to lose face, he told his friends that he was tired of it and didn't want it anymore. So one of his friends claimed the car and removed the engine to reduce its weight. He then hitched a team of horses to it. The horse drawn Rolls Royce was his means of transportation for years. This is how many Christians try to live their lives. Misunderstanding the power of the Holy Spirit, they seek other ways to energize their spiritual lives. [cited in MacArthur, Keys to Spiritual Growth, 80]

HOMESCHOOLING:

German homeschool families are being targeted with a Nazi-era law that never was overturned. It was 1938 when a law was adopted under Adolf Hitler's leadership that eliminated exemptions for homeschoolers to compulsory education laws.

Just a year before, Hitler himself said: "The youth of today is ever the people of tomorrow. For this reason we have set before ourselves the task of inoculating our youth with the spirit of this community of the people at a very early age, at an age when human beings are still unperverted and therefore unspoiled. This Reich stands, and it is building itself up for the

future, upon its youth. And this new Reich will give its youth to no one, but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing."

Homeschooling has been banned in Germany since then. WND has reported over the years on a German teen who was ordered into a psychiatric ward for being homeschooled and parents who were sentenced to jail terms for homeschooling their children.

The current German government has endorsed Hitler's view of homeschooling. In 2003, the German Supreme Court handed down the Konrad decision in which "religiously or philosophically motivated" homeschooling was banned. Four years later, the German Federal Parliament changed a key provision of German child protection law, making it easier for children to be taken away from their parents for supposed "educational neglect." [www.wnd.com/2015/05/homeschool-parents-who-faced-battering-ram-back-in-court/#bSXI5Cx6YI51IHJL.99 - accessed 5/11/15]

HOMOSEXUALITY:

Former Archbishop of Cape Town in South Africa, Desmond Tutu, who died in December 2021, said the following: "I would not worship a God who is homophobic. I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say, sorry, I would much rather go to the other place." Also, "If God's opposed to homosexuality, then he does not worship that God." [Cited by Albert Mohler, *Daily Briefing*, Monday, January 3, 2022]

Homosexuality and male prostitution, for example, were especially characteristic of Greco-Roman society. Plato lauded homosexual love in *The Symposium* (181B). Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote this letter, was about to marry the boy Sporus (Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, 6. 28), an incident bizarre only in its formality, since 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were homosexual or bisexual. [BKC on 1 Cor. 6]

This is an example of how quickly the sexual revolution has impacted our culture since the 1990s. In former Tonight Show host Johnny Carson's opening monologue, he expressed astonishment at a recent TV stunt where two men were married in a civil ceremony:

"Today, during a civil ceremony on the Donahue Show, two men married each other. It is true; I'm not making this up. . . . I mean, what the [heck] is the world coming to - two men got married on television on a daytime show? I'm not lying to you. . . . Where are our standards? [Program dated May 16, 1991]

All of us have desires that are warped as a result of our fallen nature. Desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me. [Sam Allberry, *Is God anti-gay?*, 30]

ATLANTA (AP) — United Church of Christ backs gay marriage. The president of the United Church of Christ said his denomination "acted courageously to declare freedom" when it passed a resolution endorsing same-sex marriage on Independence Day.

The resolution calls on member churches of the liberal denomination's 1.3 million members to consider wedding policies "that do not discriminate against couples based on gender." It

also asks churches to consider supporting legislation granting equal marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and to work against laws banning gay marriage.

Formed in 1957 and traditionally strong in New England, the United Church of Christ has a tradition of support for gays and lesbians. It is distinct from the more conservative Churches of Christ, which has some 2 million members in the U.S.

UCC churches are autonomous, meaning the General Synod does not create policy for its more than 5,700 congregations.

In the early 1970s, the denomination became the first major Christian church to ordain an openly gay minister. The church declared itself to be "open and affirming" of gays and lesbians 20 years ago.

"This is a significant moment," said the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, of Cleveland, coordinator of a church coalition addressing gay and lesbian issues. She said the decision emphasizes that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are "spiritual people who love and are loved by God." But Becker does not think Monday's vote was representative of the wishes of most church members.

"If we had put it to a vote of the people in the pews, it would have failed overwhelmingly," he said. "This is truly Independence Day for the UCC — we have declared ourselves independent from the teachings of Jesus and the clear teachings of Scripture." [USATODAY.com Posted 7/5/2005 9:18 AM Updated 7/5/2005 9:31 AM]

Utah Polygamist Uses Lawrence v. TX as Defense - This past summer's U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down state sodomy laws is having predictable results. Tom Green, a Utah polygamist now says the ruling supports his lifestyle as well. His argument goes something like this: What he does with his five wives (including one he "married" who was only 13) in the privacy of his home should be protected just as homosexuals are now protected under the sodomy ruling. While Green will likely lose his case if it ends up in the U.S. Supreme Court, it is certainly probable that court-mandated "privacy" will soon cover not only homosexual conduct and "marriage," but polygamy and all sorts of other sexual deviances as well. Our modern-day courts are moved more by public opinion than Constitutional dictates. Green has yet to gain favorable attention of the liberal elites who editorialize on network news or on the front pages of The Washington Post, New York Times and other leading papers. Harvard law professors are not leading students into the streets on Green's behalf; not yet anyway. But if our culture and our courts continue down their current path, it won't be long until polygamy is added to the growing list of protected rights in America. [Family Research Council Bulletin via Email, Dec. 3, 2003]

In 1970, at the beginning stages of the gay sexual revolution, Kinsey Institute researchers found that 40 percent of white homosexuals in San Francisco had at least 500 sexual partners and 28% reported over 1000 sexual partners. [cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 57)]

In response to a question about her pro-homosexual attitude and her claim to be a Christian:

"Well, I have a different view of 'Christian' than you do. I'm a follower of Jesus Christ, but the Jesus Christ I follow embraces and loves everybody, and the God I serve doesn't care whether you're tall or short, or whether you were born mentally retarded, or whether you were born black or Asian or gay." [Oprah Winfrey, cited in AFA Journal, July, 1997]

One pastor recites his experience with the homosexual movement while in California:

"While in San Francisco, I was appalled to see a [man] proudly walking the streets in bikini underwear. Others wore nuns' habits while claiming the title of 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.' I saw some dressed as women complete with dress, a wig, and make-up. Others were adorned with multiple gold earrings; in the ears, nose, lip, and even the forehead. They openly caressed one another and kissed their lovers, even in the chamber of the Board of Supervisors. Despite these austere surroundings and the presence of 20 uniformed police, they swore at preachers of the gospel, spitting on them, and kicking them. All this under the soothing words of a member of the Board who assured them that they were loved and had nothing to fear. One man wore a T-shirt which read "God is gay." [James Binney]

HOPE & HOPELESSNESS:

"My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am or shall be or feel or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has done, and in what He is now doing for me. Hallelujah!" [Charles Spurgeon, updated English by Alistair Begg]

"A young Bible School student was called in before the dean for some unacceptable sin. Whatever he was told, the gifted student concluded that for him there was no future. After a lengthy search for him, his body was found in a back room of his old New England church. He had hung himself in the choir robe in which he formally sang. Pinned to the robe was a note with two words: 'no hope.'" (cited in G. Lewis & B. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 2.494-95)

In writing about our hope as believers, and the fact that what we hope for is yet future, Spurgeon says, "These . . . subjects of hope . . . are beyond our present experience. Let us not be discouraged about this. Hope must have something to feed on. We cannot have all of heaven and yet remain on earth. My dear believer, if you feel tormented by sin within you and your holiness seems battered and spotted, you can be fully persuaded that He who has promised complete salvation is able to do it.

Do not judge yourself any longer by what you do, what you see, what you feel, or what you are. Rise into the sphere of the things that will be. When there is no joy in the present, you can know that there is infinite joy in the future. Do not say, 'Oh, but that is a long way off.' That is not true. Many of you . . . may be sixty, seventy, or even eighty years old. Your time to be with Christ cannot be far away, for the thread of your life is snapping. Some of us are middle-aged, but . . . our lease will soon run out also. And since so many people are

snatched away in their prime, we may at any moment be caught up to the land for which we hope. . . . We will be serving the Lord day and night in His temple and will be gazing on His face with unspeakable joy. Even if some of us should be doomed to exile from heaven for another fifty years, the time will soon fly away.

Let us work to our utmost for the glory of God while we are still here on earth, for the moments slip away. Do you remember this time last year? It seems like it was only the other day. Boys and girls think that a year is a long time, but older folks have a different opinion. The years no longer seem long to us, now that we are growing gray. For me, time travels so fast that its axles are hot with speed. Fear exclaims, 'Oh, for a little breathing room!' But hope answers, 'No, let the years fly away, for then we will be home all the sooner.'

Let us project ourselves into the future. We do not need much dynamite of imagination to send us there. We can leap that little distance by hope and seat ourselves among the thrones above. Resolve, at least for today, that you will not linger in a cloudy earthbound frame of mind, but will mount to the bright, cloudless eternity. Oh, to leave these muddy streams and bathe in the river of hope whose crystal waters flow from the pure foundation of divine joy." [C.H. Spurgeon, *Finding Peace in Life's Storms* (New Kenstington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997), 28-29]

I am sure the poorest saint that breathes will not exchange, were it in his power, that which he hath in hope and in reversion, for the possession of as many worlds as there be stars in heaven, or sands in the sea. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 128]

"We are all chained [to fate] . . . All of us are in custody, the binders as well as the bound . . . some are chained by office, some by wealth; some weighted down by high birth, some by low; some are subject to another's tyranny, some to their own; some are confined to one spot by banishment, some by a priesthood. All life is bondage." [The Roman Philosopher Seneca. Cited in Archetypes of Wisdom]

One cynical writer, H.L. Mencken, an American newspaperman during the early half of this century, referred to hope as "a pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible." [cited in Swindoll, Hope Again, 15]

HUMANISM:

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins — all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects

them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. . . .

"Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; . . . proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power." [Bertrand Russell, cited by Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 76]

"There is a death wish inherent in humanism--the impulsive drive to beat to death the base which made our freedoms and our culture possible." -Francis Schaeffer, *How should we then Live?* pg. 226

As Eric Hoffer (1902-1983) once said, "When freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom."

"But let us be realistic in another way, too. If we as Christians do not speak out as authoritarian governments grow from within or come from outside, eventually we or our children will be the enemy of society and the state. No truly authoritarian government can tolerate those who have a real absolute by which to judge its arbitrary absolutes and who speak out and act upon that absolute." [Francis Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, page 254]

"In our day, humanistic reason affirms that there is only the cosmic machine, which encompasses everything, including people. To those who hold this view everything people are or do is explained by some form of determinism, some type of behaviorism, some kind of reductionism." [Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*, page 180]

Note Francis Schaeffer's story about hearing a lecture by George Wald, former professor of chemistry at Harvard. He believed all things are the product of chance. During the lecture, he said, "Four hundred years ago there was a collection of molecules named Shakespeare which produced Hamlet." Man, beginning with a proud humanism a few centuries ago, tried to make himself autonomous and rather than becoming great, he found himself to be nothing more than a collection of molecules! Out of nothing man has come, nothing man is. [*How Shall We Then Live?*]

"There is a death wish inherent in humanism--the impulsive drive to beat to death the base which made our freedoms and our culture possible." [Francis Schaeffer, *How Shall We Then Live?* 226]

The Madman by Friedrich Nietzsche:

Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling out unceasingly: "I seek God! I seek God!" As there were

many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of amusement. Why? is he lost? said one. Has he strayed away like a child? said another. Or does he keep himself hidden? Is he afraid of us? Has he taken a sea voyage? Has he emigrated? - the people cried out laughingly, all in a hubbub.

The insane man jumped into their midst and transfixed them with his glances. "Where is God gone?" he called out. "I mean to tell you! We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it now move? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction? - for even Gods putrify! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!

How shall we console ourselves, the most murderous of all murderers? The holiest and the mightiest that the world has hitherto possessed, has bled to death under our knife - who will wipe the blood from us? With what water could we cleanse ourselves? What lustrums, what sacred games shall we have to devise? Is not the magnitude of this deed too great for us? Shall we not ourselves have to become Gods, merely to seem worthy of it? There never was a greater event - and on account of it, all who are born after us belong to a higher history than any history hitherto!" Here the madman was silent and looked again at his hearers; they also were silent and looked at him in surprise.

At last he threw his lantern on the ground, so that it broke in pieces and was extinguished. "I come too early," he then said. "I am not yet at the right time. This prodigious event is still on its way, and is traveling - it has not yet reached men's ears. Lightning and thunder need time, the light of the stars needs time, deeds need time, even after they are done, to be seen and heard. This deed is as yet further from them than the furthest star - and yet they have done it themselves!" It is further stated that the madman made his way into different churches on the same day, and there intoned his Requiem aeternam deo. When led out and called to account, he always gave the reply: "What are these churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God?"

"God is dead." What are the implications of our bold pronouncement? When a man dies he leaves a void in many places. His wife is husband-less. His children are father-less. A gaping void is ripped in their lives as noticeable as if it were a hole carved in their own chests. If God is dead, then all mankind must now be God-less. What voids are left in the universe the day after God's funeral dirge has been sung?

If God was eternal and has now ceased to be, then we must reconstruct our conceptions of eternity. Time itself must now be our eternity and today and tomorrow are our heaven and hell. If God was good and now is nothing, then we must decide what our code of ethics will be. We are good, therefore our desires will be our standard. Whatever is desirable is good and the undesirable will be evil. If God was light and has

faded into darkness, what tool will we use to illuminate our universe? The light of our own Reason will carry us through the dark nights after the light of God's funeral pyre fades. If God was all-powerful yet was overcome, who will now control destiny? Surely, someone must rise to power and sit upon the throne. We must then be resigned to a pantheism of force; it must be 'us' or it will be 'them.' If God's words defined Truth but his mouth has been silenced, what language will we express transcendence through? Image is Truth and all must be silent before the irrefutable facts conveyed in our captured Images. Only in seeing is believing justified. Image is Truth without need of interpretation. No priest or prophet is needed to tell us what we see with our own eyes and feel within our own breasts. If God commanded our prayers and is now dishonored and vanquished, who then will we worship and serve? Our worship is our own and we are free in it. We have in ourselves surpassed temples, shrines and idols. Our thoughts are our prayers and we choose our own sacrifices to place on our own altars which we have made with our own hands for our own glory.

We must go to God's tomb and spread his ashes to the wind. A few will weep and mourn, others will mock and jest. Most stand in silence. All will attend. We will prepare to absorb the weight of omniscience and the responsibility of determining our own purpose. We will read God's Last Will and Testament, then close the book on this chapter of our own evolution.

The ancient scroll is unceremoniously opened. Ink on paper as dust on sand. A child is chosen to read its words; she will lead us in our final Requiem Aeternam Deo. Her lip quivers just a moment. One word whispers across the echoes, blaspheming. "Resurrection." The blood on our hands becomes warm as the blood in our hearts turns cold. What if He returns, just like the last time we put Him to death?

The first Humanist Manifesto referred to humanism as a religion. Even the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961), recognized that secular humanism was a religion: "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God, are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others." Biologist and humanist Julian Huxley called it "Religion without revelation." [David Limbaugh, *Persecution*, 66, 67]

"Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism. What can the theistic Sunday Schools, meeting for an hour each week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?" [Written in 1929 by Charles F. Potter in *Humanism: A New Religion*, cited in David Limbaugh, *Persecution*, 65]

I recently read the following poem in the book "Can Man Live Without God" It is loaded with sarcasm, and it reflects well the philosophy of life as expressed by the people that I talk with every day. It would be funny if it were not so true.

Our Creed

We believe in Marx Freud and Darwin.
We believe everything is OK
as long as you don't hurt anyone,
to the best of your definition of hurt,

and to the best of your knowledge.

We believe in sex before, during, and
after marriage.

We believe in the therapy of sin.

We believe that adultery is fun.

We believe that sodomy's OK.

We believe that taboos are taboo.

We believe that everything's getting better
despite evidence to the contrary.

The evidence must be investigated

And you can prove anything with evidence.

We believe in there's something in horoscopes,
UFO's and bent spoons;

Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, and ourselves.

He was a good moral teacher although we think His good morals were bad.

We believe that all religions are basically the same--
at least the one that we read was.

They all believe in love and goodness.

They only differ on matters of creation,
sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.

We believe that after death comes Nothing
Because when you ask the dead what happens
they say nothing.

If death is not the end, if the dead have lied, then it's
compulsory heaven for all
excepting perhaps Hitler, Stalin, and Genghis Khan.

We believe in Masters and Johnson.

What's selected is average.

What's average is normal.

What's normal is good.

We believe in total disarmament.

We believe there are direct links between warfare and
bloodshed.

Americans should beat their guns into tractors
and the Russians would be sure to follow.

We believe that man is essentially good.

It's only his behavior that lets him down.

This is the fault of society.

Society is the fault of conditions.

Conditions are the fault of society.

We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him.

Reality will adapt accordingly.

The universe will readjust.

History will alter.

We believe that there is no absolute truth
excepting the truth
that there is no absolute truth.

We believe in the rejection of creeds,
and the flowering of individual thought.

(Written by Steven Turner, quoted in the book "Can Man Live without God")

As part of their experiment to make visitors thing about their ties to nature, the Copenhagen Zoo put a human couple--Henrik Lehmann and Malene Botoft--in a see-through plexiglass cage, next to the baboons and monkeys. The fully clothed primates moved into their home in August of 1996. "Our neighbors probably wondered what we're doing here," said Lehmann, a 35 year old acrobat who came up with the idea.

Lehmann awoke one morning to see a baboon staring at them from its cage a few yards away. Their 320 square foot habitat has a living room with furniture, a computer, a television and a stereo--all personal belongings of the couple. There also are a kitchen and a bedroom where the couple's sleeping habits are in view.

Unlike their neighbors, who aren't allowed out, the two humans leave their fish bowl occasionally to shop and water the flower on their porch back home. They also have privacy when showering or using the bathroom. "We don't notice visitors any longer," said Lehmann. "If I want to pick my nose or my toes now, I do it." [From "The Bergen (N.J.) Record," cited in Tribune Newspapers Parade section, December 29, 1996]

HUMILITY:

Jesus' call to selfless humility (Mt 23:11-12): 'Words we mute within our minds as we work to make ourselves great in the minds of others.'

There is an apocryphal story about a man who had two visions, a vision of hell followed by a vision of heaven.

In the first vision, that of hell, he saw a large ornate banquet table with all kinds of lavish food and drink. It was a beautiful scene. But all those sitting around the table were emaciated with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks.. The food had not been eaten for their arms were like long forks – too long for them to bend their elbows to reach their mouths. They were frustrated and angry in their eternal attempt to satisfy their craving for that which was in front of them, but was impossible to consume. Satan sat at the head of the table laughing hysterically.

In the second vision, that of heaven, he saw a similar scene. There again was the banquet table with all kinds of food and drink. At the head of the table was the Lord, Jesus Christ.

He was smiling. Around the table were the saints. They were robust and healthy, filled with joy. But how could this be? They, too, had arms like long forks, arms which were too long to feed themselves. But then, the man looked again. They were not feeding themselves. They were happily extending their arms across the table to feed one another.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote the following about the surest way to pursue humility:

There is only one thing I know of that crushes me to the ground and humiliates me to the dust, and that is to look at the Son of God, and especially contemplate the cross.

When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gain I count but loss And pour contempt on all my pride

Nothing else can do it. When I see that I am a sinner . . . that nothing but the Son of God on the cross can save me, I'm humbled to the dust . . . nothing but the cross can give us this spirit of humility." [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, cited in C.J. Mahaney, *Humility*, 66]

Every time we look at the cross Christ seems to be saying to us, "I am here because of you. It is your sin I am bearing, your curse I am suffering, your debt I am paying, your death I am dying." Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size. [John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 179]

"The pleasures of humility are really the most refined, inward, and exquisite delights in the world." [Jonathan Edwards, *Diary Memoir of Jonathan Edwards*, March 2nd 1723]

Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness." C.J. Mahaney, *Humility: True Greatness*, 22]

"It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself." [John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I:38]

Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, and at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces; it makes a man joy in every fight that outshines his own, and every wind that blows others good. [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 209-10]

Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the meanest saint. Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him, and pray for those that persecute him. A humble heart is an habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of angels, a preserver of grace, and a fitter for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties. Humility cannot find three things on this side heaven: it cannot find fullness in the creature, nor sweetness in sin, nor life in an

ordinance without Christ. A humble soul always finds three things on this side heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the meanest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition. Humility honours those that are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak in grace. Humility makes a man richer than other men, and it makes a man judge himself the poorest among men. Humility will see much good abroad, when it can see but little at home. Ah, Christian! though faith be the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is the beautifier of grace; it casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah! did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, froward, and sour, and they would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others and low thoughts of a man's self; it will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in a man's self; it will make a man see others rich, and himself poor; others strong, and himself weak; others wise, and himself foolish. [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*]

Resolved, To act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God. [Jonathan Edwards, Resolution 8]

At the feast of ego everyone leaves hungry.

"Take care that you use your talents for your Master, and for your Master only. It is disloyalty to our Lord if we wish to be soul-winners in order to be thought to be so. It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we even preach sound doctrine with the view of being thought sound, or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our Lord's glory with a single eye, and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord's gospel, and our Lord's people, and our Lord's talents, for our Lord, and for Him alone." [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students*, from the chapter entitled "Stewards". Now published by Banner of Truth Trust]

There is a story of a certain corporal and a general two centuries ago. The general as he rode along saw group of men endeavoring to lift some timber. They were shorthanded, and the work was not going well. Their corporal stood by and repeatedly yelled orders at them. The general passed and said, "Why don't you lend them help and put your shoulder into it?" "Why sir," said the lofty corporal, "How can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!" The general got off his horse, pulled off his coat, and helped move the timber, and by his efforts the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and mighty corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you want a man to do such work as this you can send for me: I am General George Washington."

"Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility...Real humiliation is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid show of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, grossly fail in...Pure Christian humility disposes a person

to take notice of every thing that is good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings..." -Jonathan Edwards.

There once was a church member who received recognition for being the humblest man in the entire church. As an award, the church gave him a pin to wear. The following Sunday he wore it and they took it away from him for being proud.

"We may easily be too big for God to use, but never too small." [D.L. Moody]

"Don't be so humble - you are not that great. " [Golda Meir (1898-1978) to a visiting diplomat]

"Before you shoot the arrow of truth, dip it in honey."

An anonymous Puritan years ago wrote this as he pondered, at least in part, 1 Peter 2:24:

"O Lord, No day of my life has passed that has not proved me guilty in Your sight. Prayers have been uttered from a prayerless heart; Praise has been often praiseless [noise]. My best services are filthy rags. Blessed Jesus, let me find a [shelter] in Your appeasing wounds. Though my sins rise to heaven, Your merits soar above them; Though unrighteousness weights me down to hell, Your righteousness exalts me to Your throne. All things in me call for my rejection, All things in You plead my acceptance. I appeal from the throne of perfect justice to Your throne of perfect grace. Grant me to hear Your voice assuring me: that by Your stripes I am healed, that You were bruised for my iniquities, that You have been made sin for me that I might be righteous in You, that my grievous sins, my manifold sins, are all forgiven, buried in the ocean of Your concealing blood.

I am guilty, but pardoned; lost, but saved; wandering, but found; sinning, but cleansed. Give me perpetual broken-heartedness. Keep me always clinging to Your cross. Flood me every moment with descending grace, Open to me the springs of divine knowledge, sparkling like crystal flowing clear and unsullied through my wilderness of life." [cited in Richard Mayhew, *The Healing Promise*, 260]

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." [prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi]

"Humility! The sweetest loveliest flower that bloomed in Eden, and the first that died, has rarely blossomed since on mortal soil. It is so frail, so delicate a thing, tis gone if it but look upon itself; and he who ventures to esteem it proves by that single thought he has it not." [Unknown]

"I have heard of a gentleman who had a most intense desire to preach, and pressed his suit upon his minister, until after a multitude of rebuffs he obtained leave to preach a trial

sermon. That opportunity was the end of his importunity, for upon announcing his text he found himself bereft of every idea but one, which he delivered feelingly, and then descended the rostrum. 'My brethren,' said he, 'if any of you think it an easy thing to preach, I advise you to come up here and have all the conceit taken out of you.'" [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 25-26]

C.H. Spurgeon, in speaking to his students at the Pastor's College, reminded them that the great English preacher, Robert Hall, upon his first experience with preaching, "Broke down altogether three times and cried, 'If this does not humble me, nothing will.'" [Lectures to My Students, 25]

"For alas! I frequently have to bemoan and mourn over my non-success and shortcomings as a speaker." [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, 26]

"To be laughed at is not great hardship to me. I can delight in scoffs and jeers. Caricatures, lampoons, and slanders are my glory. But that you should turn away from your mercy, this is my sorrow. Spit on me, but, oh, repent! Laugh at me, but, oh, believe in my Master! Make my body as the dirt of the streets, but damn not your own souls!" [C.H. Spurgeon]

"What I once highly esteemed I now look upon with disgust. What I once could lean upon, and prop up my soul with, and think would take me safe into eternity, I now see was only the deceits of the flesh and the delusion of Satan. Of all my sins my profession seems to be the greatest. I can look upon the street pacing harlot and think her nearer the kingdom of God than me. I can look upon those who are living in open profanity, and feel that their sins are not equal to mine; for I have been a presumptuous professor; I have touched the holy things of God with unholy hands. I have been thought more highly of by the people of God than there was any reason." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:102-103.]

"Take care, brethren; for if we think we can do anything of ourselves, all we shall get from God will be the opportunity to try. He will thus prove us, and let us see our inability. A certain alchemist, who waited upon Pope Leo X, declared that he had discovered how to transmute the baser metals into gold. He expected to receive a sum of money for his discovery, but Leo was no such simpleton; he merely gave him a huge purse in which to keep the gold which he would make. There was wisdom as well as sarcasm in the present. That is precisely what God does with proud men; He lets them have the opportunity to do what they boasted of being able to do. I never heard that so much as a solitary gold piece was dropped into Leo's purse, and I am sure you will never be spiritually rich by what you can do in your own strength. Be stripped, brother, and then God may be pleased to clothe you with honor, but not till then." [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, Chapter 6, "Light, Fire, Faith, Life, Love."]

HUMOROUS STORIES:

A bagpiper from Kentucky was asked by a local funeral director to play his pipes at a graveside service for a homeless man who had no surviving family members.

The meager grave side service was to be at a county cemetery in the back woods of Kentucky. The bagpiper got lost and arrived 45 minutes late. He didn't see a hearse but he did see a crew filling in a grave.

He felt bad and apologized to the men for being late. Feeling sorrow for this man who had no one to memorialize his passing, he began to play.

The workers put down their shovels and gathered around. The bagpiper played his heart out finishing with a powerful rendition of Amazing Grace.

It was so powerful and emotive that the workers began to weep.

When the piper had finished he said a quick prayer, packed up his bagpipes and started for his car. As he opened the door he heard one of the workers say, "I have never seen anything like this before and I've been installing septic tanks for thirty years."

Jenny, Jenny (867-5309) by Tommy Tutone:

The song, released in late 1981, initially gained popularity on the American West Coast in January 1982; many who had the number soon abandoned it because of unwanted calls.

"When we'd first get calls at 2 or 3 in the morning, my husband would answer the phone. He can't hear too well. They'd ask for Jenny, and he'd say 'Jimmy doesn't live here any more.' (...) Tommy Tutone was the one who had the record. I'd like to get hold of his neck and choke him." —Mrs. Lorene Burns, an Alabama householder formerly at 205-867-5309; she changed her number in 1982.

In some cases, the number was picked up by commercial businesses or acquired for use in radio promotions.

- In 1982, WLS radio obtained the number from a Chicago woman, receiving 22,000 calls in four days.
- In 1982, Southwest Junior High School received up to two hundred calls daily asking for Jenny in area code 704.
- In 2013, the number was still ringing up fifty misdialled calls daily for Florida realtor Carrie Routt in area code 850.
- A study on the security of numerical passwords in 2012 revealed that 8675309 is the fourth most common 7-digit password, speculating that it is easy to remember because of the popularity of this song, despite being otherwise fairly random (as opposed to the #1 most common 7-digit password: 1234567).
[<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/867-5309/Jenny>, accessed 12/1/15]

In the classified ad section of a small-town newspaper the following ad appeared on Monday:

FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

On Tuesday this correction - NOTICE: We regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: One sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7:00 p.m.

On Wednesday this correction - R.D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows - FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him.

Finally on Thursday - NOTICE: I, R.D. Jones have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 958-2020 as the telephone has been disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit.

Saturday, July 21, 2007

How To Measure Height Of Building By Barometer - Amazing Story

..."Some time ago I received a call from a colleague. He was about to give a student a zero for his answer to a physics question, while the student claimed a perfect score. The instructor and the student agreed to an impartial arbiter, and I was selected. I read the examination question:

Question: show how is it possible to determine the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer.

The student had answered, "Take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower it to the street, and then bring the rope up, measuring the length of the rope. The length of the rope is the height of the building."

The student really had a strong case for full credit since he had really answered the question completely and correctly! On the other hand, if full credit were given, it could well contribute to a high grade in his physics course and to certify competence in physics, but the answer did not confirm this.

I suggested that the student have another try. I gave the student six minutes to answer the question with the warning that the answer should show some knowledge of physics. At the end of five minutes, he had not written anything. I asked if he wished to give up, but he said he had many answers to this problem; he was just thinking of the best one. I excused myself for interrupting him and asked him to please go on.

In the next minute, he dashed off his answer which read: "Take the barometer to the top of the building and lean over the edge of the roof. Drop the barometer, timing its fall with a stopwatch. Then, using the formula $x=0.5*a*t^{^2}$, calculate the height of the building."

At this point, I asked my colleague if he would give up. He conceded, and gave the student almost full credit. While leaving my colleague's office, I recalled that the student had said that he had other answers to the problem, so I asked him what they were.

"Well," said the student, "there are many ways of getting the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer. For example, you could take the barometer out on a sunny day and measure the height of the barometer, the length of its shadow, and the length of the shadow of the building, and by the use of simple proportion, determine the height of the building."

"Fine," I said, "and others?"

"Yes," said the student, "there is a very basic measurement method you will like. In this method, you take the barometer and begin to walk up the stairs. As you climb the stairs, you mark off the length of the barometer along the wall. You then count the number of marks, and this will give you the height of the building in barometer units."

"A very direct method."

"Of course. If you want a more sophisticated method, you can tie the barometer to the end of a string, swing it as a pendulum, and determine the value of g at the street level and at the top of the building. From the difference between the two values of g , the height of the building, in principle, can be calculated."

"On this same tact, you could take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower it to just above the street, and then swing it as a pendulum. You could then calculate the height of the building by the period of the precession".

"Finally," he concluded, "there are many other ways of solving the problem.

Probably the best," he said, "is to take the barometer to the basement and knock on the superintendent's door. When the superintendent answers, you speak to him as follows: 'Mr. Superintendent, here is a fine barometer. If you will tell me the height of the building, I will give you this barometer.'"

At this point, I asked the student if he really did not know the conventional answer to this question. He admitted that he did, but said that he was fed up with high school and college instructors trying to teach him how to think.

The student was Neils Bohr and the arbiter was Ernest Rutherford.

Traveling down the interstate and needing to use the restroom, I stopped at a rest area and headed to the restroom. I was barely sitting down when I heard a voice from the other stall saying: "Hi, how are you?" I'm not the type to start a conversation in the restroom and I don't know what got into me, But I answered, somewhat embarrassed, "Doin' just fine!" And the other person says: "So what are you up to?" What kind of question is that? At that point, I'm thinking this is too bizarre so I say: "Uhhh, I'm like you, just traveling!"?? At this point I am just trying to get out as fast as I can when I hear another question. "Can I come over?" Ok, this question is just too weird for me but I figured I could just be polite and end the conversation.. I tell them "No..I'm a little busy right now!!!" Then I hear the person say nervously... "Listen, I'll have to call you back. There's an idiot in the other stall who keeps answering all my questions."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. She said, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, " 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.' " Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

A father was at the beach with his children when his four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

A new monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to help the other monks in copying the old texts by hand. He notices, however, that they are copying copies and not the original books. So, the new monk goes to the head monk to ask him about this. He points out that if there was an error in the first copy, that error would be continued in all the other copies. The head monk says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son." So, he goes down into the cellar with one of the copies to check it against the original. Hours later, nobody has seen him. So, one of the monks goes downstairs to look for him. He hears sobbing coming from the back of the cellar and finds the old monk leaning over one of the original books, crying. He asks what's wrong. The old monk looks up and sobs, "The word is 'celebrate.'"

Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him \$50." The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song and they give him \$100." The third boy says, "I've got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"

A new teacher was trying to use her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks their stupid, stand up! After a few seconds, little Johnny stood up. The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid Johnny?" "No, ma'am, but I hated to see you standing there all by yourself!"

Little Johnny watched, fascinated, as his mother smoothed cold cream all over her face. "Why do you do that, mommy?" he asked. "To make myself beautiful," said his mother, who then began removing the cream with a tissue. "What's the matter?" asked little Johnny. "Giving up?"

Little Johnny's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures, tacked to a bulletin board, of the 10 most wanted criminals. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. "Yes," said the policeman. "The detectives want very badly to capture him." Little Johnny then asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny, a child in the kindergarten class, seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him

lying down as though he were ill, and said, "Johnny what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

One Sunday morning the pastor noticed little Johnny was standing staring at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The young man of seven had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up and stood beside him. Gazing up at the plaque he said quietly, "Good morning son." "Good morning pastor," replied the young man, not taking his eyes off the plaque. "Sir, what is this?" Johnny asked... "Well son, these are all the people who have died in the service",replied the pastor. Soberly, they stood together staring up at the large plaque... Little Johnny's voice barely broke the silence when he asked quietly,"Which one sir, the 8:30 or the 10:30?"

After World War II, a general and his young lieutenant boarded a train in England. The only seats left were across from a beautiful young lady and her grandmother. The general and the lieutenant sat facing the women. As the train pulled out, it went through a long tunnel. For about ten seconds there was total darkness. In the silence of the moment those on the train heard two things--a kiss and a slap. Everyone on the train had his or her own perception of what happened. The young lady thought to herself, "I'm flattered that the lieutenant kissed me, but I'm terribly embarrassed that Grandmother hit him!" The grandmother thought, "I'm aggravated that the young man kissed my granddaughter, but I'm proud she had the courage to retaliate!" The general sat there, thinking to himself, "My lieutenant showed a lot of guts in kissing that girl, but why did she slap me by mistake?" The lieutenant was the only one on the train who really know what happened. In that brief moment of darkness he had the opportunity to kiss a pretty girl and slap his general!"

A true story relates the humor of child-hood innocence. A grandmother and her 10 year old granddaughter were spending the evening together when the young girl suddenly looked up and asked, "How old are you, Grandma?" The woman was a bit startled at the question, but knowing her granddaughter's quick little mind she wasn't at all shocked. "Well, honey, when you're my age you don't share your age with anyone." "Aw, go ahead, Grandma . . . you can trust me," the little girl replied. "No dear, I never tell anyone my age" was Grandma's reply.

Grandmother got busy fixing supper and then she suddenly realized the little girl had been absent for about 20 minutes--much too long! She checked around upstairs in her bedroom and found that her granddaughter had dumped the contents of her purse on top of the bed and was sitting in the midst of the mess, holding her grandmother's driver's license. When their eyes met, the child announced: "Grandma, you're 76." "Why yes, I am. How did you know that?" "I found the date of your birthday here on your driver's license and subtracted that year from this year . . . so you're 76!" "That's right, sweetheart. Your grandmother is 76." The little girl continued staring at the driver's license and added, "you also got an F in sex." [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 12]

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied,"Because people are sleeping."

A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Catlin, the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: " Leads us not into temptation ," she prayed "but deliver us some e-mail. Amen."

Psalm 23 - the computer version

The Lord is my programmer, I shall not crash.
He installed His software on the hard disk of my heart,
All of His commandments are user friendly,
His directory moves me to the right choices for His name's sake.
Even though I scroll through the problems of file,
I will fear no bugs, for You are my backup;
Your password protects me;
You prepare a menu before me in the presence of my enemies;
Your help is only a key away.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
And my file will be merged with His and saved forever.

There is an apocryphal story about a multi-millionaire who bought a beautiful mansion and invited hundreds of guests to see it. After touring the manicured grounds he brought them to a huge swimming pool in the court-yard which just happened to be filled with alligators. The rich man explained, "I value courage above all else. In fact, courage is what made me what I am today. I believe that courage is such a powerful virtue that if anyone here has the courage to jump into this pool and swim to the other side I will reward him with anything he wants: my house, my land, my money." Of course, everyone laughed at the suggestion and proceeded to follow the owner back to the house for dinner . . . when suddenly they heard a splash. Turning around they saw one of the men frantically swimming across the pool, with alligators in hot pursuit. After several death defying seconds, the man made across to the other side unharmed. The rich host was absolutely amazed, but he stuck to his promise. He said, "You are indeed a man of courage and I will stick to my word. What do you want? You can have anything--my house, my land, my money--just tell me and it's yours." The man, dripping wet and breathing heavily looked at his host and replied, "I just want to know one thing: who pushed me into that pool?"

"France has neither winter nor summer nor morals. Apart from these drawbacks it is a fine country. France has usually been governed by prostitutes." --Mark Twain

"I would rather have a German division in front of me than a French one behind me." --General George S. Patton

"Going to war without France is like going deer hunting without your Accordion." --Norman Schwartzkopf

"We can stand here like the French, or we can do something about it." --Marge Simpson

"As far as I'm concerned, war always means failure." --Jacques Chirac, President of France.
"As far as France is concerned, you're right." --Rush Limbaugh

"The only time France wants us to go to war is when the German Army is Sitting in Paris sipping coffee." --Regis Philbin

"You know, the French remind me a little bit of an aging actress of the 1940s who was still trying to dine out on her looks but doesn't have the face for it." -- John McCain , U. S. Senator from Arizona

"The last time the French asked for 'more proof' it came marching into Paris under a German flag." --David Letterman

"Only thing worse than a Frenchman is a Frenchman who lives in Canada." --Ted Nugent

"War without France would be like . . . World War II." --Unknown

"The favorite bumper sticker in Washington D. C. right now is one that says 'First Iraq, then France.'" --Tom Brokaw

"What do you expect from a culture and a nation that exerted more of its National will fighting against Disney World and Big Macs than the Nazis?" --Dennis Miller

"It is important to remember that the French have always been there when they needed us."
--Alan Kent

"They've taken their own precautions against al-Qa'ida. To prepare for an attack, each Frenchman is urged to keep duct tape, a white flag, and a three-day supply of mistresses in the house." --Argus Hamilton

1

"Somebody was telling me about the French Army rifle that was being advertised on eBay the other day -- the description was, 'Never shot. Dropped once.'" --Rep. Roy Blunt, MO

"The French will only agree to go to war when we've proven we've found truffles in Iraq "
--Dennis Miller

Q. What did the mayor of Paris say to the German Army as they entered the city in WWII?
A. Table for 100,000 m'sieur?

"Do you know how many Frenchmen it takes to defend Paris ? It's not known, it's never been tried."---Rep. R. Blount, MO.

"Do you know it only took Germany three days to conquer France in WWII? And that's because it was raining." --John Xereas, Manager, DC Improv

The AP reported that the French Government announced after the London bombings that it has raised its terror alert level from Run to Hide. The only two higher levels in France are Surrender and Collaborate.

The rise in the alert level was precipitated by a recent fire which destroyed France 's white flag factory, effectively disabling their military.

French Ban Fireworks at Euro Disney. (AP), Paris, March 5, 2003. The French Government announced today that it is imposing a ban on the use of fireworks at Euro Disney. The decision comes the day after a nightly fireworks display at the park, located just 30 miles outside of Paris, caused the soldiers at a nearby French Army garrison to surrender to a group of Czech tourists.

A drunk man who smelled like beer sat down on a subway seat next to a priest. The man's shirt was stained and his face was plastered with red lipstick. A half empty bottle of gin stuck out of his coat pocket. He opened a newspaper and began reading. After a few minutes the man turned to the priest and asked, "Say, Father, what causes arthritis?" "My Son, it's caused by loose living, being with cheap, wicked women, too much alcohol and a contempt for your fellow man." Well, I'll be!" the drunk muttered, returning to his paper. The priest, thinking about what he had said, nudged the man and apologized. "I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?" "I don't have, Father. I was just reading here that the Pope does."

There was a family who had a pet duck that became deathly ill. So the husband takes the duck to their vet. The doctor examines the duck, who had since stopped moving, and pronounces him dead. The man asks him, "Are you certain? Maybe he's just in a coma. I demand you do some tests." So the vet leaves the room and returns a moment later with a Labrador retriever. The dog sniffs the duck, looks at the doctor and shakes his head "no." The man still wasn't convinced that his duck was dead, so the doctor again leaves the room returning this time with a large cat. The cat jumped up on the table, sniffed the duck, and also shook his head, "no." The vet turns to the astonished man and says, "100 percent certain that your duck is dead." He put the duck in a box and handed the man a bill that totaled 150.00. "A hundred and fifty bucks!" the man objected. Just to tell me that my duck is dead?! "Had you taken my initial word for it," the doctor replied, "it would have only been 50.00. But since you didn't, I had to order a Lab report and a cat scan."

The story is told of a young supermarket clerk working in the produce department. As he is stacking some fruit, an elderly woman approaches him with an unusual request.

"Sonny, I'd like to buy half a head of cabbage."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am, but we only sell them whole."

"I know, dear, but I was wondering if you could make an exception for me. You see, my husband died many years ago. I'm all alone and have no one else to help me eat the cabbage."

"Well, I know that must be difficult, but I just don't think we can sell you half a head of cabbage. How about if I go into the back and pick out the freshest head of cabbage I can find for you. Hopefully, it will last longer."

"Thank you, young man, but I'd rather just have half a head. Would you mind asking the produce manager if he would be willing to sell me half a head?"

Irritated at her persistence, the clerk utters a "let me check," along with a forced smile. He finds the manager in the fruit section doing inventory.

"There's an old hag who wants us to sell her half a head of cabbage!"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth that he sees that the old woman has followed him and overheard what he had said. With a smile on his face, he extends his hand in a loving gesture toward the woman as if continuing his thought: "And this dear woman would like the other half."

The manager decides to make an exception, sells the woman half a cabbage, and comments to the clerk, "Great recovery, kid! That was amazing. I've never seen anyone think on his feet as quickly as you just did."

Thank you, sir. I grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania, and learned how to get out of jams quickly."

"You're from Reading, Pennsylvania?"

That's right. Reading, Pennsylvania, the home of ugly women and great hockey players."

All of a sudden, the produce manager's face turns beet red. "Young man, I'll have you know that my wife is from Reading, Pennsylvania."

"Really?" says the clerk. "What team did she play for?"

A drunken cowboy lay sprawled across three entire seats in the posh Amarillo Theater. When the usher came by and noticed this, he whispered to the cowboy, "Sorry, sir, but you're only allowed one seat." The cowboy groaned but didn't budge. The usher became more impatient: "Sir, if you don't get up from there I'm going to have to call the manager." Once again, the cowboy just groaned. The usher marched briskly back up the aisle, and in a moment he returned with the manager. Together the two of them tried repeatedly to move the cowboy, but with no success Finally, they summoned the police. The Texas Ranger surveyed the situation briefly then asked, "All right buddy what's your name?" "Sam," the cowboy moaned. "Where ya from, Sam?" asked the Ranger. With terrible pain in his voice, and without moving a muscle, Sam replied,"... the balcony".

An older lady gets pulled over for speeding... Older Woman: Is there a problem, Officer? Officer: Ma'am, you were speeding. Older Woman: Oh, I see. Officer: Can I see your license please? Older Woman: I'd give it to you but I don't have one. Officer: Don't have one? Older Woman: Lost it, 4 years ago for drunk driving. Officer: I see...Can I see your

vehicle registration papers please. Older Woman: I can't do that. Officer: Why not? Older Woman: I stole this car. Officer: Stole it? Older Woman: Yes, and I killed and hacked up the owner. Officer: You what? Older Woman: His body parts are in plastic bags in the trunk if you want to see. The Officer looks at the woman and slowly backs away to his car and calls for back up. Within minutes 5 police cars circle the car. A senior officer slowly approaches the car, claspig his half drawn gun. Officer 2: Ma'am, could you step out of your vehicle please! The woman steps out of her vehicle. Older woman: Is there a problem sir? Officer 2: One of my officers told me that you have stolen this car and murdered the owner. Older Woman: Murdered the owner? Officer 2: Yes, could you please open the trunk of your car, please. The woman opens the trunk, revealing nothing but an empty trunk. Officer 2: Is this your car, ma'am? Older Woman: Yes, here are the registration papers. The officer is quite stunned. Officer 2: One of my officers claims that you do not have a driving license. The woman digs into her handbag and pulls out a clutch purse and hands it to the officer. The officer examines the license. He looks quite puzzled. Officer 2: Thank you ma'am, one of my officers told me you didn't have a license, that you stole this car, and that you murdered and hacked up the owner. Older Woman: Bet the liar told you I was speeding, too.

[May insert any names in this joke] George and Laura Bush and Bill and Hilary Clinton are traveling by train to the Super Bowl. At the station George and Laura each buy a ticket and watch as Bill and Hilary buy just one ticket. "How are the two of you going to travel on only one ticket?" asks George W, astonished at what he is seeing. "Watch and learn," answers Hilary.

They all board the train. George and Laura take their respective seats but Bill and Hilary cram into a toilet together and close the door. Shortly after the train has departed, the conductor comes around collecting tickets. He knocks on the toilet door and says, Ticket, please."The door opens just a crack and a single arm emerges with a ticket in hand. The conductor takes it and moves on. The Bushes see this happen and agree it was quite a clever idea, so after the game they decide to try a similar plan on the return trip.

When they get to the station they see the Clinton's at the window buying a single ticket for the return trip. To their astonishment, the Clinton's see that the Bushes don't buy any ticket at all. "Aren't you taking a terrible chance by traveling without a ticket?" says Hilary. "Live and learn," answers Laura Bush.

When they board the train the Bushes cram themselves into a toilet and the Clinton's cram into another toilet just down the way. Shortly after the train leaves the station, George W. leaves their toilet and walks over to The Clinton's toilet, knocks on their door and says, "Ticket, please."

Little Johnny's neighbors had a baby. Unfortunately, the baby was born without ears. When mother and new baby came home from the hospital Johnny's family was invited over to see the baby. Before they left their house, Little Johnny's dad had a talk with him and explained that the baby had no ears. His dad also told him that if he so much as mentioned anything about the baby's missing ears or even said the word ears he would get the spanking of his life when they came back home. Little Johnny told his dad he understood completely. When Johnny looked in the crib he said, "What a beautiful baby." The mother said, Why, thank

you, Little Johnny." Johnny said, "He has beautiful little feet and beautiful little hands, a cute little nose and really beautiful eyes." "Can he see?" asked Little Johnny. "Yes", the mother replied, "we are so thankful; the Doctor said he will have 20/20 vision "That's great", said Little Johnny, "cuz he'd be up a creek if he needed glasses."

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet and says, "My dog's cross-eyed; is there anything you can do for him?" "Well," says the vet, "let's have a look at him." So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally, he says, "I'm going to have to put him down." "What? Because he's cross-eyed?" "No, because he's really heavy."

There was once a handyman who had a dog named "Mace." Mace was a great dog except he had one strange habit: He liked to eat grass. Not just a little bit, but in great amounts. He loved grass! One day the handyman lost his wrench in the tall grass while he was working outside. He looked and looked, but it was nowhere to be found. As it was getting dark, he gave up for the night and decided to look the next morning. When he awoke, he went outside and saw that his dog had eaten the grass all in the area where the man had been working the previous day. His wrench now lay in plain sight, shining in the sun. Going out to get his wrench, the man called the dog over to him and declared, "A grazing Mace, how sweet the hound, that saved a wrench for me."

The story is told of a man by the name of Joe who wasn't feeling very well and went to see his family doctor. After running a battery of tests, the doctor sat the man down and said, "Joe, I've got some pretty bad news for you." "Give it to me clean doc," Joe replied. "Well Joe, you've got some serious heart problems; but that's not all: you are also in the initial stages of senility." Joe looked at the doctor and replied, "gee, at least my heart's O.K."

The story is told of the Mexican bandit who robbed a Texas bank of \$250,000 and escaped across the river. A month went by and the bandit thought he was safe. He was celebrating his good fortune at a local cantina (that's a bar, folks) when a Texas Ranger walked up and dragged him out into the dusty street.

After he realized he had a communication problem, the Ranger poked his head back into the bar: "Anybody here speak English?" he shouted. "I do, senior." came the reply. "Then come here." the Ranger ordered.

Alone in the street, the conversation between Ranger, translator and bandit began. "Did he rob the bank?" "He did. "Does he still have the \$250,000?" Yes again. Then the ranger pulled out his Colt .45, held the barrel of the gun to the bandit's head and cocked the trigger. "Make sure he understands this next question real good." The Ranger told the translator. "WHERE'S THE MONEY?"

In Spanish the frightened bandit blurted out that the money was hidden in a waterproof bag at the bottom of the well in the town plaza. The translator looked up at the Ranger: "He says he is not afraid to die!"

The importance of correct interpretation can be illustrated by the "Pilot Gripe Sheet" which some pilots use after every flight to convey to the mechanics problems encountered with the aircraft during the flight that need repair or correction. The form is a piece of paper that the

pilot completes and then the mechanics read and correct the problem. They then respond in writing on the lower half of the form what remedial action was taken and the pilot reviews the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews and engineers lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems as submitted by Qantas pilots and the solution recorded by maintenance engineers. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never had an accident. (P = the problem logged by the pilot. S = the solution and action taken by the engineers.)

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Loose nut in the cockpit.

S: Medical check up ordered for Pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Auto pilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what they're there for.

P: IFF inoperative.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

A blonde is driving home and she gets caught in a really bad hail storm. The hail is as big as tennis balls, and she ends up with her car covered with large dents. So the next day she takes her car to the repair shop. The shop owner, seeing she is blonde, decides to have a little fun. He tells her just to go home and blow into the tail pipe, really hard, and all the dents will just pop out. The blonde drives home, gets out of the car, gets down on her hands and knees and starts blowing into the tail pipe. Nothing happened. So she blew a little harder, and still nothing happens. Meanwhile, her roommate, also a blonde, comes home and asks, "What in the world are you doing?" The blonde car owner tells her how the repairman had instructed her to blow into the tailpipe in order to get all the hail dents to pop out. Her blonde roommate rolls her eyes and says, "Hellooo!? Don't you think you should roll up the windows first?"

In light of the news of the so-called human cloning going on, we have to ask ourselves the hypothetical question. If you pushed your naked clone off the top of a tall building, would it be: A) murder, B) suicide, or C) merely making an obscene clone fall?

A blonde, wanting to earn some money, decided to hire herself out as a handyman type person and started canvassing a well-to-do neighborhood. She went to the front door of the first house and asked the owner if he had any jobs for her to do. "Well, you can paint my porch. How much will you charge?" The blonde said "How about 50 dollars?" The man agreed and told her that the paint and other materials that she might need were in the garage. The man's wife, inside the house, heard the conversation and said to her husband, "Does she realize that the porch goes all the way around the house?" The man replied, "She should, she was standing on it." A short time later the blonde came to the door to collect her money. "You're finished already?" he asked. "Yes," the blonde answered, "and I had paint left over, so I gave it two coats." Impressed, the man reached in his pocket for the \$50. "And by the way," the blonde added, "it's not a Porch, it's a Lexus."

A blonde gal was speeding on the freeway when she happened to be stopped by an equally blonde police woman. The police woman asked the blonde driver, "You were going a good 10 mph over the speed limit. Let me see your driver's license and registration." The blonde driver began to rifle through her purse. Obviously flustered, she asked the blonde police woman, "Can you help me? I don't know what my driver's license looks like." The police woman replied, "It's small and square and has your picture on it." A moment later the blonde driver pulled a small rectangular pocket mirror from her purse and, looking into it, declared, "Here it is!" She handed it to the blonde police officer who looked at it and declared, "Okay, I didn't realize you were a police officer--you're free to go."

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon: with great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." And then finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down. The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365: "Shall We Gather at the River."

A little village in the Czech Republic was being terrorized by two huge black bears who were killing their livestock and had even attacked and killed a villager. A hunting party was organized. The small group separated into two groups to better cover the area. Almost immediately, a shot rang out and a loud cry went up from one group. The other group hurried over and found the villagers crowded around the body of one of the bears. "Where is Pavel?" asked a villager. "The male bear ate him and ran away!" cried the leader of the group that had killed the bear. "How do you know it was a male that ate Pavel?" "Why, you can see that we have shot the female; therefore, the Czech is in the male."

The Babylonian general and his army were in pursuit of a renegade who had stolen secret papers from the king. Their search led them to a temple ruin, an ancient ziggurat, and from the center arose a plume of smoke. Storming the ziggurat, the general discovered the renegade trying to build a fire so he could destroy the stolen papers. The thief was captured before he could damage the papers. The moral of the story: The searchin' general has determined that smoking ziggurats is hazardous to your stealth.

An Amish boy and his father were visiting a mall for the first time. They were amazed by almost everything they saw, but especially by two shiny, silver walls that could move apart and back together again. The boy asked his father, "What is this Father?" The father (never having seen an elevator) responded, "Son, I have never seen anything like this in my life, I don't know what it is." While the boy and his father were watching wide-eyed, an old lady in a wheel chair rolled up to the moving walls and pressed a button. The walls opened and the lady rolled between them and into a small room. The walls closed and the boy and his father watched small circles of light with numbers above the wall light up. They continued to watch the circles light up in the reverse direction. The walls opened up again and a beautiful 24 year old woman stepped out. The father said to his son, "Go get your Mother."

Ol' Fred had been a faithful Christian and was in the hospital, near death. The family called their preacher to stand with them. As the preacher stood next to the bed, Ol' Fred's condition appeared to deteriorate and he motioned frantically for something to write on. The pastor lovingly handed him a pen and a piece of paper, and Ol' Fred used his last bit of energy to scribble a note, then he died. The preacher thought it best not to look at the note at that time, so he placed it in his jacket pocket. At the funeral, as he was finishing the message, he realized that he was wearing the same jacket that he was wearing when Ol' Fred died. He said, "You know, Ol' Fred handed me a note just before he died. I haven't looked at it, but knowing Fred, I'm sure there's a word of inspiration there for us all." He opened the note, and read, "Hey, you're standing on my oxygen tube!"

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY READING LIST

Military Agriculture / by Colonel O'Corn

Exotic Irish Plants / by Phil O'Dendron

Irish Dentistry / by Perry O'Dontal

Green Lawn Chairs / by Patty O'Furniture

Irish First Aid / by R.U. O'Kaye

Irish Flooring / by Lynn O'Leum

The Irish Heart Surgeon / by Angie O'Plasty

Smoker's Cough / by Nick O'Teen

The LA Lakers' Breakfast / by Kareem O'Wheat
Because I Say So! / by Frank O. Pinion
Not Bugged Down In Reality / by Jason Rainbows
Wouldn't You Know It / by Murphy Slaw

POLITICALLY CORRECT FOOTBALL

The Politically Correct National Football League would like to announce its name changes and schedules for the upcoming season:
The Washington Native Americans will host the New York Very Tall People on opening day. Other key games include the Dallas Western-Style Laborers hosting the St. Louis Uninvited Guests, and the Minnesota Plundering Norsemen taking on the Green Bay Meat Industry Workers.
In Week 2, there are several key match-ups, highlighted by the showdown between the San Francisco Precious Metal Enthusiasts and the New Orleans Pretty Good People. The Atlanta Birds of Prey will play host to the Philadelphia Birds of Prey, while the Seattle Birds of Prey will visit the Phoenix Male Finches.
The Monday night game will pit the Miami Pelagic Percoid Food Fishes against the Denver Untamed Beasts of Burden. The Cincinnati Large Bangladeshi Carnivorous Mammals will travel to Tampa Bay for a clash with the West Indies Free Booters later in Week 9. And the Detroit Large Carnivorous Cats will play the Chicago Securities-Traders-in-a-Declining-Market.
Week 9 also features the Indianapolis Young Male Horses at the New England Zealous Lovers of Country.

LIFE IN THE HEADLINES (Biblical headlines as might be written by today's media)

On Red Sea crossing:
WETLANDS TRAMPLED IN LABOR STRIKE
Pursuing Environmentalists Killed

On David vs. Goliath:
HATE CRIME KILLS BELOVED CHAMPION
Psychologist Questions Influence of Rock

On Elijah on Mt. Carmel:
FIRE SENDS RELIGIOUS RIGHT EXTREMIST INTO FRENZY
400 Killed

On the birth of Christ:
HOTELS FULL, ANIMALS LEFT HOMELESS
Animal Rights Activists Enraged by Insensitive Couple

On feeding the 5,000:
PREACHER STEALS CHILD'S LUNCH
Disciples Mystified Over Behavior

On healing the 10 lepers:

LOCAL DOCTOR'S PRACTICE RUINED "Faith Healer" Causes Bankruptcy

On healing of the Gadarene demoniac:
MADMAN'S FRIEND CAUSES STAMPEDE
Local Farmer's Investment Lost

On raising Lazarus from the dead:
PREACHER RAISES A STINK
Last Will & Testament Reading Delayed
--Author unknown.

From the Old "How Many Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb" File of Jokes:

1. How many Charismatics does it take to change a light bulb? One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.
2. How many Calvinists does it take to change a light bulb? None. God has predestined when the light will be on. Calvinists do not change light bulbs. They simply read the instructions and pray the light bulb will be one that has been chosen to be changed.
3. How many Armenians does it take to change a light bulb? All. They need everyone to make sure it stays on. One can never really be sure.
4. How many Baptists does it take to change a light bulb? Change???
5. How many neo-orthodox does it take to change a bulb? No one knows. They can't tell the difference between light and dark.
6. How many TV evangelists does it take to change a light bulb? One. But for the message of light to continue, send in your donation today.
7. How many independent fundamentalists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, because any more might result in too much cooperation.
8. How many liberals does it take to change a light bulb? At least ten, as they need to hold a debate on whether or not the light bulb exists. Even if they can agree upon the existence of the light bulb, they still might not change it, to keep from alienating those who might use other forms of light.
9. How many Catholics does it take to change a light bulb? None. They always use candles.
10. How many worship leaders who use guitars does it take to change a light bulb? One. But soon all those around can warm up to its glowing.
11. How many members of an established fundamental Bible teaching church that is over 20 years old does it take to change a light bulb? One to actually change the bulb, and nine to say how much they liked the old one.
12. How many United Methodists does it take to change a light bulb? This statement was issued: "We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb (or light source, or non-dark resource), and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life, and tinted-all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence."
13. How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb? "What's a light bulb?"

14. How many youth pastors does it take to change a light bulb? Youth pastors aren't around long enough for a light bulb to burn out.

15. How many Southern Baptists does it take to change a light bulb? 109. Seven on the Light Bulb Task Force Subcommittee, who report to the 12 on the Light Bulb Task Force, appointed by the 15 on the Trustee Board. Their recommendation is reviewed by the Finance Committee Executive of 5, who place it on the agenda of the 18 member Finance Committee. If they approve, they bring a motion to the 27 member church Board, who appoint another 12 member review committee. If they recommend that the Church Board proceed, a resolution is brought to the Congregational Business Meeting. They appoint another 8 member review committee. If their report to the next Congregational Business Meeting supports the changing of a light bulb, and the Congregation votes in favor, the responsibility to carry out the light bulb change is passed on to the Trustee Board, who in turn appoint a 7 member committee to find the best price in new light bulbs. Their recommendation of which Hardware Store has the best buy must then be reviewed by the 23 member Ethics Committee to make certain that this hardware store has no connection to Disneyland. They report back to the Trustee Board who, then commissions the Trustee in charge of the Janitor to ask him to make the change. By then the janitor discovers that one more light bulb has burned out.

Girl Potato and Boy Potato had eyes for each other, and finally they got married, and had a little sweet potato, which they called 'Yam.' Of course, they wanted the best for Yam.

When it was time, they told her about the facts of life. They warned her about going out and getting half-baked, so she wouldn't get accidentally mashed, and get a bad name for herself like 'Hot Potato,' and end up with a bunch of Tater Tots. Yam said not to worry, no Spud would get her into the sack and make a rotten potato out of her! But on the other hand she wouldn't stay home and become a Couch Potato either.

She would get plenty of exercise so as not to be skinny like her Shoestring cousins.

When she went off to Europe, Mr. and Mrs. Potato told Yam to watch out for the hard-boiled guys from Ireland. And the greasy guys from France called the French Fries. And when she went out west, to watch out for the Indians so she wouldn't get scalloped.

Yam said she would stay on the straight and narrow and wouldn't associate with those high class Yukon Golds, or the ones from the other side of the tracks who advertise their trade on all the trucks that say, 'Frito Lay.'

Mr. and Mrs. Potato sent Yam to Idaho P.U. (that's Potato University) so that when she graduated she'd really be in the Chips. But in spite of all they did for her, one-day Yam came home and announced she was going to marry Tom Brokaw.

Tom Brokaw! Mr. and Mrs. Potato were very upset. They told Yam she couldn't possibly marry Tom Brokaw because he's just..... A COMMON TATER !!

It is with the saddest heart I have to pass on the following: Please join me in remembering a great icon, veteran Pillsbury spokesperson, the Pillsbury Doughboy, who died yesterday

of a severe yeast infection and complications from internal injuries due to repeated pokes in the belly.

He was 71. Doughboy was buried in a slightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out, including Mrs. Butterworth, the California Raisins, Hungry Jack, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, Captain Crunch and more.

The gravesite was piled high with flours as longtime friend, Aunt Jemima, delivered a sweet eulogy, describing the Doughboy as "a man who never knew how much he was kneaded". Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with many turnovers. He was not considered a very smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes.

Despite being a little flaky at times he was still, a crusty old man, considered a roll model for millions.

Toward the end it was thought he'd recover from his sick-bed, but as things turned out, he didn't pop up. However, he was a Christian so we know that someday he will rise.

Doughboy is survived by his wife, Play Dough. They have two children and one in the oven. The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.

A pastor visited his church members one Saturday. At one house it was obvious that someone was home, but nobody came to the door, even though the pastor knocked several times. Finally, the pastor took out his card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it on the door. Revelation 3:20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me." The next day the card turned up in the collection plate. Below the pastor's message was the notation "Genesis 3:10 - I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself." (author unknown)

HYMN STORIES

Horatio G. Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago during the 1800s. He had a lovely family: wife, Anna, and five beautiful children.

The Spaffords were not strangers to suffering.

Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire. For the Spaffords, however, the worst was yet to come.

Here's how the story unfolds.

On November 21, 1873, the French ocean liner, Ville du Havre was crossing the Atlantic on its way to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters.

Although Mr. Spafford had planned to go with the family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to address an unexpected business problem. He told his wife he would join her and their children in Europe a few days later by way of another ship.

Some 4 days into the journey across the Atlantic, the French liner collided with an iron-hulled Scottish ship, the Loch Earn. Chaos erupted.

Anna hurriedly brought her 4 children to the deck and knelt there praying that God would spare them if that would be His will.

Some 12 minutes after being struck their liner slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic, carrying with it 226 of the passengers, including the 4 Spafford children.

Anna was spotted floating alone on a piece of wreckage. She was rescued and taken to Wales. From there she wired her husband a message which began, "Saved alone, what shall I do?"

Another of the ship's survivors later recalled Anna saying:

"God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Horatio Spafford booked passage on the next available ship & left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about 4 days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children drowned.

It was at this time that Spafford wrote the great hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul."

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

HYPOCRISY:

Understand first how great a duty the profession of true religion is, that you may not think as some foolish people, that every man should conceal his religion, or keep it to himself. Observe, therefore, these reasons following which require it. Our tongues and bodies are made to exercise and show forth that acknowledgment and adoration of God which is in our heart. And as he denieth God with the heart who doth not believe in him and worship him in his heart, so he denieth God imputatively with his tongue and life, who doth not profess and honor him with his tongue and life, and so he is a practical atheist.

The public assemblies and worship of God, are purposely appointed by him, that in them we might make open profession of our religion. He that denieth profession, denieth the public faith and worship of the church, and denieth baptism and the Lord's supper, which are . . . appointed for the solemn profession of our faith.

Our profession is needful to our glorifying God. Men see not our hearts, nor know whether we believe in God or not, nor what we believe of him, till they hear or see it in our profession and actions. Our profession is the means of saving others: They must see our good works that they may glorify God. [Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, 563]

R.C. Sproul, in his book, Objections Answered, tells about a young Jewish boy who grew up in Germany many years ago. The boy had a profound sense of admiration for his father, who saw to it that the life of the family revolved around the religious practices of their faith. The father led them to the synagogue faithfully.

In his teen years, however, the boy's family was forced to move to another town in Germany. This town had no synagogue, only a Lutheran church. The life of the community revolved around that church and all the best people belonged to it. Suddenly, the father announced to the family that they were all going to abandon their Jewish traditions and join the Lutheran church. When the stunned family asked him why, the father explained that it would be "good for his business." The son was shocked and confused. His deep disappointment soon gave way to anger and intense bitterness.

He later left Germany and went to England to study. Each day found him at the British Museum formulating his ideas and composing a book. In that book he introduced a whole new world view and conceived a movement that was designed to change the world. He described religion as the "opiate for the masses." He committed the people who followed him to life without God. His ideas became the norm for the governments of almost half the world's population. His name? Karl Marx, founder of the Communist movement.

What does it mean to be a "hypocrite?" Basically hypocrites present themselves as something or someone other than who they really are. An example of this is given by W. Robert Cook, who for years taught systematic theology at Western Seminary in Portland:

"Several years ago, in a trip to Greece, I visited the ancient site of Epidaurus. Among the things I saw was a magnificent outdoor theater dating back to the 3d century B.C. It has near perfect acoustics due to the mathematical precision with which it was planned and built. It is said that all 12,000 people could hear the slightest breath or the tearing of a piece of paper from the stage without any amplification. As she was describing this remarkable sight to us I noticed that our Greek guide was continually referring to the "hypocrites" who performed on the stage. On occasion, as she would remember her audience was American, she would restate herself and speak of the "actors."

This is what it means to be a hypocrite. It means you are an "actor" playing a role that's not really who you are.

The story is told of a young supermarket clerk working in the produce department. As he is stacking some fruit, an elderly woman approaches him with an unusual request.

"Sonny, I'd like to buy half a head of cabbage."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am, but we only sell them whole."

"I know, dear, but I was wondering if you could make an exception for me. You see, my husband died many years ago. I'm all alone and have no one else to help me eat the cabbage."

"Well, I know that must be difficult, but I just don't think we can sell you half a head of cabbage. How about if I go into the back and pick out the freshest head of cabbage I can find for you. Hopefully, it will last longer."

"Thank you, young man, but I'd rather just have half a head. Would you mind asking the produce manager if he would be willing to sell me half a head?"

Irritated at her persistence, the clerk utters a "let me check," along with a forced smile. He finds the manager in the fruit section doing inventory.

"There's an old hag who wants us to sell her half a head of cabbage!"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth that he sees that the old woman has followed him and overheard what he had said. With a smile on his face, he extends his hand in a loving gesture toward the woman as if continuing his thought: "And this dear woman would like the other half."

The manager decides to make an exception, sells the woman half a cabbage, and comments to the clerk, "Great recovery, kid! That was amazing. I've never seen anyone think on his feet as quickly as you just did."

Thank you, sir. I grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania, and learned how to get out of jams quickly."

"You're from Reading, Pennsylvania?"

That's right. Reading, Pennsylvania, the home of ugly women and great hockey players."

All of a sudden, the produce manager's face turns beet red. "Young man, I'll have you know that my wife is from Reading, Pennsylvania."

"Really?" says the clerk. "What team did she play for?"

IDENTITY:

A name is symbolic of a person's identity. This was especially true during biblical times. "Abraham" means "father of a multitude." "Moses" means "draws out." "Jesus" means "God saves." In ancient tribal cultures people were often named for something in nature such as "sitting bull" and "red cloud." In the middle ages, children born on a saint's day were often named after that saint. The Puritans started naming their children after virtues, such as Faith, Prudence, or after other abstractions such as Increase. Many families name their children after a loved one, such as a parent, grandparent or another ancestor or person of admiration. Today, however, it seems that the main criteria for a name is that it sounds

good. Some parents, to ensure individuality, make up unique names out of unusual spellings or vocalizations. Many others name their children after pop icons (decades from now, adults will find themselves saddled with the names of then-old fashioned pos stars who happened to be popular when they were born). A new trend in baby names is taking the pop-culture influence to a new level. Cleveland Evans, a psychology professor at Nebraska's Bellevue University and a member of the American Name Society, studied Social Security records for the year 2000 and found that many children today are being named after consumer products. 22 girls were named "Infiniti" (not with a "y" as in the attribute of God, but with an "i" as in the car brand). 55 boys were named "Chevy" and 5 girls carried the name "Celica." Hundreds of children were named after clothing companies. There were 298 girls named "Armani," 164 more after the more casual "Nautica," and 6 boys were named "Timberland" (after the boot). Fabrics also come into play. 5 girls were named "Rayon," 6 boys were named "Cashmere," 7 were named "Denim" and 5 "Cotton" (though perhaps this was for Increase Mather's son). 49 boys were named "Canon" (after the camera?) And 7 were named Del Monte (after the canned vegetable company?). 21 girls were named "L'Oreal" after the hair dye (maybe to let them know "you are worth it."). 23 girls and 6 boys were named "Skyy" with two "y's" (this is a brand of Vodka). Parents named their children after other alcoholic beverages, also. For example, 9 girls were named "Chianti." The ultimate product for name for a new baby that was uncovered by Mr. Evans was "ESPN." Two separate parents, one in TX and the other in MI, named their sons after the sports cable network. (A reporter for the Dallas Morning News tracked down one of the families and found that the correct pronunciation of the name is "Espan.") Not that there's anything wrong with having an unusual name, which, as in Johnny Cash's "Boy Named Sue, can be a character building experience (but maybe he should have changed the spelling to "Sioux"). What's the point? Well, for one thing, Christians find their identity in a greater name—in the name of Jesus, "God saves." [Adapted from an article in World Magazine, Nov. 15, 2003]

IDOLATRY:

"The man of business makes money his god. The man of pleasure makes the lust of the flesh his god. The proud man makes his adored self his god. The Pharisee makes self-righteousness his god. The Arminian makes free-will his god. The [legalistic] Calvinist makes dry doctrine his god. The Antinomian makes the perversion of Scripture truth his god. All in one way or other, however, they may differ in the object of their idolatrous worship, agree in this--that they give a preference in their esteem and affection to their peculiar idol above the one true God of Israel." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:101.]

IGNORANCE:

The other day I went into the local religious book store, where I saw a "honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car, and I'm really glad I did. What an uplifting experience followed!

I was stopped at a light at a busy intersection, just lost in thoughts of the Lord, and I didn't notice that the light had changed. That bumper sticker really worked! I found lots of people who loved Jesus. Why, the guy behind me started to honk like crazy. He must really love Jesus Christ because pretty soon, he leaned out his window and yelled His name as loud as he could. It was like a football game, with all his shouting.

Everyone else started honking, too, so I leaned out my window and waved and smiled to all those loving people. Another man started waving at me in a funny way with his finger stuck in the air. I asked my two kids what that meant, they squirmed, looked at each other, giggled and told me that it was the Hawaiian good luck sign, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back.

A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and were walking toward me. I bet they wanted to pray, but just then I noticed the light had changed to yellow, and I stepped on the gas. And a good thing I did, because I was the only driver to get across the intersection. I looked back at them standing there. I leaned way out the window, gave them a big smile and held up the Hawaiian good luck sign and I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful people!

"The Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves." This familiar statement was used in a survey by pollster George Barna on American religious beliefs. 75% of Americans, including more than 40% of those who claim to be born again Christians, agreed with this unbiblical statement, which Mr. Barna said exposes American' belief "that God is merely our assistant, not our foundation." More than 40% of professed evangelicals also said that the Holy Spirit and Satan do not exist. [cited in *World Magazine*, August 19, 2000, 15]

An acquaintance of mine who installs computer equipment related this story. He was installing a network at the public library and heard the following.

Some high school kid came in and asked for a video of Abraham Lincoln giving the Gettysburg Address. When the librarian tells the kid that they don't have it, the kid says, "Well, dude, you ought to think about getting it. You've got videos of President Clinton, and Abraham Lincoln was a much greater president than he was."

Another kid comes to the desk and asks for information on youth in Africa. So the librarian asks the kid if he wants books about growing up in Africa. The kid says, "no I want books about killing old people and people who are vegetables." I didn't have a clue what the kid was saying but the librarian did. He says, "You don't want books on youth in Africa, you want books on Euthanasia."

After these incidents the librarian related some other funny stories:

Some woman calls up and screams to the guy "I have an emergency and I need the telephone number for 911!" He also told me some college student came in once and asked for a photo of the Underground Railroad. A man called the reference library phone and wanted to know how to say hello in sign language over the telephone. A 7th grade kid told him that he had just watched Jurassic Park and wanted a cassette tape of

live dinosaur sounds. Some man called up and wanted the correct spelling for BMW. And finally, another high school kid who was doing a research paper on the White House wanted to know the shape of the Oval Office and what flowers grew in the Rose Garden."

I received this advertisement on December 3, 1998 from P E O P L E U N L I M I T E D - The Infinite A liveness Company.

How Long Do You Want To Live? If you could live to the age of 100 in good health, would you want to? What about 150? What about 250? What about forever? The Choice Is Yours! If you haven't asked yourself these questions, you need to. If you have, you probably want to know more. Either way, join us in an upcoming lecture by International Speakers and Authors James R. Strole and Bernadeane. James and Bernadeane have appeared on numerous television and radio shows including Larry King, Joan Rivers and many others. They have been working in this specialized field of unlimited human life potential for over 25 years.

Where: Mustang Library, 10101 North 90th Street, Scottsdale
Time: 7:30 p.m. - Wednesday, December 16th - \$5 Door Fee
Join Us Right Here In Scottsdale For Our Weekly Meetings

Live Now, Live Forever - Weekly Meetings (Every Monday and Friday - 8:00 p.m.) - Holiday Inn, 7515 East Butherus, Scottsdale Airport. Phone 949-4344 for details.

Perhaps the clearest example you'll ever hear of a tragedy caused by poor judgment took place nearly 40 years ago in a small desert town in Southern California.

It was summer, the heat was insufferable, and so a group of young boys took refuge in a favorite swimming hole--a deep spot in an irrigation ditch on the edge of town. While the teenagers began to play, one boy named Kenny stood on the high bank above the water and watched.

As an innocent prank, one boy squatted low in an area only a few feet deep and pretended to be submerged in water well over his head. The murky water concealed the shallowness of the pool and made the illusion quite convincing. Too convincing.

The boy raised his arms from the water and yelled to his friend. In a flash, Kenny was airborne, leaping head-first from the bank toward the knee-deep water. The boy in the water cried for him to stop, but Kenny was already in flight. He broke the pool's surface and to his shock, instantly met the bottom. The force of the dive drove his body into the thick, packed silt, burying his head and snapping his neck. Nothing could be done for Kenny and within a few days he passed away. [cited in Grace to You monthly newsletter, John MacArthur, dated August 22, 1995]

The famous open-air preacher George Whitefield once asked a man, "What do you believe?" The man replied, "I believe what my church believes." "And what does your church believe?" Whitefield asked. "What I believe," replied the man. Undaunted, Whitefield tried

again and asked, "and what do you both believe?" With that the man replied, "Why we both believe the same thing!" [cited in Wiersbe, Colossians, 23-24]

IMAGES / ART:

Devoid of art in the early centuries...

It comes as a bit of a surprise, then, to realise that for the first two centuries of the church's life, art appears to have played almost no role. Little or nothing in the way of Christian religious art from this period survives.

There could be a number of reasons for this:

- * This was a persecuted, underground church. They had more pressing matters to attend to than the creation of beautiful objects.
- * Given the uncertain conditions in which the church existed, whatever art they did create might not survive.
- * Its Jewish roots might have made the early church wary of painting, sculpture and similar representational art-forms.

Whatever the reason, all that we have from this period is a few symbols, notably the symbol of the fish but also the lamb and the cross, painted on or carved into walls.

Probably the earliest depiction that we have of Christ dates from around 200 AD, and is actually a crude anti-Christian caricature. Found scratched into the wall of a guardroom near the Circus Maximus in Rome, it shows a crucified man with the head of a donkey, and the slogan (in Greek) "Alexamenos worships his god". Most probably, it's a jibe directed by Roman soldiers at a Christian colleague.
[http://www.catholica.com.au/peregrinus1/062_pere_print.php, accessed 12/28/12]

INFANTS:

The godly assembly who produced the Westminster Confession succinctly expressed their belief about children who died in infancy: 'Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when, and where, and how he pleases.' See the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. X. Princeton Theological Seminary professor A. A. Hodge wrote: "The phrase "elect infants" is precise and fit for its purpose. It is not intended to suggest that there are any infants not'. elect, but simply to point out the facts — (1) that all infants are born under righteous condemnation; and (2) that no infant has any claim in itself to salvation; and hence (3) the salvation of each infant, precisely as the salvation of every adult, must have its absolute ground in the sovereign election of God. It is certainly revealed in Scripture that none, either adult or infant, is saved except on the ground of a sovereign election; that is, all salvation for the human race is pure grace. It is not positively revealed that all infants are elect, but we are left, for many reasons, to indulge a highly probable hope, that such is the fact. [See A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith, A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* Expounding the Westminster Confession (Edinburgh Banner of Truth, 1958).] My father, Charles Hodge, at the close of his long life spent in defense of Calvinism, wrote on one of his conference papers, in trembling characters, a little

while before he died, "I am fully persuaded that the vast majority of the human race will share in the beatitudes and glories of our Lord's redemption." Remember that all who die before complete moral agency have been given to Christ.' (See A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976].)

ISLAM:

"It is therefore unthinking to set Islam and Christianity side by side, as if in monotheism at least they have something in common. In reality, nothing separates them so radically as the different ways in which they appear to say the same thing—that there is only one God." [Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II 1, 449]

ISRAEL:

AD 70 Judgment against:

For as our Saviour prophesied concerning Jerusalem, 'that a stone should not be left upon a stone,' so it was fulfilled forty years after his ascension, by Vespasian the emperor and his son Titus, who, having besieged Jerusalem, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died, partly of the sword and partly of the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort; two thousand in one night were embowelled; six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple; the whole city was sacked and burned, and laid level to the ground; and ninety-seven thousand taken captives, and applied to base and miserable service, as Eusebius and Josephus saith. Vespasian brake into their city at Kedron, where they took Christ, on the same feast day that Christ was taken; he whipped them where they whipped Christ; he sold twenty Jews for a penny, as they sold Christ for thirty pence. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 52]

INTEGRITY:

"It is a sad thing to be Christians at a supper, heathens in our shops, and devils in our closets." [Stephen Charnock, cited in Swindoll, *Job*, 189] We could paraphrase the thought in today's language: "It is a sad thing to be Christians at church, pagans at work, and devils when no one else is looking."

A renown Hasidic Rabbi by the name of Zusya once said: "When I die, God will not ask me, 'Why were you not Moses?' When I die, God will ask me, 'Why were you not Zusya?'" "Many poets are not artists for the same reason that many religious men are not saints: they never succeed in being the particular poet or the particular monk they are intended to be by God. They never become the man or the artist who is called of by all the circumstances of their individual lives.

John Calvin wrote on the first page of his monumental theological work *The Institutes*: "Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God."

They waste their years in vain efforts to be dome other poets, some other saint. For many absurd reasons, they are convinced that they are obliged to become somebody else who died 200 years ago and who lived in circumstances utterly alien to their own.

They wear out their minds and bodies in a hopeless endeavor to have somebody else's experience or write somebody else's poems or express somebody else's spirituality." (Thomas Merton, Roman Catholic Philosopher/Theologian; 1915-1968. Cited in *Archetypes of Wisdom*)

JEWS:

From 1466 to 1677 eight Jews, wearing only loincloths, were chosen for mockery in Rome's annual Carnival event just prior to Lent. These eight had to run a distance of 1/4 mile between jeering spectators who threw rocks and garbage at them. And the end of the "race" the men were required to kiss a statue of a pig.

JOY: [General; Circumstances and; Opposite of] - See also "Contentment"

General

"Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that the Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot understand what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." [C. S. Lewis]

It has been said that you can't always have happiness, but you can always give happiness.

Thou, poor soul, who prayest for joy, waitest for joy, complainest for want of joy, longest for joy; thou then shalt have full joy, as much as thou canst hold, and more than ever thou thoughtest on, or thy heart desired. In the meantime walk carefully, watch constantly, and then let God measure out to thee thy times and degrees of joy. It may be he keeps them until thou hast more need. Thou hadst better lose thy comfort than thy safety. If thou shouldst die full of fears and sorrows, it will be but a moment, and they are all gone and concluded in joy inconceivable. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the fears of the upright are but for a moment. God's "anger endureth but a moment; in his favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." O blessed morning! Poor, humble, drooping soul, how would it fill thee with joy now, if a voice from heaven should tell thee of the love of God, the pardon of thy sins, and assure thee of thy part in these joys! What then will thy joy be, when thy actual possession shall convince thee of thy title, and thou shalt be in heaven before thou art well aware. [*The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, chapter 1]

Circumstances and

The Wall Street Journal presented a series of articles entitled "Executive's Crisis," and one story featured Jerald H. Maxwell, a young entrepreneur who founded a successful hi-tech

company. For a while he was considered to be a managerial and financial genius. but just for a while. Then there was a disintegration, a sinkhole collapse:

The day is etched into Jerald H. Maxwell's memory. His family will never forget it, either. To them it is the day he started weeping in his room, the day his exuberant self-confidence ended and his depression began, the day his world--and theirs--came tumbling down.

Maxwell had been fired! Everything fell apart, and he had no ability to handle the situation. The Journal continued:

For the first time in his life, Mr. Maxwell was a failure, and it shattered him. His feeling of defeat led to an emotional breakdown, gnawed away at the bonds between Mr. Maxwell and his wife and four sons and pushed him to the brink . . . "When things fell apart, they felt so bad I was ashamed," Mr. Maxwell recalls. He pauses and sighs, then goes on: "It says in the Bible that all you have to do is ask and you will receive. Well I asked for death many times." [cited in MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 21-22]

Opposite of

There was a very cautious man Who never laughed or played. He never risked, he never tried, He never sang or prayed. And when he one day passed away, His insurance was denied. For since he never really lived, They claimed he never died. [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 191]

Some saints can't enjoy a meal because the world is starving. They can't joyfully thank God for their clothing and shelter because the world is naked and homeless. They are afraid to smile because of the world's sadness. They're afraid to enjoy salvation because of the world's lost ones. They can't enjoy abn evening at home with their families because they feel they ought to be out "saving souls." They can't spend an hour with an unforgiven one without feeling guilty if they haven't preached a sermon or manifested a "sober Christian spirit." They know nothing of balance. And they're miserable because of it. They have no inner incentive to bring people into a relationship with Christ which would make them feel as miserable as they themselves feel. They think the Gospel is "good news" until you obey it and then it becomes an endless guilt-trip.

There are leisure centres, sports centres, sewing centres, diet centres, entertainment centres and guilt centres. This last group is usually called "churches." The endless harping on the string of guilt is part of the reason for all this gloom and uncertainty. [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 104]

JUDGMENT & JUDGING:

Dies Irae: A Melody of Doom

Day of wrath! O day of mourning!
See fulfilled the prophet's warning—
Heaven and earth in ashes burning!
Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth,

When from heav'n the Judge descendeth,
On Whose sentence all dependeth!
Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
Through earth's sepulchers it ringeth,
All before the throne it bringeth.
Death is struck and nature quaking,
All Creation is awaking,
To its Judge an answer making.
Lo! the book exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded;
Thence shall judgment be awarded.
When the Judge His seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Nothing unavenged remaineth.
Ancient Latin hymn Dies Irae

Later,

What shall I, frail man, be pleading,
Who for me be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?
King of majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us!
Think, good Jesus! My salvation
Caused thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation.
Faint and weary Thou hast sought me
On the cross of suffering bought me;
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?
Righteous Judge! For sin's pollution
Grant Thy gift of absolution,
Ere that day of retribution.
Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning,
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning.

"The best of our righteousness is as filthy rags in the presence of a holy God. As Christians we know that we are saved not by our righteousness, but by the One who stood in the gap for us, Jesus Christ himself, who bore the full weight of the true dies irae, the day of God's wrath. On that day, the sun was turned to darkness while he suffered the full weight of the punishment our sins deserved (Matt. 27:45). The earth itself convulsed and the curtain in the temple, the barrier closing off the presence of God in the Most Holy Place, was torn in two, opening up a gap for us to come to God." [Iain M. Duguid, NIV Application Commentary on Ezekiel]

"How rarely we weigh our neighbor in the same balance in which we weigh ourselves."

[Thomas a Kempis]

File under: "Your Sin Will Find You Out / Judgement

The Nazi Next Door—94-Year-Old Nazi Concentration Camp Guard Found Living in Tennessee. The Briefing by Albert Mohler, Wednesday, March 11, 2020

But finally today as we're thinking about evil, moral evil and natural evil, when it comes to moral evil, at least we would like to think that we would know it when we see it. But tell that to neighbors in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who knew their neighbor living in a ranch house as nothing but a kindly old man until he was just ordered deported by the United States government because of his complicity in the Holocaust. Rick Rojas and Richard Fausset writing for the New York Times tell us, "It is perhaps fitting that the decades long search for Nazi collaborators living on United States soil may have reached its conclusion or something close to it in a small city, in an unremarkable ranch house on an equally unremarkable cul-de-sac. By many accounts, the man living inside that house was also seemingly unremarkable, not unlike the dozens of other under-the-radar Nazi collaborators who've been found and prosecuted over the last half century."

This man is 94 years old and that is why the United States Department of Justice believes that it is now winding down its efforts to try to locate and then to deport and bring to justice those who were actively involved in collaborators in the Nazi regime and in particular the killing regime of the Third Reich in the Holocaust, the intentional killing of 6 million Jews and others as well. The arrest of this 94-year-old man living for so many decades in the United States in this ranch house on a quiet street in Oak Ridge, Tennessee was a wakeup call for the man's neighbors who said they could not have imagined that he was, as the United States has now declared, an active collaborator in one of the worst instances of the second World War.

The federal prosecutors convinced the court that Mr. Berger was part of the SS machinery of oppression that kept concentration camp prisoners in atrocious conditions of confinement and the prosecutors went on to point out that this led not only to the injury and emaciation of many of those prisoners, but to their elimination, to their deaths. The prosecutors also pointed out that Mr. Berger had volunteered to wear the Nazi uniform at this point. Many of those who have been arrested or charged with similar kinds of crimes, war crimes defended themselves by saying that they had been coerced into the uniform, but that appears not to have been the case with Mr. Berger.

Remember that the Bible warns us that our sins will find us out. This man at age 94 must have imagined that he had gotten away with it, that he had placed himself in the United States and that he would die in peace in that ranch house in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. But something happened that he could not have envisioned. That was the fact that SS cards identifying him along with other prison camp guards, which had been on a boat that was sunk by the Allies, these cards were discovered in 1950 but they had disintegrated. But modern technology meant that these cards could be reassembled, and thus the names and all the identifying information on those SS cards could now be fully understood, leading to the fact that most of those cards represented human beings long since dead, but not in this case, a 94-year-old man living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The federal judge in this case found Mr. Berger guilty of "willing service as an armed guard of prisoners at a concentration camp where persecution took place," and then ordered his deportation to Germany. But Devora Fish, identified as the director of education for the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, said this: "Every time that somebody is brought to justice, even from 50 years ago or longer, that is a message to the world because we're not going to stop until everybody is brought to justice. Even if it's something you did years ago, it will catch up to you."

Now, sadly, that is not always the case when it comes to a human court of justice, but here's where Christians understand that the Bible makes clear that it will always be the case when it comes to the court and to the justice of Almighty God. On that day before that Judge, all things will be revealed and everything will be made known and there will be the execution of perfect justice to the glory of God alone. It is deeply humbling to us to recognize how little we sometimes see. The neighbors of this man did not see a Nazi war criminal. They just saw an elderly man living in the United States who had come from Germany. But what we cannot see, God sees. On that, we can absolutely depend.

After preaching a sermon on the redemption offered by Christ and the judgement of God for the unbeliever, Dr. James Kennedy was approached by a woman who was obviously upset. "My God would never do that," she declared, referring to the judgement. "Yes ma'am," Dr. Kennedy replied. "Your God would never do that because He is a figment of your imagination." [From "The Voice of the Martyrs" Tom White, May 2003, p. 2]

Harvard biologist, Edward O. Wilson, conducted an insightful experiment with common ants. After noticing that it took ants a few days to recognize one of their crumpled comrades as having died, Wilson discovered that ants identify death among their members by smell and not by sight. As the dead ant's body begins to decay, other ants would invariably carry it out to a specified refuse pile. Wilson eventually pinpointed a trigger chemical called oleic acid. When ants smelled oleic acid on a felled member they would carry him away. Wilson found the instinct so strong that when he daubed oleic acid on small bits of paper the ants toted them to the ant cemetery. Finally, Wilson painted oleic acid on the bodies of live ants. Sure enough their nest-mates seized them—legs and antenna wriggling in protest—out to the refuse pile. These ants, alive but pronounced dead by their peers, would have to meticulously clean themselves off before returning. If they left even a trace of oleic acid on their bodies they would be carried away by more pall-bearer ants.

"God does not pay at the end of every day. But at the end, He pays." [Ann of Austria, 16th c.]

"All of God's Accounts are not settled this month."

"Judge not lest you be judged" (Matthew 7:1).

This is a very familiar maxim, often cited by unbelievers and carnal Christians, as a rebuke to Christians who they regard as intolerant. These words of the Lord Jesus Christ do, indeed, warn us against a self-righteous attitude, condemning others who disagree with us, on the basis of superficial criteria.

On the other hand this caution by no means relieves us of the responsibility of reevaluating the beliefs and practices of others in the light of Scripture. In the very same sermon, in fact, Jesus said just a few moments later: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine," and, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:6,15). Obedience to such commandments obviously requires one to make a judgement as to whether certain unbelievers should be regarded as "dogs" or "swine," to whom it would be counterproductive to try to speak of spiritual matters; or whether certain professing Christian leaders are factually false prophets who should be repudiated.

On another occasion, Jesus said: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement" (John 7:24). We must be judges—in the sense of discerners—but such judgements must not be superficial. They must be *righteous* judgements, taking full account of all relevant background factors and evaluating everything in the light of Biblical criteria.

Since the Scriptures themselves are to be used in the final judgment (note John 12:48; Revelation 20:12, etc.), it is obvious that we should use them right now to discern truth and error, right and wrong, "For the word of God . . . is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

There is also another basis of judgement that the Lord Jesus has authorized us to use. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit . . . Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:18,20). Thus, the two-fold test of Scripture, plus production of good or bad fruit, can serve as the basis of a valid judgement. Until adequate data for making such a test are available, *judge not!* [from Our Daily Bread, Friday, July 19, 1991]

N.T. scholar, D.A. Carson:

"It is easy to see how powerful and dangerous the temptation to be judgmental can be. The challenge to be holy has been taken seriously, and a fair degree of discipline, service and formal obedience have been painstakingly won. Now, I tell myself, I can afford to look down my long nose at my less disciplined peers and colleagues. Or perhaps I have actually experienced a generous measure of God's grace, but somehow I have misconstrued it and come to think that I have earned it. As a result I may look askance at those whose vision, in my view, is not as large as my own; whose faith is not as stable; whose grasp of the deep truths of God not as masterful; whose service record is not as impressive (in men's eyes, at least); whose efforts have not been as substantial. These people are diminished in my eyes; I consider their value as people inferior to my own value. The harping, critical attitude may become so poisonous that men whose spiritual stature, personal integrity, and useful service are all vastly superior to my own, somehow emerge as spiritual pygmies and intellectual paupers by the time I have finished my assessment." [The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5-7, 97-98]

"In ancient Persia a certain corrupt judge who accepted a bribe to render a false verdict was ordered executed by king Cambyses. The judge's skin was then used to cover the judgment

seat. Subsequent judges were forced to render their judgments while sitting on that chair, as a reminder of the consequences of perverting justice." [cited in MacArthur NT Commentary: Matthew 1-7, 435]

"Judge not the workings of his brain,
And of his heart thou cannot see.
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-won field
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield."

The late J. Christy Wilson, pioneer missionary, built a sizeable underground Christian church in Afghanistan. Each Sunday, behind drawn curtains in his home, Afghan converts together with American and other diplomats assembled for worship. When he learned that Dwight Eisenhower planned a trip to Afghanistan in 1959, Mr. Wilson decided to ask the president a favor. The president had just attended the opening of a mosque for Muslim diplomats in Washington. Would the president ask Mohammed Zahir Shar, Afghanistan's king, for permission to build a church for Christian diplomats in Kabul? The request made its way to Mr. Eisenhower through his pastor, Edward Elson. His answer came back: yes. Shortly after Mr. Eisenhower's visit Afghanistan's government granted his request. Plans were drawn and fundraising began. Blind Afghans, students from two schools stated by Mr. Wilson's wife, collected coins for the project. The process was long and difficult, but by 1970 workers had finished building the church. Three years later it was destroyed. Rapidly increasing numbers of Christian converts provoked opposition to Mr. Wilson's work. The government ordered the Wilsons out of the country in March, 1973. It closed Betty Wilson's schools for the blind. Then it ordered the destruction of the church building. Church leaders around the world, including Billy Graham, appealed to the king. German businessman Hans Mohr, who had purchased the lapis lazuli used in the church construction, told the mayor of Kabul: "If your government touches that house of God, God will overthrow your government." On July 17, 1973, soldiers arrived with bull-dozers. They ripped into the new building. They dug 12 feet under the foundation because secret police had informed them of an "underground church" there. While the demolition took place, Christians gathered nearby to pray and later served tea and cookies to the soldiers. On the night government soldiers destroyed the church, coup leaders overthrew the Afghan monarchy. The king's cousin, Mohammed Daoud, took power. Afghanistan has never been the same since. [Mr. Scotchmer, senior editor at the Sentinel Group, published in World Magazine, November 10, 2001]

KNOWLEDGE:

"It is nearly an axiom that people will not be better than the books they read." – Bishop Henry C. Potter (1835 – 1908)

"Some bless themselves that they have a stock of knowledge, but what is knowledge good for without repentance? It is better to mortify one sin than to understand all mysteries." [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 77]

There is no fear of knowing too much, but there is much fear in practising too little. [Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 203]

"No theologian is never more than 80% right." [John Calvin, as cited by R.C. Sproul]

The tree of knowledge may bear many leaves while offering little fruit.

"To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal ideas from many persons is research." [Steven Wright]

"God is like the sun. You cannot look at it. But without it you cannot look at anything else." (G.K. Chesterson)

"There are some people who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge. That is called 'curiosity.' There are some people who seek knowledge that they themselves may be known. That is called 'vanity.' There are some people who seek knowledge in order to sell it. That is called 'dishonorable.' There are some who seek knowledge in order to edify others. That is called 'love.'" [St. Bernard of Clairvoix]

Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

"When I was youth director in a church in Illinois, a boy in the junior department had memorized six hundred verses word perfectly. We even had him on a Christian radio program and tested him on the air. Later we were told someone apparently was stealing money from the junior-department offering each Sunday. A committee was appointed to investigate, and--you guessed it--the kid who knew the six-hundred verses was the culprit. I called him into my office and repeated to him a verse of Scripture (which, by the way, he told me I misquoted). I said, 'Do you see any connection between that verse of Scripture and your stealing from the offering?' 'No,' he said at first. And then, 'Well, maybe there is.' 'What do you think is the connection?' 'I got caught,' he said." [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 95]

"I once asked a pathologist friend in Philadelphia, 'Have you seen many brains?' 'Hundreds of them,' he said. 'Have you ever seen one worn out?' 'I've never seen one even slightly used,' he answered." [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 41]

"I have a constant debate with the Lord. You see, I'm always trying to impress him with how much I know of his word, but for some strange reason he's never impressed. Why should he be? Everything I know is the product of what he has revealed to me. And he's constantly reminding me of how little like Jesus Christ I am." [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 58]

"To fail to learn is to learn to fail"

Read as an act of worship. Read to be elevated into the great truths of God so that you may worship the Trinity in Spirit and in truth. Be selective about what you read, however. Measure all your reading against the touchstone of the Scripture. So much of today's literature is froth. . . . Time is too precious to waste on nonsense. Read more for eternity

than time, more for spiritual growth than professional advancement. Think of John Trapp's warning, "As water tastes of the soil it runs through, so does the soul taste of the authors that a man reads." Before picking up a book, ask yourself: Would Christ approve of this book? Will it increase my love for the Word of God, help me conquer sin, offer abiding wisdom, prepare me for the life to come? Or could I better spend time reading another book? Speak to others about the good books that you read. Conversation about experiential reading promotes experiential living. [Joel Beeke, "The Lasting Power of Experiential Preaching," in Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching, edited by Don Kistler (Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), p. 120]

"The supreme end of Education is the power to tell the genuine from the counterfeit." (Samuel Johnson)

The famous Greek mathematician, Euclid, wrote a formidable 13 volume text for the study of geometry. But Ptolemy I, King of Egypt, wished to learn the subject without laboring through so many books. As a king, he was accustomed to having his way made easy by servants, so he asked if there was a shortcut to mastering geometry. Euclid's reply to the throne was terse: "There is no royal road to learning." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 223]

As one prominent theologian once said, "There is nothing in my heart that has not first been in my head." [cited in Oglivie, Colossians: Loved and Forgiven, 8]

"There are many ways to learn, and I do a little of each one. But what helps me learn principles and how to explain them to someone else is that I always learn from others. You never get too smart or too knowledgeable to learn from others. Lots of times people think they're getting answers from me, but I'm picking their brains at the same time." [the late Dr. Walter Martin, in Witch Hunt, 228-29]

"Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it." [George Santayana]

LANGUAGES, BIBLICAL:

Bill Mounce tells the story about a woman who was being told by her elders that she was not allowed to divorce her unfaithful husband. They based their argument "on the Greek" claiming that Jesus was really saying that "But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, even including sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery" (Mt 5:32).

Mounce goes on to say: beware of people who claim authoritative knowledge based on something you can't check. If they can cite a well-known translation or commentary writer, or if they make a sensible contextual argument, that is one thing. But to dismiss interpretations to the contrary that are held by all translations, be suspicious. [Except for Adultery - Matt 5:32 (Monday with Mounce 159) 15 Oct 2012]

Why English Is Hard to Learn.

We'll begin with box; the plural is boxes, But the plural of ox is oxen, not oxes.

One fowl is a goose, and two are called geese, Yet the plural of moose is never called meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a house full of mice; But the plural of house is houses, not hice.

The plural of man is always men, But the plural of pan is never pen.

If I speak of a foot, and you show me two feet, And I give you a book, would a pair be a beek?

If one is a tooth, and a whole set are teeth, Why shouldn't two booths be called beeth?

If the singular's this and the plural is these, Should the plural of kiss be ever called keese?

We speak of a brother and also of brethren, But though we say mother, we never say methren.

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his, and him; But imagine the feminine . . . she, shis, and shim!

LAW:

By various maxims, forms, and rules,
That pass for wisdom in the schools,
I sought my passion to restrain;
But all my efforts proved in vain.
But since my Savior I have known
My rules are all reduced to One,
To keep my Lord by faith in view,
This strength supplies and motive too. [John Newton]

"It is amazing to me how people can look at and preach about Christ, his life and death and never mention the law. But unless the law of God is satisfied, there is no salvation. The law is opposed to us, it stands there and demands a perfect, absolute obedience and it threatens us with death if we fail in any one respect. If Christ has not fulfilled the law, we are yet in our sins, we are undone, we are damned and we are lost; but he has finished the work, the books have been cleared, the law has been satisfied, there is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Do you know that? Are you rejoicing in it? Are you ready to take your stand with Toplady and say:

'The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do,
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.'"
[D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones]

"The person who can rightly divide Law and Gospel has reason to thank God. He is a true theologian. I must confess that in times of temptation I do not always know how to do it. To divide Law and Gospel means to place the Gospel in heaven, and to keep the Law on earth; to call the righteousness of the Gospel heavenly, and the righteousness of the Law earthly;

to put as much difference between the righteousness of the Gospel and that of the Law, as there is difference between day and night. If it is a question of faith or conscience, ignore the Law entirely. If it is a question of works, then lift high the lantern of works and the righteousness of the Law. If your conscience is oppressed with a sense of sin, talk to your conscience. Say: "You are now groveling in the dirt. You are now a laboring ass. Go ahead, and carry your burden. But why don't you mount up to heaven? There the Law cannot follow you!" Leave the ass burdened with laws behind in the valley. But your conscience, let it ascend with Isaac into the mountain." [Martin Luther, *Galatians* (comment on 2:13)]

"When you see that men have been wounded by the law, then it is time to pour in the gospel oil. It is the sharp needle of the law that makes way for the scarlet thread of the gospel" [Samuel Bolton, cited in Walter Chantry, Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic, 43]

"The law was given, not only as a director of duties, but as a glass to reveal the imperfections in our performance of duties, that so we might be kept humble and vile in our own eyes, and that we might live more out of ourselves and more in Christ. It was given so that we might fly to Christ upon all occasions, as a defiled man flees to the fountain to be washed and cleansed, for in Christ there is mercy to cover, and grace to cure all our infirmities." [Samuel Bolton, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

Law of Mechanical Repair: After your hands become coated with grease your nose will begin to itch. Law of the Garage: Any screw or nut dropped will disappear into thin air. Law of probability: The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act. Ma Bell's Law: When you dial a wrong number, someone always answers. Grocery Law: If you change lines, the one you were in will start to move faster than the one you are in now. Law of the Result: When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will. Murphy's Law of Lockers: If there are only two people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers. Law of Dirty Rugs/Carpets: The chances of an open-faced jelly sandwich of landing face down on a floor covering are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet/rug. Brown's Law: If the shoe fits, it's ugly. Oliver's Law: A closed mouth gathers no feet. Indy's Law: If you go to pass a car the driver will speed up.

LAZINESS: (see also "Discipline")

"Now let me burn out for God" (Henry Martyn, missionary to India).

Alexander Whyte, one of Scotland's Greatest Preachers, once said that: "I would have all lazy students drummed out of the college and all lazy ministers out of the assembly. I would have laziness held to be the one unpardonable sin in all our students and in all our ministers."

If I rest, I rust.
Martin Luther (1483–1546)

it is better to wear out than to rust out.
George Whitefield (1714–1770)

J. Oswald Sanders wrote: "If he is unwilling to pay the price of fatigue for his leadership, it will always be mediocre. . . . True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man, and the more effective the leader he is, the higher the price to be paid." [above cited by MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 166]

Puritan Richard Baxter, wrote in his classic book "The Reformed Pastor":

"The ministerial work must be carried on diligently and laboriously, as being of such unspeakable consequence to ourselves and others. We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's death, to save ourselves and others from damnation, to overcome the devil and demolish his kingdom, to set up the kingdom of Christ, and to attain and help others to the kingdom of glory. And are these works to be done with a careless mind, or a lazy hand? O see, then, that his work be done with all your might! Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow. [Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, 112]

LEADERSHIP: [General; Discipline of; Unrealistic Expectations]

General

The Valley of Vision
A COLLECTION OF PURITAN PRAYERS
A Minister's Prayer

My Lord,
Let not my ministry be approved only by men,
or merely win the esteem and affections of people;
But do the work of grace in their hearts,
call in thy elect,
seal and edify the regenerate ones,
and command eternal blessing on their souls.
Save me from self-opinion and self-seeking;
Water the hearts of those who hear thy Word,
that seed sown in weakness may be raised in power;
Cause me and those that hear me
to behold thee here in the light of special faith,
and hereafter in the blaze of endless glory;
Make my every sermon a means of grace to myself,
and help me to experience the power of thy dying love,
for thy blood is balm,
thy presence bliss,
thy smile heaven,
thy cross the place where truth and mercy meet.
Look upon the doubts and discouragements of my ministry
and keep me from self-importance;
I beg pardon for my many sins, omissions, infirmities,
as a man, as a minister;
Command thy blessing on my weak, unworthy labours,

and on the message of salvation given;
Stay with thy people,
and may thy presence be their portion and mine.
When I preach to others let not my words be merely elegant and masterly,
my reasoning polished and refined,
my performance powerless and tasteless,
but may I exalt thee and humble sinners.

O Lord of power and grace,
all hearts are in thy hands, all events at thy disposal,
set the seal of thy almighty will upon my ministry.

[Arthur Bennett, ed., *The Valley of Vision* (reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975),
186.]

Puritan Richard Baxter, had great concern for The integrity of pastors in his day, and his words of three centuries ago are just as appropriate today as they were then:

Take heed to yourselves also because there are many eyes upon you. So there will be many who observe your fall. If you miscarry, the world will also echo with it. It is the same as the eclipses of the sun in broad daylight--they are seldom without witnesses. If you take the position of prominence in the churches, you may expect men's eyes will be upon you. Other men will sin without observation, but you cannot do so. [Richard Baxter in *The Reformed Pastor*, 36]

When asked about the true virtues of an excellent servant of Christ, the great reformer Martin Luther had this to say: "He should have these properties and virtues:

First - to teach systematically
Second - he should have a ready wit
Third - He should be eloquent
Fourth - He should have a good voice
Fifth - He should have a good memory
Sixth - He should know how to make an end
Seventh - He should be sure of his doctrine
Eighth - He should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honor, in the Word
Ninth - He should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered by everyone.

"A good example is the tallest kind of preaching"

"Example is the most powerful rhetoric." [Puritan Thomas Brooks]

Robert Louis Stevenson told the story of a veiled Muhammadan prophet who was said to be a great teacher and example to his people. The man always wore the veil over his face, as he claimed his countenance was so glorious that no one could bear the sight of his face. But as time went on the veil decayed and eventually fell away, revealing nothing but an ugly old man beneath. In drawing application to the Christian leader, Stevenson concluded that 'however high the truths the preacher [teaches], and however skillfully he might excuse the blemishes of character, the time comes when the veil falls away and a man is seen by the people as he really is. It is seen whether beneath the veil is the ugly fact of unmortified

egotism or the transfigured glory of Christlike character." [cited by Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 144]

When you are holding a hammer everything looks like a nail.

Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

It was said that Napoleon Bonaparte knew every officer in his army by name. He would wander around the camp, meet an officer, greet him by name, and talk about his family, home town, etc. The men were always amazed at how much personal information the emperor was able to know about each one.

An old Chinese proverb says: "If you are planning for one year, grow rice. If you are planning for 20 years, grow trees. If you are planning for centuries, grow men." [cited in Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 181]

"The best leader is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it." [Theodore Roosevelt]

"I hold very stern opinions with regard to Christian men who have fallen into gross sin. I rejoice that they may be truly converted, and may be with mingled hope and caution received into the church; but I question, gravely question whether a man who has grossly sinned should be very readily restored to the pulpit. As John Angell James remarks, 'When a preacher of righteousness has stood in the way of sinners he should never again open his lips in the great congregation until his repentance is as notorious as his sin.' Let those who have been shorn by the sons of Ammon tarry at Jericho till their beards be grown . . . it is an accurate enough metaphor for dishonored and characterless men, let their age be what it may. Alas! the beard of reputation, once shorn, is hard to grow again. Open immorality in most cases however deep the repentance, is a fatal sign that ministerial graces were never in the man's character." [Spurgeon *Lectures to my Students*, 8-9]

"[the pastor] is the parish clock, many take their time from him, and if he be incorrect, then they all go wrongly, more or less, and he is in a great measure accountable for all the sin which he occasions." [Spurgeon *Lectures to my Students*, 10]

"If [the pastor] has not been called to holiness, he certainly has not been called to the ministry" [Spurgeon *Lectures to my Students*, 3]

"When one is less than godly, and seeks to lead other people in godliness, he is like a blind man elected to the professorship of optics; philosophizing on light and vision when he himself is in the dark." (C.H. Spurgeon)

"It is better to abolish the pulpit than to fill it with men who have no experiential knowledge of what they're teaching . . . because the hand that desires to make another hand clean must itself not be dirty." (C.H. Spurgeon)

Discipline of

J. Oswald Sanders wrote: "If he is unwilling to pay the price of fatigue for his leadership, it will always be mediocre. . . . True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man, and the more effective the leader he is, the higher the price to be paid." [above cited by MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 166]

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Unrealistic Expectations

An actual ad placed for a pastor:

Wanted--A rector for St. James Church. He must possess all Christian graces and a few worldly ones, must have such tact and disposition as will enable him to side with all parties in the parish on all points, giving offense to none; should possess a will of his own, but agree with all the vestry; must be socially inclined and of dignified manners--affable to all, neither running after the wealthy nor turning his back upon the poor; a man of high-low church tendencies preferred. Must be willing to preach first-class sermons and do first-class work at second class compensation--salary should not be so much of an object as the desire to be a zealous laborer in the vineyard; should be able to convince all that they are miserable sinners without giving offense. Each sermon must be short, but complete in itself--full of old-fashioned theology in modern dress--deep but polished, and free from the eloquence peculiar to newly-graduated theologians; should be young enough to be enthusiastic, but possess judgement of one of ripe years and experience. Only he who possesses the above qualifications need apply. To such a one will be given steady employment for a term of years. [Milwaukee Sentinel, June 16, 1875]

LEGACY:

When you were born, you cried, and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die, the world cries, and you rejoice.

LEGALISM & ANTINOMIANISM: [General; Doctrinal Legalism]

[General]

The wife of the great missionary, Adoniram Judson: "Oh how I rejoice that I am out of the whirlpool! Too [frivolous], too trifling, for a missionary's wife! That may be, but after all, gaiety is my lightest sin. It is my coldness of heart, my listlessness, my want of faith, my

spiritual inefficiency and inertness, my love of self, the inherent and every-day pampered sinfulness of my nature, that makes me such a mere infant in the cause of Christ--not the attractions of the world."

A third century bishop was shocked to see soon-to-be martyrs spending their last nights in drunkenness and promiscuity. "If a martyr's death makes one perfect," they reasoned, "what would it matter if they spent their last hours sinning?" Cromwell's England saw a heretical sect known as "The Ranters" which developed a doctrine of "the holiness of sin." One leader cursed for an entire hour in the pulpit of a London church. Others devoted themselves to public drunkenness and blasphemy.

Let us hear what [John Wesley's] mother says about Thomas a Kempis's opinion, that all mirth or pleasure is useless, if not sinful. She observes:

"I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, that had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture. Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasures? Of the innocence or malignity of actions? Take this rule,—whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself." [J.C. Ryle, *The Christian Leaders of The Last Century*]

Here is a book that was written in 1744 (and available from Stillwater Revival Books) by a man with the last name of Fraser: The Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches Explained and Vindicated

1. Heresy, or error in doctrine (e.g. Arminianism, Pelagianism, Romanism, the denial of the regulative principle of worship, antinomianism, legalism, etc.)
2. Idolatry in public worship (e.g. singing hymns of human composition, paedocommunion and open communion, the use of musical instruments, women speaking or preaching in public worship, anti-paedobaptism, Charismatic [or anabaptistic] folly and excesses, malignancy [anti-covenanting], etc.)
3. Tyranny in government (e.g. Popery, Prelacy, Independency, etc.)
4. Sinful terms of communion (e.g. any terms which deny or ignore the attainments of the covenanted Reformation or in any way contravene Scripture)
5. Tolerationism (e.g. refusing to discipline the scandalous, open communion and countenancing false ministers or false governments or false doctrine, etc.).

Many other areas are also dealt with, not the least of which include a strong testimony against the Prelatical Priest George Whitefield (who, as the preface notes, is "a person leavened with gross errors, enthusiastic delusions, etc.").

"Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit and abolish women? The sun, the moon, and the stars have been worshiped. Shall we then pluck them out of the sky? ...see how much he [God] has been able to accomplish through me, though I did no more than pray and preach. The Word did it all. Had I wished I might have started a conflagration at

Worms. But while I sat still and drank beer with Philip and Amsdorf, God dealt the papacy a mighty blow." [Martin Luther]

One day Spurgeon was being gently reprimanded for his smoking by a Methodist preacher. To which Spurgeon told him, "If I ever find myself smoking to excess, I promise that I will quit." The man asked him "What would you call smoking to excess?" To which Spurgeon replied: "Why, smoking two cigars at the same time!" [cited in Wiersbe, Walking With the Giants, 74]

One of the saints of past ages, Jerome, tells of how he led a grossly sinful life in his youth. After he came to Christ he literally fled from all the sinful situations that he once embraced. He then thought that the answer to overcoming the temptation of the flesh was to leave Rome. He then found his way to a wilderness and found refuge in a cave where he sought to subdue his fleshly desires by fasting to the point of near-starvation. Then one night he had a dream. He dreamt that he was rioting and carousing with his friends of his godless days. Jerome then realized that the flesh cannot be starved, beaten, or regulated into submission. Only by walking in the power of the Spirit can a believer control the flesh. [cited in H.A. Ironside, Colossians, 112]

"Any asceticism is a great deal more to men's taste than abandoning self. They will rather stick hooks in their backs and do the 'swinging poojah' than give up their sins and yield up their wills. There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us and that is the power of the indwelling Christ." [Alexander McClaren, cited in MacArthur, Colossians, 124]

"One Sunday morning I was about to finish preaching when suddenly a man approached the pulpit yelling at the top of his voice, 'I have something to say. I have something to say!' Before the ushers could escort him out, the tape recorder picked up what he shouted to the congregation: 'You people are religious phonies--materialistic hypocrites. If you really loved God you'd get rid of your cars and your fancy houses and give all that you have to the poor. You'd serve God in poverty like Jesus did.'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 186]

"The Gospel, like its blessed Master, is always crucified between two thieves -- legalists of all sorts on the one hand and Antinomians on the other; the former robbing the Saviour of the glory of his work for us, and the other robbing him of the glory of his work within us." [James Henley Thornwell, Antinomianism]

The "Pillar Saints" of the 4th c.

"The first and most famous of these ascetics was Simeon Stylites. Simeon was born in northern Syria at the close of the 4th c. His thoughts early took a pious trend, and he became a monk in a monastery near Antioch. However, he took his vocation so much to bear that for 10 years he lived in utter seclusion, never moving from his narrow cell. In addition to this he imposed upon himself such excessive austerities that at the age of 30 he was expelled from the monastery. Undiscouraged, and with his spirit's eye directed toward the brightness of an eternal reward, Simeon built himself a pillar 6 feet high, the top of which was a yard in diameter, and on this he made his dwelling place. To add to this, his ordeal, he loaded his neck down with chains. From this pillar he moved to several others in succession, each

higher than the last, until at length he attained a height of 60 feet. On this last pillar he spent the rest of his life--30 years--without ever once descending. His disciples provided him with food and drink, by means of a rope with a basket attached. From his lofty position he preached to the numerous pilgrims attracted from all parts of the world by rumors of his sanctity, and he established a sect. He achieved a reputation as a miracle worker. Here, between sky and earth, he made an awesome sight as he cried out to a sinful world to repent, even as he was repenting. Theodoret, a religious historian who knew Simeon personally, vouches for these facts. There were many converts to this barbarous form of asceticism. To its followers the underlying virtue of living on top of a pillar seemed to be its efficacy in separating devotees more completely from earth and their fellow men. There in tiny huts, or entirely exposed to caprices of the weather, men proved by years of sacrifice and suffering their devotion to their faith. The most celebrated disciple of Simeon was Daniel the Stylite of Constantinople. Daniel's ordeal was even more severe than that of Simeon because of the trying climate along the shores of the Bosphorus, where he built his pillar. Daniel of Constantinople endured this penance for 33 long, sun-beaten years. There is only one record of a pillar hermit in the West. A monk, Wulflaicus, attempted the pillar life near Treves about 585, but the clergy of the neighborhood were unsympathetic to this form of soul-flagellation and eventually they compelled Wulflaicus to abandon the idea and destroyed his pillar" [Pillar Saints, Crowell Pub. Co., cited in Lauren, Colossians, 28-30]

The story is told of a hermit who made a long journey through the desert to visit a supposed wise man. The hermit made the long trek through the wilderness with only his walking stick. When he came to the place where the wise-man lived he asked him how he might find peace with God. The old sage told him to bury his walking stick in the desert sand and water it daily. When it bloomed with flowers he would have peace with God.

The man was ecstatic and planted the stick as he was told. He watered it day after day after day. Months passed by; no blooms. Finally he gave up saying, "This is of no value. I'm no better off today than I was before I planted this worthless dead stick.

The stick is lifeless; it has no inherent power to produce anything. So is a life lived in its own self-effort.

Dead sticks? What did Jesus say? "I am the vine, you are the branches. Unless you abide in me you can do nothing."

"Nothing not only includes saving yourself from your sin; it also includes living a life pleasing to God. [taken in part from H.A. Ironside, Colossians, 112]

Someone once wrote:

"By various maxims, forms and rules, That pass for wisdom in the schools, I sought my passions to restrain; But all my efforts proved in vain. But since my Savior I have known, My rules are all reduced to one, To keep my Lord by faith in view, His strength supplies and motive too."

Legalism, Doctrinal

Jesus nowhere says, 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you are scintillatingly critical and condescending toward evangelicals who have some things wrong.' I do not mean to hint for a moment that we who teach can afford to duck the responsibility of teaching discernment. I mean only to say that even discernment must be nestled into the bigger 'main thing' of love for the brothers and sisters in Christ." (D.A. Carson, *The Pastor As Scholar and the Scholar As Pastor*, 101)

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity." or "In sure things unity; in doubtful things liberty; in all things charity." [St. Augustine]

Here is a book that was written in 1744 (and available from Stillwater Revival Books) by a man with the last name of Fraser: *The Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches Explained and Vindicated*:

1. Heresy, or error in doctrine (e.g. Arminianism, Pelagianism, Romanism, the denial of the regulative principle of worship, antinomianism, legalism, etc.)
2. Idolatry in public worship (e.g. singing hymns of human composition, paedocommunion and open communion, the use of musical instruments, women speaking or preaching in public worship, anti-paedobaptism, Charismatic [or anabaptistic] folly and excesses, malignancy [anti-covenanting], etc.)
3. Tyranny in government (e.g. Popery, Prelacy, Independency, etc.)
4. Sinful terms of communion (e.g. any terms which deny or ignore the attainments of the covenanted Reformation or in any way contravene Scripture)
5. Tolerationism (e.g. refusing to discipline the scandalous, open communion and countenancing false ministers or false governments or false doctrine, etc.).

Many other areas are also dealt with, not the least of which include a strong testimony against the Prelatical Priest George Whitefield (who, as the preface notes, is "a person leavened with gross errors, enthusiastic delusions, etc.").

This letter was forwarded to me from a friend of mine back in 1999:

For a number of months, my wife Catherine and I have been brought into a state where we have had to go right back to the drawing-board with everything, especially concerning our place in the church, which 'expression' of it we belong in, etc. We have even been right back to the drawing-board concerning the very essence of Christianity--the nature of the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints--which has been a thoroughly strengthening exercise, through which we have been brought much closer to the Lord.

1998 was one of the darkest years for us that we can recall. But it has also been a time of extraordinary growth. . . . We have been betrayed by people we thought were friends; and we have discovered friends in places where we least thought we had them. It is significant that all of this has happened within the confines of one particular sect in the . . . Christian scene. I am speaking here about the sect which calls itself "Reformed" . . . we had never experienced such cut-throatism and back-stabbing, such frozen hearts, such glacial coldness, such a profound fear of healthy emotion, such a lack of true compassion and genuine Christian love, such an unwillingness to openly debate and

discuss (rather than snipe and destroy), such a predilection for empty gossip and willingness to pass it on without discernment, such a gullibility to believe the lies of others, such an ever-readiness to sit in judgement and condemn, such a penchant for backhanded childish vindictiveness towards those by whom they feel slighted, such a proneness to secret jealousy of those who pose a threat because of the gifts the Lord has given them, such an avid desire to destroy with ruthlessness a person's ministry or good name on the flimsiest of evidence, such a readiness to see problems in churches as matters to be handled with the restriction of iceberg "proceduralism" rather than with the fullness of pastoral warmth, such an obsession "with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions" (1Tim.6:4), such a huge reluctance and even an inability to discern the truth and real heart of a situation or person, such enormous pride in imagining that they alone are the REAL Christians...

The writer goes on to speak of the critical spirit among those who condemn others on the basis of whether they dot their "i's" and cross their "t's" in the exact same place as they do. He writes:

It should be said here that we have not come to these conclusions lightly but over many years of observation, involvement, and painful personal experience. It is all so sad and superficial to see the way that people hooked into [this sectarian attitude] (... "Reformed" first and Christians second) so readily set out to blast a person's character as soon as they get the slightest whiff of anything about that person which does not quite fit into their required mold. They encourage a "culture of condemnation", in which a fellow-Christian's stumblings are gloated over and viewed as reasons for acrimonious exclusion rather than sympathized with and seen as stimulants to loving rescue. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that there seems to be a mind set . . . which almost takes a delight in believing the worst about a person or situation. They seem to thrive on "bad reports", and almost rejoice when anyone is seen to be less than perfect, dancing on the spiritual graves of their unfortunate victims like a bunch of crazed witches leaping around a cauldron!

However, in saying these things, I have to stress that we do NOT at all reject what people call "Reformed doctrine". In that sense, we are still very much "Reformed". However, our desire is to be biblical in doctrine and practice by continually taking part in an ongoing reformation, rather than being part of a stagnantly tendentious sect which imagines itself to be the last bastion of true Christianity. Truth is certainly vitally important. It is even worth dying for! It should never be compromised -- although one should certainly be careful how one presents it. But Truth is never worth destroying others for. As soon as one seeks to destroy people for the sake of truth, one has slipped over from Christianity to pragmatic nihilism...

He closes with this:

Surely, we are dealing with a major problem in the church today, as some become like the Pharisees of old, who hedged orthodoxy about with so many rules, principles and prejudices of their own making that they eventually obfuscated the truth and created a stumbling-block for the people.

An increase in speculative knowledge in divinity is not what is so much needed by our people as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light and have no heart ... Our people do not so much need to have their heads turned as to have their hearts touched, and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching which has the greatest tendency to do this. -- Jonathan Edwards in Religious Affections.

Lynn Worden related a "Religious Division" story adapted from the comic Emo Phillips. After a lengthy discussion with a man who was standing atop the Golden Gate Bridge contemplating suicide, Emo's heart went out to him. The discourse is as follows: I asked him, "Are you a Christian, a Moslem, a Hindu, a Jew, or what?" The man replied, "I am a Christian." I said, "Me too. Small world. Are you Protestant or Catholic?" He said, "Protestant." I said, "Me too. What denomination?" He said, "Baptist." I said, "Me too! Northern Baptist or Southern Baptist?" He said, "Northern Baptist." I said, "Me too! Northern Conservative Baptist or Northern Liberal Baptist?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist." I said, "Me too! Call Ripley's Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist, or Northern Conservative Reformed Baptist?" He said, "Northern Conservative Reformed Baptist." I said, "Me too! Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region, or Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Eastern Region?" He said, "Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region." I said, "ME TOO! Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1879, or Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1910?" And he said, "Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1910." And I said, "DIE HERETIC!" And I pushed him off the bridge!

"Never in any chapter of the four Gospels was Jesus astounded by anybody's righteousness. After all, he was entirely pure and holy himself. Never was he impressed with anyone's wisdom or education. Never did he say, 'Boy, Matthew sure is smart, isn't he? I really picked out a financial genius there.' But he was amazed by one thing: people's faith (Luke 7:9)." [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 39-40]

"In too many places where the Bible is being thumped and doctrine is being argued until three in the morning, the Spirit of that doctrine is missing. William Law, an English devotional writer of the early 1700s, wrote, 'Read whatever chapter of Scripture you will, and be ever so delighted with it--yet it will leave you as poor, as empty and unchanged as it found you unless it has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God, and brought you into full union with and dependance upon him.'" [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, 140]

"But what a different way of building up [i.e. God's work in our lives that is often misunderstood by others] this is from being build up in the Arminian method on the one hand, and the dead Calvinistic mode on the other! The Arminian says, 'You must pray, strive, and do your best; you must be active in God's cause; you must go about collecting money for the missionaries; you must be up and doing; and so in some way or other make yourself fit to receive the grace of God.' The dry Calvinist says, 'Away with your doubts and fears, we will have none of that rubbish. . . . Believers are to rejoice always, and have done with sighs and groans. The gospel is all liberty and peace. Christ is everything, all in all--and therefore way with our your rubbish of experience.' So that the Arminian on the one hand pulls down the work of Christ to substitute creature-righteousness; and the dry Calvinist on

the other pulls down the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul to build up a nominal Christ." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:105-106.]

"Today it is possible to make a living as an esteemed theologian and yet have no more living faith than a slug. Christians can sit in pews listening to the Word preached every Sunday--and even have a devotional life of sorts throughout the week--without rising above the cynicism, depression, and unbelief that are so prevalent in our culture. We can know the Word in some sense, but the Word must find within our hearts an atmosphere in which its divine power can be released." [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 195]

John Newton (1725-1807), author of "Amazing Grace," writes to a fellow pastor who is composing a tract against prevalent false doctrines:

You are likely to be engaged in controversy. . . . You are of the strongest side; for truth is great, and must prevail. . . . I am not therefore anxious for the [outcome] of the battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph, not only over your adversary, but over yourself. If you cannot be vanquished, you may be wounded. To preserve you from such wounds as might give you cause of weeping over your conquests, I would present you with some considerations, which, if duly attended to, will do you the service of a great coat of mail. . . . I may reduce my advice to three heads, respecting your opponent, the public and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish that before you set pen to paper against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. This practice will have a direct tendency to conciliate your heart to love and pity him; and such a disposition will have a good influence upon every page you write. If [he is a believer] . . . the Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever. But if [he is not a believer], . . . he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his. . . . If you write with a desire of being an instrument of correcting mistakes, you will of course be cautious of laying stumbling blocks in the way of the blind or of using any expressions that may exasperate their passions, confirm them in their principles, and thereby make their conviction, humanly speaking, more impracticable. . . . [John Newton, Works, Vol 1 (Banner of Truth, 1985), p. 269ff.]

LIBERALISM, THEOLOGICAL:

Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, best-known for his work "Christ and Culture", famously observed the error of Liberal theology that taught that: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the [ministry] of a Christ without a Cross."

In Mother Teresa's book "Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations and Prayers," she wrote, "We never try to convert [anyone] to Christianity, but in our work we bear witness to the love of God's presence, and if Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, or agnostics become better men, we will be satisfied."

At the end of her life, Mother Teresa doubted the existence of God and heaven. In her private letters she wrote: "Lord, my God, you have thrown [me] away as unwanted and unloved. I call, I cling, I want, and there is no one to answer, no, no one. Where is my faith? There is nothing, I have no faith." (Mike Gendron newsletter, 2016)

Robert Jensen is absolutely transparent in his atheism. "I don't believe in God," he asserts. That statement is simple enough, indicating a categorical denial in any belief in God. Lest anyone mistake his atheism for mere theological confusion, Jensen went on to explain: "I don't believe Jesus Christ was the son of a God that I don't believe in, nor do I believe Jesus rose from the dead to ascend to a heaven that I don't believe exists." What makes these statements all the more significant is that they appear in an article entitled, "Why I am a Christian (Sort Of)," in which Jensen, a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin, explains why he joined St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Austin. [Albert Mohler Commentary 05-01-06]

LIES:

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazi war machine of WWII, had a proven philosophy that is yet in practice today: tell the people big lies often enough and they will come to believe them.

LOGIC:

"The misologists--the haters of logic--use logic to demonstrate the futility of using logic." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 137]

"The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect" [Aristotle]

LOVE: [General; God & Man; Man's Need; Men to Men; Romantic]

General

True love cannot be divorced from truth or validate immoral behavior.

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries;

avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless--it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, and irredeemable.... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love.....is Hell. --C.S. Lewis

Bitterness imprisons life, Love releases it. Bitterness paralyzes life, Love empowers it. Bitterness sours life, Love sweetens it. Bitterness sickens life, Love heals it. Bitterness blinds life, Love anoints its eyes.

See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God, that no "root of bitterness" spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled. (Hebrews 12:15)

"Love and do as you please." [Augustine]

"If it should ever come to pass
That any sheep of Christ should fall away,
My feeble, fickle soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day;
Were not thy love as firm as free,
Thou soon wouldst take it Lord, from me."
(author unknown)

"True love doesn't have a happy ending. True love doesn't have an ending."

"One loving heart sets another on fire." [Augustine]

"There is no greater love than the love that holds on where there seems nothing left to hold on to." [G.W.C. Thomas]

"Love is the one business in which it pays to be absolutely lavish. Give it away; throw it away; splash it over; empty your pockets; shake the basket; and tomorrow you'll have more than ever."

"My love is my weight, my love is my gravity" (*amor meus, pondus meum*) [Augustine]

God & Man

"There can be only two basic loves. The love of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or the love of self unto the forgetfulness (and denial) of God." [Augustine]

"[The genuine believer] cannot love a sinner as a sinner: "In whose eyes a vile person is condemned." He may love him as a creature; he may love his soul, or he may love him under some relation that he stands in to him. Thus, God loves the damned spirits as they are His creatures; but, as fallen angels, He hates them with an infinite hatred." [Puritan Matthew Mead, *The Almost Christian Discovered*, 75]

"Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for You." [St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th c., from his hymn, "O Sacred Head"]

"He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake." [Aurelius Augustine]

"Suppose, brethren, a man should make a ring for his betrothed, and she should love the ring more wholeheartedly than the betrothed who made it for her? . . . certainly, let her love his gift: but, if she should say, 'the ring is enough, I do not want to see his face again' what would we say of her? . . . The pledge is given her by the betrothed just that, in his pledge, he himself may be loved. God, the, has given you all these things. Love Him who made them." [Aurelius Augustine, cited in Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo, 326]

"If the things of the world delight you, praise God for them but turn your love away from them and give it to their Maker, so that in the things that please you may not displease Him." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, IV, 12]

The late Dr. Donald Barnhouse, who was a great expositor, tells of a Japanese girl who worked at the airline desk at the lobby of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. On one occasion when he happened to be in that hotel at the airline desk, he spoke to that girl who was fluent in Japanese, Chinese, and English, and who was obviously from a very cultured background. In an open and frank way he simply asked her if she was a Christian. She replied "no I'm a Buddhist." After being questioned further she stated that she had heard of Jesus Christ and of a sacred book called the "Bible," but she knew nothing of Jesus Christ personally. Then Dr. Barnhouse asked her a very telling question. He said to her "do you love Buddha?" Startled, she replied "love? I never thought about love in connection with religion." Challenged by her pathetic reply, Dr. Barnhouse unfolded to her the beautiful reality of Christian love in contrast to the pagan gods who are hated and feared. He told that girl that no god in the entire world is loved except the true God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He pointed out that in her country statues were everywhere of the deities and they were fierce monsters guarding temple gates while a placating people attempt to somehow appease an otherwise angry deity. He reminded her that in her religion they burned incense and offered sacrifices in an effort to appease the cruel and impulsive whims of these wicked deities.

Buddhists do not love Buddha and Buddha does not love Buddhists. Hindus do not love their deities and their deities do not love them. Moslems do not particularly love Allah and there is no indication that Allah loves them. This is the great distinctive of true Christianity: its sum and its substance is love. God loves us and we love God. We love one another. [Cited by J. MacArthur, GC 50-6]

Man's Need

During WW-2, orphaned babies were placed in a large institution. The accommodations were pleasant: new toys, brightly colored furniture, delicious food. Never-the-less the health of the children began to rapidly deteriorate. Though there were no signs of disease, they stopped eating and playing. They then grew weak and began dying. UN doctors were flown in to investigate. Their prescription: For 10 minutes each hour the children were to be picked-up, hugged, kissed, played with, and talked to. The orders were obeyed and within a short time the strange epidemic disappeared. The little ones brightened, their appetites grew, their toys were played with and when their 10 minutes came they enthusiastically reached out with their little arms to be picked-up by the approaching nurses. The doctors

identified the fatal lethargy as "Marasmus" and described it as a gradual and mysterious emaciation of the body which seems to strike when others don't seem to take time to show enough love.

Men to Men

On July 25, 1993, gunmen burst into St. James Anglican Church in Cape Town, South Africa, and opened fire into the congregation with automatic weapons, lobbing two hand grenades in among the people as well. The carnage was horrendous. One member of the congregation returned to the church, having rushed his dying wife to the hospital, to tell his three children of her death. As he stood in the church building holding these children who had just received the news, a television camera was pointed in their direction, and the journalist asked whether he had anything to say. The broadcast was aired live all over South Africa. Bishop Frank Retief, senior pastor of that church, recounts what happened next:

Looking into the face of the entire nation of South Africa, he said with tears in his eyes, "I do not know who you are. And I don't know why you have done this. But you need to know that we are Christians, and for Christ's sake I forgive you and I extend the hand of reconciliation to you and I appeal to you to give yourselves up and to become Christians yourself." [Cited in *Crying Out For Vindication: The Gospel According to Job*]

In one of the popular "Chicken Soup" volumes, Dennis E. Mannering tells about an assignment he once gave to a class he teaches for adults. He gave them the assignment to "go to someone you love and tell them that you love them." At the beginning of the next class, one of the students began by saying, "I was angry with you last week when you gave us this assignment. I didn't feel I had anyone to say those words to. But as I began driving home my conscience started talking. Then I knew exactly who I needed to say 'I love you' to. Five years ago, my father and I had a vicious disagreement and never really resolved it. We avoided seeing each other unless we absolutely had to at family gatherings. we hardly spoke. So by the time I got home, I had convinced myself I was going to tell my father I loved him. Just making that decision seemed to lift a heavy load off my chest. At 5:30, I was at my parent's house ringing the doorbell, praying that dad would answer the door. I was afraid that if mom answered, I would chicken out and tell her instead. But . . . dad did answer the door. I didn't waste any time. I took one step inside the door and said, 'Dad, I just came over to tell you that I love you.' It was as if a transformation came over my dad. Before my eyes his face softened, the wrinkles seemed to disappear and he began to cry. He reached out to me and hugged me and said 'I love you too, son, but I've never been able to say, it.' But that's not even my point. Two days after that visit, my dad had a heart attack, and is in the hospital. I don't even know if he'll make it. So my message to all of you is this: Don't wait to do the things you know need to be done. What if I had waited to tell my dad? Take the time to do what you need to do and do it now!" ["Do it Now!" *Condensed Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Copyright 1996 by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hanson and Patty Hanson]

"The way to love someone is to lightly run your finger over that person's soul until you find a crack and then gently pour your love into that crack." [Keith Miller]

"Before you shoot the arrow of truth, dip it in honey."

There was a certain barber who noted a huge increase in his business over the course of a week. In fact, his earnings nearly doubled. He didn't understand why until he discovered that his competitor down the street was very sick, so all of his customers were coming to him. When the week had ended the barber took all of his earnings over and above his average take for a week and gave it to the sick man stating that it was "a gift of Christian love." (Cited by J. MacArthur, cassette tape GC 59-13)

There once was a poor and well-known Japanese Christian by the name of Toyohiko Cagawa. He was deeply burdened for the poor Japanese people in the slums of Kobe. He spent nearly all the years of his life in these slums, ministering to the people there. He was a small man with a frail body, and one of his lungs was diseased with tuberculosis. On a visit to the United States, one of the doctors there told him that he wouldn't live long; so he returned to Kobe saying "If my life is short, it will be full." He moved into a street in the heart of the slums so the people could easily get to him. So there, in the stench of the back streets, Toyohiko Cagawa lived. Every day he preached in the streets to the poor people. On one particular day he was preaching from John 3:16, and his theme was "God's love for unworthy sinners." Kobe was not an easy place to preach God's Word -- Toyohiko was mocked and laughed. One man said "what does this little man, with funny talk know about God, and what does anyone know about whether God loves us or not!" As Toyohiko attempted to answer them, he coughed a hacking cough and spit up a large amount of blood. They laughed and said, "if God loves you, why doesn't He do something for you?" The persistent little man lifted his arm, wiped the blood from his mouth with his sleeve, and went on with the story of God's love. Gradually, in the crowded street, their voices were stilled. For stealing in on their pagan minds was the realization that right before their eyes in that little sick man was the very proof of what he was saying, for Toyohiko Cagawa was actually a demonstration of God's love.

"Jesus nowhere says, 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you are scintillatingly critical and condescending toward evangelicals who have some things wrong.' I do not mean to hint for a moment that we who teach can afford to duck the responsibility of teaching discernment. I mean only to say that even discernment must be nestled into the bigger 'main thing' of love for the brothers and sisters in Christ." (D.A. Carson, *The Pastor As Scholar and the Scholar As Pastor*, 101)

Romantic

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose. His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name, Miss Hollis Maynell.

With time and effort he located her address. She lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting Her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II.

During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A Romance was budding. Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused.

She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like.

When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting - 7:00 P.M. at the Grand Central Station in New York. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on My lapel." So at 7:00 he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen.

I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened: A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blonde hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured. Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat.. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes.

The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. I felt as though I was split in two, so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own. And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful. I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me; may I take you to dinner?"

The woman's face broadened into a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is about, son," she answered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!" It's not difficult to understand and admire Miss Maynell's wisdom. The true nature of a heart is seen in its response to the unattractive.

"Tell me whom you love," Houssaye wrote, "And I will tell you who you are."

LOYALTY:

"Frankly, the deepest pain you'll ever know and the deepest pain I'll ever know is not physical. It's not material. It doesn't have to do with our physical body and it doesn't have to do with our material or economic or circumstantial life patterns. The greatest pain we will ever know is relational. It is the potential of people to devastate us, to destroy us, to abuse

us. And apart from internal personal guilt which has to be the greatest pain but that is personal and internal, the most serious pain we suffer in the world comes from unfulfilled and devastated relationships. No disease is as painful as rejection. No disease is as painful as false accusation. No disease is as painful as misrepresentation, betrayal [and] hatred." [John MacArthur, *The Sufficiency of God's Grace*, gtty.org/resources/sermons/80-72/The-Sufficiency-of-Gods-Grace]

LUST:

Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst.

"Lust is the ape that gibbers in our loins. Tame him as we will by day, he rages all the wilder in our dreams by night. Just when we think we're safe from him, he raises up his ugly head and smirks, and there's no river in the world flows cold and strong enough to strike him down. Almighty God, why dost thou deck men out with such a loathsome toy?" [Novelist Frederick Buechner, *Godric*, cited in Leadership Journal, *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 31]

Lenin pronounced his famous "Glass of Water Theory," legislating that the sexual act was of no more consequence than the quenching of thirst by a glass of water (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13). [Cited in Leadership Journal (anonymous author), *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 33]

"I began to view sex as another of God's mistakes, like tornadoes and earthquakes. In the final analysis, it only caused misery. Without it, I could conceive of becoming pure and godly and all those other things the Bible exhorted me toward. With sex, any spiritual development seemed hopelessly unattainable. Maybe Origen had the right idea after all." [anonymous author, Leadership Journal, *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 37]

Jesus offers us "living water." Can "living water" quench the fires of lust? [TAB]

Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst.

"Scratching lust's itchy sore." [Augustine, cited in *Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society*, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 51)]

Several years ago, the book *Vital Signs* reported that of the "Christian" households that subscribed to cable TV, 23% were receiving one or more porn channels (the same percentage as society at large). [Cited in *Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society*, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 56)]

"I feel as if I have escaped from the hands of a mad and furious master." [Sophocles, when old age finally quelled his sexual drive, cited in *Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society*, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 61)]

"C.K. Chesterton once likened this world to the desert island site of a shipwreck. A sailor awakes from the deep sleep and discovers treasure strewn about, relics from a civilization had can barely remember. One by one he picks up the relics--gold coins, a compass, fine

clothing--and tries to discern their meaning. According to Chesterton, fallen humanity is in such a state. Good things on earth still bear traces of their original purpose, but each is also subject to misinterpretation or abuse because of fallen, 'amnesiac' human nature." [cited in *Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society*, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 63)]

MAN:

"Man is the measure of all things." Protagorus of Abdura

Speaking of the dilemma which is man, Blaise Pascal wrote:

"What a freak, what a monster, what a chaos, what a subject of contradiction, what a marvel! Judge of all things, and imbecile earthworm; possessor of the truth, and sink of uncertainty and error; glory and rubbish of the universe." [cited in Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 43-44]

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." [C.S. Lewis]

A little girl asked her father, "Where did the first humans come from?" The father answered, "It's in the Bible. God made the first two, Adam and Eve. They had children, their children had children, and down it went all the way to today." A few hours later, the girl asked her mother the same question. Her mother answered, "A long time ago there were monkeys from which humans evolved." The confused girl returned to her father and said, "Dad, how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and mom said they developed from monkeys?" The father answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family and your mother told you about her's."

"In thinking of ourselves what can only be thought of God, we are then unable to think of Him more highly than we think of ourselves. In being to ourselves what God ought to be to us, He is no more to us than we are to ourselves." [Karl Barth, cited by David Wells, *The Gospel Alternative*, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98, tape 3, side 1]

John Calvin wrote on the first page of his monumental theological work *The Institutes*: "Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God."

It is said that, when Harvard's Emerson Hall was in process of construction, the Department of Philosophy was planning to place an inscription over the doorway reading, "Man is the measure of all things." But President Eliot heard of it and quietly decided otherwise. When the summer vacation was over the professors returned to the almost completed building and discovered the words engraved in the stone, "What is man that Thou are mindful of him?" [cited by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., *Bib. Sac.*]

MARRIAGE: [*General*; *Divorce*; *Role of Husband*; *Role of Wife*; *Success in*; *Working Wives & Mothers*]

General

Jewish sentiment noted: "Whoever has no wife exists without goodness, without a helpmate, without joy, without blessing, without atonement . . . without well-being, without a full life; . . . indeed, such a one reduces the representation of the divine image [on earth]." Gen. Rab. 17:2

"There is no relationship so lovely, no communion so friendly, no society so sweet, as a good married life, when husband and wife dwell together in peace and unity. Peace and happiness in married life is, next to God Himself and the knowledge of His Word, the highest blessing and gift that God can bestow on us." [Martin Luther, cited in *Gustav Koenig. The Life of Dr. Martin Luther - Represented in Engravings*. Germany: Christian Book and Art Pub. Co., n.d., 60]

While crossing a bridge in London, John Wesley stumbled and sprained his ankle. Some friends carried him to the house of Mrs. Mary Vazielle on Threadneedle Street. She was a widow with several children. She cared for Wesley and his response to her concern was to ask her to marry him. If we were writing fiction we might say that the sprained ankle was God's providential way to bring those people together. But the marriage was a disaster, and Mary finally left John.

Had Wesley consulted with his brother Charles, and asked for the prayers of the brethren, he might have avoided that unfortunate situation. Mary was accustomed to her quiet home, and it was difficult for her to travel with her husband and stay in uncomfortable inns. It is unfortunate that Mary was not content just to ignore John's ministry; she actually opposed it. She gave certain personal letters to his enemies and even made additions to them that made them worse! Once she even pulled her husband around on the floor by his hair! "I felt as though I could have knocked the soul out of her!" one of Wesley's friends said. Wesley concluded that his unhappy marriage encouraged him to work harder and not complain about missing the comforts of a home. Certainly it encouraged him to be away from home more! [W. Wiersbe, *Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and Preachers*, Moody Press, 1984, p. 246.]

One of the great ironies of marriage is that the woman marries a man hoping he will change while the man marries the woman hoping that she won't.

Marriage is not to be "regarded as a holy sacrament in the realm of grace, but honored rather as a divine ordinance in the realm of creation." Marriage, therefore, is designed as an institution to serve the public good and is to thereby be the foundation for a well-ordered society.

"Marriage is a wonderful institution . . . if you like institutions." [Groucho Marx]

In Islam, a faithful Muslim man who dies a martyr's death is rewarded with 72 virgins in heaven. What about an unfaithful man? He dies and goes to hell where he receives 72 wives! [Joke, by TAB]

A husband was in big trouble when he forgot his wedding anniversary. His wife told him "Tomorrow there better be something in the driveway for me that goes zero to 200 in 2 seconds flat." The next morning the wife found a small package in the driveway. She opened

it and found a brand-new bathroom scale. Funeral arrangements for the husband have been set for Saturday

I stand by the bed where the attractive young woman lies . . . A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles in her mouth, had been severed. My knife has followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; nevertheless, to remove the malignant tumor on her cheek, I had to cut that little nerve. Her young husband is in the room. He stands at the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight . . . The young woman speaks. "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks. "Yes," I say, "it will." She nods and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says. "It's kind of cute." Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crookend mouth, and I can see how he twists his own lips to show her that their kiss still works. I hold my breath and let the wonder in. [Dr. Richard Selzer in *James Dobson, Straight Talk to Women and Their Wives*]

Views of children on marriage:

How do you Decide who to Marry?

"You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming" [Alan, age 10]

"No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with." [Kirsten, age 10]

What is the Right Age to Get Married?

"Twenty-threes is the best age because you know the person forever by then." [Camille, age 10]

How Can a Stranger Tell if Two People Are Married?

"Married people usually look happy to talk to other people." [Eddie, age 6]

"You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids." [Derrick, age 8]

Is it Better to be Single or Married?

"It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them." [Anita, age 9]

"Single is better, for the simple reason that I wouldn't want to change no diapers. Of course, if I did get married, I'd just phone my mother and have her come over for some coffee and diaper-changing." [Kirsten, age 10]

How Would the World be Different if People Didn't get Married?

"There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn't there?" [Kelvin, age 8]

How Would you Make a Marriage Work?

"Tell your wife that she looks pretty even if she looks like a truck." [Ricky, age 10]

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Tommy, a child in the kindergarten class, seemed especially intent when they told

him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and asked, "Tommy, what's the matter?" Little Tommy responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm gonna have a wife."

Some years ago "The Saturday Evening Post" carried an article entitled, "The Seven Ages of the Married Cold." It revealed the reactions of a husband to his wife's colds during their first seven years of marriage. It went something like this:

The first year. "Sugar dumpling, I'm really worried about my baby girl. You've got a bad sniffle and there's no telling about these things with all this strep going around. I'm putting you in the hospital this afternoon for a general checkup and a good rest. I know the food's lousy, but I'll be bringing your meals in from Rossini's. I've already got it all arranged with the floor superintendent."

The second year. "Listen darling, I don't like the sound of that cough. I've called Doc Miller and asked him to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please, just for papa."

The third year. "Maybe you'd better lie down, honey: nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I'll bring you something. Have you got any canned soup?"

The fourth year. "Now look, dear, be sensible. After you've fed the kids, washed the dishes, and finished the floors, you'd better lie down."

The fifth year. "Why don't you take a couple of aspirin?"

The sixth year. "I wish you would just gargle or something instead of sitting around all evening barking like a seal!"

The seventh year. "For pete's sake, stop sneezing! Are you trying to give me pneumonia?" [cited in The Family, John MacArthur, 61]

"To me it seems that we are living in an important and uncertain age, and the institution of marriage is most assuredly in an uncertain state. If 50-75 percent of Ford or General Motors cars completely fell apart within the early part of their lifetimes as automobiles, drastic steps would be taken. We have no such well organized way of dealing with our social institutions, so people are groping, more or less blindly, to find alternatives to marriage (which is certainly less than 50 percent successful). Living together without marriage, living in communes, extensive childcare centers, serial monogamy (with one divorce after another), the women's liberation movement to establish the woman as person in her own right, new divorce laws which do away with the concept of guilt--these are all gropings toward some new form of man-woman relationship for the future. It would take a bolder man than I to predict what will emerge." [Carl Rogers, Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives, 11] Cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13 for God's "prediction" of what will and has happened.

An influential Puritan once said that sexual intercourse was "one of the most proper and essential acts of marriage" and something in which a couple should engage "with good will and delight, willingly, readily, and cheerfully." [cited in Worldly Saints, page 2]

"To sleep with swine, to nestle with serpents, to be with loathsome insects that gnaw and sting, is bad enough; but to be with the altogether in the shape of [a bad marriage] is hideous beyond conception. Dante, in his vision, never saw anything worse than that which exists in some marriages." [Henry Ward Beecher, cited in Gems of Truth and Beauty, 194]

"If a truly innocent person has to bear the burden of an unhappy marriage, there is hope for him even in his sufferings; and even these are, for a man surrendered to God, the most wholesome school of purification, and of discipline in virtue: the years lost for earthly happiness become gained for eternity." [Larry Christenson, The Christian Family, 26]

Some words are very difficult to pronounce. What is the hardest word to say in the English language? The hardest word to say is "Sorry."

An except from a personal letter I received in August, 1997 (regarding our teaching on the family):

. . . God is doing a new work in our 19 year marriage! Last night on the way home I caught both of us bringing up behavior patterns we had observed in each other. That is when I finally said "no more".. Our application of our new understanding of our roles as husband and wife starts tonight (last night) and all those things in the past stay there. We are determined to perform our God given roles as responsibilities before Him and not a trial-run to see who goofs first. . . . [Sadly, this couple was divorced a year or two later.]

"Just as it is the crown, and not merely the will to rule, that makes the king, so it is marriage, and not merely your love for each other, that joins you together in the sight of God and man. As high as God is above man, so high are the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of marriage above the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of love. *It is not your love that sustains marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.* [Dietrich Bonhoeffer, cited in Larry Christenson, The Family, 28]

"God makes your marriage indissoluble. He protects it against every danger which threatens it from without or within; God himself guarantees the indissolubility of the marriage. No temptation, not human weakness can dissolve what God joins; indeed, whoever knows it may confidently say: What God has joined together, man cannot put asunder." [Dietrich Bonhoeffer, cited in Larry Christenson, The Family, 25]

"It is difficult to see how Christianity can have any positive effect on society if it cannot transform its own homes." [John MacArthur, Colossians, 166]

A concerned husband calls his therapist who asks him, "What's wrong?" The husband replies, "My wife is trying to poison me." The counselor offers to talk to the man's wife. A few days later the counselor calls the man back. "I talked to your wife on the phone for 20 minutes," he says. "What should I do?" the man asks him. "Take the poison!"

Divorce

I've been a pastor for sixteen years. Tragedy struck my life recently when my wife told me that she no longer loved me, and that the men from her office were on their way over to move her into her own apartment. Neither my two children nor myself had any idea whatsoever that she was unhappy or even the least bit dissatisfied. She taught Sunday School, she sang in the choir, she even presented solos in church. However, she had a fine job and she zoomed up the ladder to the point where she was making as much money as I

was. Although I had hinted at her quitting over the last year or so, she said she just had to work to be happy.

Well, the next night after she moved out I went to her apartment to give her a check to take care of the children and I found her in the arms of her boss. It has been so very difficult for the children and me. When she moved out she left everything that was of a spiritual nature. Her Christian tapes, her books, her pictures, etc. And she has since replaced them with their worst counterparts.

I love her. I've forgiven her. I seek God's strength to be what I must be to the praise of His glory; but it's not easy. Yet, there is joy in trusting Him.

Sunday was my birthday. It was also my spiritual birthday. And although I was very melancholy inside, I was excited about my Sunday school lesson and my two sermons. I sort of suppressed my pity-party the best I could and we had tremendous turnout--a great service that magnified the Lord; and the church surprised me with an entire day of festivities on my behalf. It was the sweetest fellowship I've ever known. Unity like I've never seen. And I could feel it ministering to all my hurts and insecurities. Several men came to me at different times in the day with tears, saying it was the most wonderful day they had ever enjoyed.

My wife refuses to talk with any other than her humanist friends at work. She told me finally she knew she was wrong, and she knew that she was hurting me and everyone else, and she knew she would pay a great price for her actions. But, she said, I made up my mind that I was willing to pay the price. *She doesn't even know what the price is.*

(signed) "Down, but not out" [taken from the video, *God's Pattern for Wives*, John MacArthur. Chicago: Moody Press]

Role of Husband

"The husband must so unite authority and love that neither of them may be omitted or concealed, but both be exercised and maintained. Love must not be exercised so imprudently as to destroy the exercise of authority; and authority must not be exercised over a wife so magisterially and imperiously, as to destroy the exercise of love. As your love must be a governing love, so your commands must all be loving commands. Lose not your authority; for that will but disable you from doing the office of a husband to your wife, or of a master to your servants. Yet must it be maintained by no means inconsistent with conjugal love; and therefore not by fierceness or cruelty, by threatenings or stripes . . . There are many cases of equality in which authority is not to be exercised; but there is no case of inequality or unworthiness so great, in which conjugal love is not to be exercised; and therefore nothing must exclude it." [Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, 439]

"The husband is to excel the wife in knowledge, and be her teacher in the matters that belong to her salvation. He must instruct her in the Word of God, and direct her in particular duties, and help her to subdue her own corruptions, and labor to confirm her against temptations; if she doubt of any thing that he can resolve her in, she is to ask his resolution, and he to

open to her at home the things which she understood not in the congregation (1 Cor. 14:35)." [Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory, 439]

"Hear the measure of love: If it is needful that you should lose your life for her, or be cut to pieces a thousand times, or endure anything whatever, don't refuse to do it! For Christ bought His church and brought it to His feet with His great care, not with threats or any such thing. So you must conduct yourself with your wife." [John Chrysostom]

As someone once said, "The husband is the head of the house, but the wife is the neck and she can turn the head any way she wants!"

Role of Wife

As someone once said, "The husband is the head of the house, but the wife is the neck and she can turn the head any way she wants!"

Newspaper columnist and minister, George Crane, tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me!" Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan: "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, drop the bomb. Tell him you are getting a divorce. That will really hurt him." With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful! Beautiful! Will he ever be surprised!" And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, acting, reinforcing, sharing... When she didn't return, Dr. Crane called, "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?" "Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him!" [excerpted from Robert Strand's book, Moments for Each Other, 1993]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon made this tribute to his wife:

She delights in her husband; in his person, his character, his affection. To her he is not only the chief and the foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all. Her heart's love belongs to him, and to him only. He is her little world, her paradise, her choice treasure. She is glad to sink her individuality in him. She seeks no renown for herself. His honor is reflected upon her and she rejoices in it. She will defend his name with her dying breath. Safe enough is he where she can speak for him. His smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks. Even in her dress she thinks of him and considers nothing beautiful which is distasteful to him. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand, but she believes them all and anything she can do to promote them she delights to perform. Such a wife as a true spouse, realizes the model marriage relation and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be.

Success in

Singer Cliff Barrows of the Billy Graham Crusade once revealed his secret to marital success: "I find marriages are held together by twelve simple words: "I am wrong," "I am sorry," "Please forgive me," "I love you." [cited by C. Swindoll, Strike The Original Match, 82]

In choosing a spouse, self-denial should be a characteristic sought after. Who are better suited to wedlock than men and women who have already died to self? Already they live to serve and please Another rather than selfish desires. Even now they deny legitimate self-interests to wait upon One to whom solemn vows have been made. [Walter Chantry, The Shadow of the Cross: Studies in Self-Denial]

Working Wives & Mothers

Back in 1970, Larry Christenson wrote: "Working wives and working mothers have become so much a part of our culture that we scarcely stop to consider what a departure this is from Divine Order, or the deleterious effect it has upon family life. . . . Nowhere does our enslavement to materialistic goals show itself more brazenly than in the naive notion that the wife must work in order to maintain a decent standard of living for the family. That cases of genuine necessity exist no sensible person would deny. But it is also evident that in many, perhaps the great majority of cases, the income of the wife goes toward luxuries which a family could do without." [The Christian Family, 127-28]

"Even secular anthropologists are recognizing the fearfully negative results in a world of working wives and mothers. Marvin Harris, writing in Why America Changed: Our Cultural Crisis (Simon and Schuster, 1981) lays many of the various troubles of our time at the feet of working women. He shows that the working woman is the child of consumptive materialism. The women's liberation efforts, he says, are created only to justify the materialism that took women into the money-making pursuit. These women have thereby impacted the home. He accuses them of undermining the husbands's role; driving male wages down by increasing the supply of workers; destroying 'the marital and procreative imperative' that hinges on women's being in the home raising children; shattering the traditional American domestic life and the way of love and sex; bringing an end to 'the lifetime, male-dominated, two parent, multi-child, breadwinner family;' creating black unemployment by filling up jobs with low-paid and unaggressive laborers, and thereby leading to an increase in the crime rate. In the August, 1981 issue of Psychology Today, he is quoted: 'Unwittingly, therefore, white women, responding to their own economic imperatives clothed in the rhetoric of sexual liberation, are steadily tightening the vise that holds the ghetto in its jaws' (p. 42)." [John MacArthur, The Family, 34]

MARTYRDOM: - See "Christ - Example of"

There have been more Christian martyrs in the last century than in all the previous nineteen centuries combined.

The first bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, was burned at the stake in 156 AD by the Roman authorities. Before the pyre was lit he said, "Eighty and six years I have served Him and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a time and is quickly quenched but you do now know the fire that

awaits the wicked and the judgement to come and everlasting punishment. Why are you waiting? Do what you will."

From Steven Neil's History of Missions (page 161):

He describes what happened in Japan in 1500s when the Emperor realized the threat of Christianity to the Japanese Empire. He was so incensed that he resorted to absolute brutality in his effort to remove any semblance of Christianity from the nation. As a result, I believe the nation of Japan has not been the same since.

"27 Jesuits, 15 Franciscans and 5 secular clergy did manage to evade the order of banishment. It was not until April, 1617 that the first martyrdoms of Europeans took place: A Jesuit, a Franciscan being beheaded at Omura; and a Dominican and an Augustinian a little later in the same area. Every kind of cruelty was practiced on the victims of the persecution. Crucifixion was the method usually employed in the case of Japanese Christians. On one occasion, 70 Japanese at Yaydo were crucified upside down at low water and were drowned as the tide came in." Do you have a good enough imagination to picture the lapping of the waters? . . . [Cited by John Piper, "Doing Missions When Dying is Gain" (Wheaton College), Cassette Message dated Oct. 27, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

MATERIALISM:

"Borrow money from pessimists; they don't expect it back." [Steven Wright]

"He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake." [Aurelius Augustine]

"Suppose, brethren, a man should make a ring for his betrothed, and she should love the ring more wholeheartedly than the betrothed who made it for her? . . . certainly, let her love his gift: but, if she should say, 'the ring is enough, I do not want to see his face again' what would we say of her? . . . The pledge is given her by the betrothed just that, in his pledge, he himself may be loved. God, the, has given you all these things. Love Him who made them." [Aurelius Augustine, cited in Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo, 326]

"If the things of the world delight you, praise God for them but turn your love away from them and give it to their Maker, so that in the things that please you may not displease Him." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, IV, 12]

MEANING OF LIFE:

Two Taoist sages were discussing the older one's imminent death. The dying sage laughingly said: "I wonder what God will make of me now? Perhaps an insect's wing or rat's leg?" (cited in Archetypes of Wisdom)

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome

of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.”

[Bertrand Russell]

William B. Provine writes as what Lewis called ‘a consistent pessimist’, stating: ‘There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die . . . That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.’ Peter Atkins likewise affirms that (from his naturalistic perspective) when the sun dies: ‘We shall have gone the journey of all purposeless stardust, driven unwittingly by chaos, gloriously but aimlessly evolved into sentience, born unchoosingly into the world, unwillingly taken from it, and inescapably returned to nothing.’

Others build upon Russell's scaffolding with what Richard John Neuhaus calls a ‘debonair nihilism’, an existential determination to ignore the meaninglessness of it all by enjoying the subjective bloom of the metaphorical roses along life's way. Hence, although Richard Dawkins agrees with Steven Weinberg's comment that ‘the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless’, he nevertheless wants ‘to guard against . . . people therefore getting nihilistic in their personal lives.’ Dawkins argues (correctly) that subjective human purposes lacking objective value are compatible with an objectively meaningless cosmos: ‘You can have a very happy and fulfilled personal life even if you think the universe at large is a tale told by an idiot. You can still set up goals and have a very worthwhile life and not be nihilistic about it at a personal level.’ Likewise, A.C. Grayling affirms that ‘the meaning of your life is the meaning you give it.’ But this is at best a pyrrhic victory over meaninglessness (and one only available to those capable of exercising such existential intentionality). [cited in the Wordview Email newsletter]

As French atheist André Comte-Sponville concludes: ‘there is no way for a lucid atheist to avoid despair.’

Dawkins likes to talk up the emotional rewards of science: ‘All the great religions have a place for awe, for ecstatic transport at the wonder and beauty of creation. And it's exactly this feeling of spine-shivering, breath-catching awe—almost worship—this flooding of the chest with ecstatic wonder, that modern science can provide.’ However, given Russell's scaffolding, such value-laden terms as ‘awe’ and ‘beauty’ refer to nothing but subjective personal reactions taking place within, and relative to, by-products of an evolutionary process lacking any intrinsic meaning or given purpose. In the final analysis, Dawkins affirms that ‘the universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.’ As Lewis held (both as an atheist and a Christian): ‘Either there is significance in the whole process of things as well as in human activity, or there is no significance in human activity itself . . . You cannot have it both ways. If the world is meaningless, then so are we . . .’

MEN, MEN'S ISSUES:

Men Are Just Happier People. What do you expect from such simple creatures?

Your last name stays put. The garage is all yours. Wedding plans take care of themselves. Chocolate is just another snack. You can be President. You can never be pregnant. You can wear a white T-shirt to a water park. You can wear NO shirt to a water park. Car mechanics tell you the truth. You never have to drive to another gas station restroom because this one is just too icky. You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt. Same work, more pay. Wrinkles add character. Wedding dress \$5000. Tux rental-\$100. People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them. The occasional well-rendered belch is practically expected. New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet. One mood all the time. Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat. You know stuff about tanks. A five-day vacation requires only one suitcase. You can open all your own jars. You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness. If someone forgets to invite you, he or she can still be your friend. Your underwear is \$8.95 for a three-pack. Three pairs of shoes are more than enough. You almost never have strap problems in public. You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes. Everything on your face stays its original color. The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades (maybe a lifetime?). You only have to shave your face and neck. You can play with toys all your life. Your belly usually hides your big hips. One wallet and one pair of shoes one color for all seasons. You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look. You can "do" your nails with a pocket knife. You have freedom of choice concerning growing a mustache. You can do Christmas shopping for 25 relatives on December 24 in 25 minutes. No wonder men are happier.

MENTAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH:

"[Moods and despair] indicate that people are not wholly or ultimately made for this world. There is something eternal in us. We are to find the fulfillment of our passion for meaning and security, which is expressed in a distorted way by our typical immersion in these worldly projects, and a realm which is not subject to disappearance. A human being is not an absurdity, a feudal passion, doomed either to repression or the most poignant unhappiness. He is, rather, a wayward child of God, whose restlessness and anxiety and despair can and should drive him into the arms of his Father. His despair is indeed a sickness, but it is curable when he finds his true home." [Soren Kierkegaard, cited in Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason, 45-46]

"Many Christian people, in fact, are in utter ignorance concerning this realm where the borderlines between the physical, psychological and spiritual meet. Frequently I have found that such [church] leaders had treated those whose trouble was obviously mainly physical or psychological, in a purely spiritual manner; and if you do so, you not only don't help. You aggravate the problem." [Martyn Lloyd Jones, Spiritual Depression (Eerdmans, 1965)]

"When I was ill...the physicians made me take as much medicine as though I had been a great bull. . . I do not deny that medicine is a gift of God, nor do I refuse to acknowledge science in the skill of many physicians. But take the best of them, how far are they from perfection? . . . When I feel indisposed, by observing a strict diet and going to bed early, I generally manage to get round again, that is, if I can keep my mind tolerably at rest. I have

no objection to the doctors acting upon certain theories, but, at the same time, they must not expect us to be the slaves to their fancies." [Martin Luther speaking of his own struggle with depression (and the use of medicine in his day)]

Charles Spurgeon had a category for causeless depression, depression that shows up through no fault of one's own: "Causeless depression cannot be reasoned with, nor can David's harp charm it away by sweet discourings. As well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness . . . The iron bolt which so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison, needs a heavenly hand to push it back."

"If there are any of us who think that the New Testament promises to us, as a benefit of redemption, psychological wholeness and relief from the assaults of a fallen world we are going to be so terribly disappointed. . . . You will suffer deprivations, you will have wrongs done to you . . . which will never be righted in this world. You will have personal weakness that you will never master, try and struggle as you might. And wholeness, in the sense of having a beautifully tuned internal self-life that never stutters and gasps . . . just isn't going to happen. . . . The point of the New Testament is that however much we've suffered, whatever losses we've endured, whatever indignations have come our way, we nevertheless can still walk with God who is holy and loving, and we can still do right by others and not merely feel good about ourselves." [David Wells, *The Gospel Alternative*, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

MERCY:

The Puritan Thomas Manton said: "There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves, for they know how gently God hath dealt with them." [cited in MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7*, 395]

MIND:

There is a difference between the mind and the three pound organ that is our brain. Consider the number 1. What is the number 1? If I write #1 on a piece of paper, is that the number 1? What if I throw away the paper? Did I do away with the #1? You say, "Man discovered the #1." Primal man picked up a stone and said to himself, 'This is one stone.'" How did he know it was the #1? Maybe it was t/#2. And if he knew it was the #1, that number must have existed before he did. In fact, before anything was created, the #1 existed because the #1 exists in the mind. and if it existed forever - and exists in the mind - there must be an eternal Mind within which it exists. This is the mind of God.

In one education study that was done, a group of people were each given a new concept to think about. Something they'd never heard of before. And they were asked to believe it. For most of them, this new information was contrary to their pre-conceived notions. The results of the study showed that 50% of the group immediately believed this new concept. 30% disbelieved it—immediately. 15% wanted to wait and think it over without asking for any clarification. 5% carefully considered all the details before making up their minds. What does this tell us? 5% think. 15% think they think. And 80% would seemingly rather die than think!

This is like the man who declared, "When I work, I work hard; when I sit, I sit loose; and when I think I fall asleep." This is often looked at by the world as the nature of Christians—they don't think.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." [Milton]

"If we think of the mind as a person enclosed in a room with only one window, we can readily understand the dependence of mental functions on the body without having to suppose that with the death of the body the life of the mind must cease. For while a person is enclosed in the room, experience of the outside world will depend on the condition of the window. Board up the window partly or completely and you will affect tremendously the sorts of experiences the person in the room can have. So too, when the human person is alive in a body, changes to that body particularly the brain will have considerable effect on the sorts of mental experiences the person is capable of having. But perhaps bodily death is analogous to the person gaining freedom from the enclosed room so that she or he is no longer dependent on the window for experience of the outside world. At death perhaps . . . the mind loses its dependency on the bodily organs such as the brain. The mere fact that the mind is dependent on the functioning of the brain while it (the mind) is associated with a living body is no more proof that a mind will cease functioning at bodily death than is the fact that the person is dependent on the window while she or he is in the room proof that when the room and window are no more the person will cease having experiences of the outside world." [William Rowe, cited in Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 277]

MINISTRY:

"Let us see in this fact a standing pattern to all who try to do good to others, whatever their office may be. Let it be remembered by every minister and every missionary,—by every schoolmaster and every Sunday-school teacher,—by every district visitor and every lay agent,—by every head of a house who has family prayers,—and by every nurse who has the charge of children. Let all such remember Christ's example, and resolve to do likewise. We are not to give up teaching, because we see no good done. We are not to relax our exertions, because we see no fruit of our toil. We are to work on steadily, keeping before us the great principle, that duty is our's and results are God's. There must be ploughmen and sowers, as well as reapers and binders of sheaves. The honest master pays his labourers according to the work they do, and not according to the crops that grow on his land. Our Master in heaven will deal with all His servants at the last day in like manner. He knows that success is not in their hands. He knows that they cannot change hearts. He will reward them according to their labour, and not according to the fruits which have resulted from their labour. It is not "the good and successful servant," but the "good and faithful servant," to whom He will say, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [Ryle, J. C. (1859). *Expository Thoughts on Mark* (pp. 196–197). London: William Hunt]

We're not concerned with the temporal and transient. Our success isn't measured in hours, or even centuries. Our focus is fixed on eternity. The gospel is hard to believe, and the people who bring it to the world are nobodies. The plan is still the same for all who are God's clay pots. To summarize, here is Paul's humble, five-point strategy: We will not lose heart. We will not alter the message. We will not manipulate the results, because we

understand that a profound spiritual reality is at work in those who do not believe. We will not expect popularity, and therefore, we will not be disappointed. And we will not be concerned with visible and earthly success but devote our efforts toward that which is unseen and eternal.

In 2 Corinthians 4:6-7, Paul wrote, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." . . . At the end of the day there is no human explanation for the growth of the church. The world thinks we're odd and bizarre. We're the losers. We're the privy pots. And yet, through the mouths of Paul and other misfits across the centuries, the church inexplicably moves in the history of the world with immense power beyond anything else. The gospel alone turns sinners into saints by transplanting men and women from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son - from eternal death to everlasting life. That is power to create new beings fit for God's presence and glory.

If we brought a bus load of movie stars, corporate titans, or Ivy League professors into our church (assuming they'd condescend to get on a bus), they'd look at us and laugh: "These people can't change the world!" No, we can't. But for those who remain faithful to the whole truth of Christianity, God is changing the world through us. He's been doing it through all history. [John MacArthur, *Hard to Believe: The High Cost and Infinite Value of Following Jesus* (Thomas Nelson, 2003), p. 51-52]

Once Spurgeon was asked about the secret of his ministry. After a short pause he responded, "My people pray for me." [cited in Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, 36]

If you would have been seeking ordination into ministry in 1662 England, part of the exhortation given to every ministerial candidate as follows: "Seeing that you cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures abound with a life agreeable to the same, consider how studious you ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures. We have good hope that you have well weighed and pondered these things with yourselves long before this time and that you have clearly determined by God's grace to give yourselves wholly to this office whereunto it hath pleased God to call you. So that as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing and draw all your cares and studies this way and that you will continuously pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Savior Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost, that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures you might wax riper and stronger in your ministry." [cited by John MacArthur, cassette message GC 54-34, 1 Timothy, side a, 1986]

Someone once said, "it doesn't take much of a man to be in the ministry, but it does take all of him."

"Dr. John Henry Jowett said, 'Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing.' He was right. A pastor friend and I once heard a young man preach an eloquent sermon, but it lacked something. 'There was something missing,' I said to my friend; and he replied, 'Yes, and it won't be there until his heart is broken. After he has suffered awhile, he will have a message worth listening to.'" [Warren Wiersbe, *Be Encouraged*, 51]

The late Louis L'Amour is one of the best selling authors of all time with nearly 230 million copies of his books in print world-wide. When asked the key to his writing style, he responded, "Start writing, not matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on." That's applicable for life and ministry. We need to get busy. Just do something; serve someone; minister in some way. Don't just sit there staring at a blank page! [adapted in part from a quote by John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 178]

THE ROCK - A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room was filled with light and the Saviour appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. This the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Seeing that the man was showing signs of discouragement, Satan decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's mind such as: You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself over this? "You are never going to move it." Thus giving the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure.

These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man even more. Why kill myself over this? he thought I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough." And that he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the Lord. "Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?" To this the Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are calloused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. "I, my friend will move the rock."

Perseverance in Ministry:

A.J. Gordon in his book, *The Holy Spirit in Missions*, said:

"It was 7 years before Carey baptized his first convert in India. It was 7 years before Judson won his first disciple in Burma. Morrison toiled 7 years before the first Chinaman was brought to Christ. Moffat declared that he had waited 7 years to see the first evident moving of the Holy Spirit upon the Bekiwanas of Africa. Henry Richards wrought 7 years in the Congo before the first convert was gained [there]." [Cited by John Piper, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts," Cassette Message on Isaiah 6:1-8,

“Take care, brethren; for if we think we can do anything of ourselves, all we shall get from God will be the opportunity to try. He will thus prove us, and let us see our inability. A certain alchemist, who waited upon Pope Leo X, declared that he had discovered how to transmute the baser metals into gold. He expected to receive a sum of money for his discovery, but Leo was no such simpleton; he merely gave him a huge purse in which to keep the gold which he would make. There was wisdom as well as sarcasm in the present. That is precisely what God does with proud men; He lets them have the opportunity to do what they boasted of being able to do. I never heard that so much as a solitary gold piece was dropped into Leo's purse, and I am sure you will never be spiritually rich by what you can do in your own strength. Be stripped, brother, and then God may be pleased to clothe you with honor, but not till then.” [Charles Spurgeon, An All-Round Ministry, Chapter 6, "Light, Fire, Faith, Life, Love.”]

MIRACLES:

"If seduction and darkness were again to begin through the wrath and decree of God (as will happen after our days, it is to be feared), and the devil were to begin to perform signs through some false prophet and perhaps cure a sick person, you would no doubt see the mob press to espouse the cause in such a way that no preaching or warning would be of any avail. . . . For in those who have no love for the truth, the devil will be powerful and strong. . . . If, then, these teachings [of a false prophet] contradict the chief doctrine and article of Christ, we should accord them neither attention nor acceptance though it were to snow miracles daily." [Martin Luther]

"Miracles are a retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for some of us to see." [C.S. Lewis, 20th century author and theologian]

OUR NATION'S GODLY HERITAGE--BULLETPROOF GEORGE WASHINGTON

The Father of our Country experienced a miracle early in his military career. This account is widely known and was included in most school history textbooks, until recent changes caused it to be deleted from many books.

During the French and Indian war at the Battle of the Monongahela, young Colonel Washington was engaged in a fierce skirmish with the Indians. An easy target in his bold red coat, he crisscrossed the battlefield carrying General Braddock's orders to the troops. The Indian warriors later acknowledged that they were targeting all officers--and particularly Washington--in the bright garb. Yet Washington survived. There were eighty-six British and American officers involved in the battle; sixty-three of them died. Colonel Washington was the only officer on horseback who was not killed, and later, the Indians testified that they repeatedly shot at him, and were surprised that he never fell. They believed he was protected by an invisible power and that no bullet, bayonet, arrow or tomahawk could harm him.

Years later, the Indian chief sought Washington out in order to tell him what had happened in the battle. The Chief said, "I am a chief and ruler over my tribes. I have traveled a long and weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. [On that day] I called to my men and said, 'Quick, let your aim be certain, and he dies.' Our rifles were leveled, rifles which, but for you, knew not how to miss--'twas all in vain, a power mightier far than we, shielded you. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle."

Washington himself later wrote to his brother John, "By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me!"

JOEY'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School. "Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge, and all the people walked across safely. He used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters and call in an air strike. They sent in bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved." "Now, Joey, is that REALLY what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked. "Well, no, Mom, but if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it !"

MISCELLANEOUS:

From the "Heads I win; tails you lose" files of ancient philosophy (as taken from D. Soccio, Introduction to Philosophy, 48-49):

Protagoras had a pupil named Eulathus, who arranged to take Protagoras's course in rhetoric and sophistry, a kind of law school, for partial tuition. So sure was Protagoras of his abilities as a teacher that he told Eulathus he did not have to pay the balance until Eulathus won his first court case. In fact, Protagoras guaranteed that Eulathus would win his first case.

Time dragged and Eulathus neither paid up nor argued any cases in court. Not only was Protagoras out of the money, he looked bad to his students and to other Sophists. After all, if winning is what counts, and if a appearance is reality, and if the pupil can out maneuver the old master, why should anyone continue to pay his high fees? Protagoras was compelled to take action.

Confronting Eulathus (probably in a public place where he can use his crowd-pleasing skills), Protagoras demanded payment in the form of this dilemma: Eulathus, you might as well pay me, since I'm going to sue you for the rest of the tuition. If I win in court, the court will rule that you owe me the money; if I lose in court, you will have won your first case, and you owe me the money. Either I win in court or I lose, so either you owe me the money or you owe me the money."

Eulathus, alas, was a good teacher, and Eulathus was ready for him. He shot back with a counter dilemma: "No, sir, you have it backwards. If you defeat me in court, then I have lost my first case and so do not owe the money; if I defeat you, the court ruled that I do not owe you the money. Either I defeat you or you defeat me. In either case, I do not owe you the money."

Frank Hayes (1888–1923) was a jockey who, on June 4, 1923, suffered a fatal heart attack in the midst of a steeplechase at Belmont Park in New York State, USA. The thirty-five-year-old Hayes had never won a race before and in fact by profession was not actually a jockey but a horse trainer and longtime stableman. The horse, a 20-1 outsider called Sweet Kiss, was owned by Miss A.M. Frayling. Hayes apparently died somewhere in the middle of the race, but his body remained in the saddle throughout. Sweet Kiss eventually crossed the finish line in the lead with Hayes technically still atop her back, making him the first, and thus far only, jockey known to have won a race after death. Hayes' death was not discovered until Miss Frayling and race officials came to congratulate him shortly after the race. It was theorised that the fatal heart attack was probably brought on by Hayes' extreme efforts to meet the weight requirements, possibly followed by the excitement of riding to the front of the pack. After the discovery of Hayes' death, all further post-race regulations were waived by the Jockey Club, the result being declared official without the customary formality of weighing in. Hayes, dressed in his colorful racing silks, was buried three days later. It was claimed that Sweet Kiss was nicknamed "Sweet Kiss of Death" for the rest of her life. [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Hayes_\(jockey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Hayes_(jockey))]

Did you know that a company once sued a union because the union didn't go on strike? It happened in 1983. Colonial Manor Nursing Home of Youngstown, Ohio, took the Service Employees International Union to court for not following through on the union's threat to strike. When labor negotiations between the workers and the nursing home broke down, union members authorized a strike and gave Colonial a ten-day notice of their intentions as required by federal law. The nursing home responded by spending \$15,000 to recruit, interview, and train people to fill the 47 jobs it expected to be vacant from the anticipated strike. However, the union didn't go on strike. On the day the strike was supposed to begin, the union employees showed up for work--and so did the replacements! Faced with meeting payroll for two staffs, Colonial sued the union for "fraud and negligence" and asked for 3 million in punitive damages in addition to the actual damages. The union countersued. Eventually, both sides settled their dispute at the bargaining table and dropped their lawsuits.

A Charlotte, North Carolina man, having purchased a case of rare, very expensive cigars, insured them against ... get this ... fire. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of fabulous cigars, and having yet to make a single premium payment on the policy, the man filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the man stated that he had lost the cigars in "a series of small fires." The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason that the man had consumed the cigars in a normal fashion.

The man sued... and won! In delivering his ruling, the judge stated that since the man held a policy from the company in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable, and also guaranteed that it would insure the cigars against fire, without defining what it considered to be "unacceptable fire," it was obligated to compensate the insured for his loss.

Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the judges ruling and paid the man \$15,000 for the rare cigars he lost in "the fires." After the man cashed his check, however, the insurance company had him arrested... on 24 counts of arson! With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used as evidence against him, the man was convicted of intentionally burning the rare cigars and sentenced to 24 consecutive one year terms. [Rec'd via the Internet on July 11, 1998]

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given by the American Assoc. for Forensic Science, AAFS president Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here's the tale:

"On March 23, 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. The decedent had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide (he left a note indicating his despondency). As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers and that Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide anyway because of this. Ordinarily, a person who sets out to commit suicide ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended. That Opus was shot on the way to certain death nine stories below probably would not have changed his mode of death from suicide to homicide. But the fact that his suicidal intent would not have been successful caused the medical examiner to feel he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor whence the shotgun blast emanated was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing and he was threatening her with the shotgun. He was so upset that, when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window striking Opus. When one intends to kill subject A but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant that neither knew the shotgun was loaded. The old man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded gun. He had no intention to murder her- therefor the killing of Opus was apparently an accident. That is, the gun had been accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun approximately six weeks prior to the fatal incident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to threaten her with the weapon, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. There was an exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son, one Ronald Opus, had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This lead him to jump off a 10-story building, only to be killed by a shotgun blast through a ninth-story window. The medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

A woman, in wanting to soothe the fears of a recently wed girl-friend, sent her a card with words of encouragement. And wishing to give her some encouragement from Scripture, she decided 1 John 4:18 would be a good verse to have her look up:

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,"

Unfortunately, she forgot to put the "I" before "John" and when her friend received the card she looked up John 4:18:

"For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband;"

A Cry in the Night

The following story is true and was taken from the book, "Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer," written in 1894.

"Some people reject Christianity because it seems too incredible to believe that God would take such great pains to save human beings so far beneath Him. They forget the New Testament teaches that God is our *Father*. And because He is our Father, it is not surprising that God made such a sacrifice to save us. Even mere men will not permit a child to perish without putting forth a mighty effort to save him--any child, it need not be his own."

"One fact is worth a dozen arguments, so I will ask you to listen to the story of a humble man as he relates an incident in his otherwise uneventful life. For a little while imagine that you're seated around the table of an American boarding house where the guests are spending an hour or two in the evening relating the more remarkable events that have happened to them. Imagine that you are listening to one of the guests there instead of to me:"

"My name is Anthony Hunt. I'm a cattle driver, and I live many miles away upon the western prairie. There wasn't a house in sight when my wife and I moved there."

"One day, about ten years ago, I left home to sell fifty head of cattle. Before I came back I was to buy some groceries and dry goods and, above all, a doll for our youngest child, Dolly. She's never had a store-bought doll of her own, only the rag-babies her mother made her. Dolly could talk of nothing else but the doll I was going to bring her, and as I was leaving she ran down to the gate to call after me to 'buy a big one.'"

"Nobody but a parent can understand how my mind lingered on that toy and, when the cattle were sold, the first thing I went to buy Dolly's doll. I found a large one, with eyes that would open and shut when you pulled a wire. I had it wrapped in paper and then tucked it under my arm with the other parcels of calico, tea, and sugar. It might have been wiser to stay in town until morning, but I was anxious to get back and eager to hear Dolly carry on about the doll she was so eagerly expecting."

"I mounted a steady-going old horse of mine and, pretty well loaded, started for home. Night set in before I was a mile from town and, when I came to the wildest stretch of road I know of, it was already black as pitch. But I knew this road so well that I could have felt my way home if I had to--and it was almost like doing that when the storm that had been brewing finally broke and the rain fell in torrents."

"I was five or six miles from home. I rode on as fast as I could, but suddenly I heard a little cry, like a child's voice. I stopped short and listened. I heard it again. I called, and the voice answered me, but I still couldn't see a thing. All was dark as pitch. I got down and felt around in the grass and called out again. Once more the tiny voice answered."

"Then I began to wonder. I'm not a timid man, but folks know that as a cattle driver I'd usually be carrying money with me. I thought then that it might be a trap to rob and murder me. I'm not superstitious--not very--but I couldn't see how a real child could be out on the prairie so late on such a terrible night. It might be an animal's cry. The bit of coward that hides itself in most men showed itself to me then, and I was half inclined to run away. But once more I heard that pitiful cry and said to myself, 'If any man's child is out here, Anthony Hunt is not the man to let him lie there and die.'"

"I searched again. At last I remembered a hollow underneath the hill and groped my way there through the darkness. Sure enough, I found a little dripping thing that moaned and sobbed as I took it in my arms. I mounted my horse and tucked the little soaked thing under my coat as best I could, promising to take it home to its mamma."

"The child seemed tired to death and soon cried itself to sleep against my bosom. It had slept there over an hour when through the darkness I caught sight of my own windows. There were lights in them, and I supposed my wife had lit them for my sake. But when I got into the front yard I could sense that something was wrong. I stood still with dead fear in my heart for about five minutes before I could bring myself to lift the door-latch. At last I did and found my wife in the middle of a room filled with friends from surrounding farms. She was weeping, and when she saw me enter she hid her face."

"'Oh, don't tell him,'" she said. 'It will kill him.' 'What is it friends,' I cried. And one said: 'Nothing now, I hope, What's that in your arms?'"

"'A poor lost child,' I said. 'I found it on the road. Take it, will you? I've turned faint.' And as I lifted the little sleeping thing, I saw the face of my own child, my little Dolly. It was *my* darling child, and no other, that I had picked up on the rain-drenched road."

"While her mother was working, my little Dolly had wandered out on the prairie to greet papa and the new doll. When the storm hit, my wife lost hope of finding her alive, and was lamenting for our child that she assumed to be dead. I thanked God on my knees before them all."

"It is not much of a story, friends, but I think of it often in the night. I wonder how I could bear to go on living if I had not stopped when I heard the cry for help upon the road--the little baby cry, hardly louder than a squirrel's chirp." [author unknown]

MISSIONS:

J. Oswald Sanders tells the story of an indigenous missionary who walked barefoot from village to village preaching the gospel in India. His hardships were many. After a long day of many miles and much discouragement he came to a certain village and tried to speak the

gospel but was driven out of town and rejected. So he went to the edge of the village dejected and lay down under a tree and slept from exhaustion.

When he awoke people were hovering over him, and the whole town was gathered around to hear him speak. The head man of the village explained that they came to look him over while he was sleeping. When they saw his blistered feet they concluded that he must be a holy man, and that they had been evil to reject him. They were sorry and wanted to hear the message that he was willing to suffer so much to bring them. [cited on the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, website: <http://www.bbcmpls.org/foreignmissions/drivingconvictions.htm>]

A.J. Gordon in his book, The Holy Spirit in Missions, said:

“It was 7 years before Carey baptized his first convert in India. It was 7 years before Judson won his first disciple in Burma. Morrison toiled 7 years before the first Chinaman was brought to Christ. Moffat declared that he had waited 7 years to see the first evident moving of the Holy Spirit upon the Bekiwanas of Africa. Henry Richards wrought 7 years in the Congo before the first convert was gained [there].” [Cited by John Piper, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts,” Cassette Message on Isaiah 6:1-8, Jan. 1, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

From Steven Neil’s History of Missions (page 161):

He describes what happened in Japan in 1500s when the Emperor realized the threat of Christianity to the Japanese Empire. He was so incensed that he resorted to absolute brutality in his effort to remove any semblance of Christianity from the nation. As a result, I believe the nation of Japan has not been the same since.

“27 Jesuits, 15 Franciscans and 5 secular clergy did manage to evade the order of banishment. It was not until April, 1617 that the first martyrdoms of Europeans took place: A Jesuit, a Franciscan being beheaded at Omura; and a Dominican and an Augustinian a little later in the same area. Every kind of cruelty was practiced on the victims of the persecution. Crucifixion was the method usually employed in the case of Japanese Christians. On one occasion, 70 Japanese at Yaydo were crucified upside down at low water and were drowned as the tide came in.” Do you have a good enough imagination to picture the lapping of the waters? . . . [Cited by John Piper, “Doing Missions When Dying is Gain” (Wheaton College), Cassette Message dated Oct. 27, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

MISUNDERSTANDING:

Traveling down the interstate and needing to use the restroom, I stopped at a rest area and headed to the restroom. I was barely sitting down when I heard a voice from the other stall saying: "Hi, how are you?" I'm not the type to start a conversation in the restroom and I don't know what got into me, But I answered, somewhat embarrassed, "Doin' just fine!" And the other person says: "So what are you up to?" What kind of question is that? At that

point, I'm thinking this is too bizarre so I say: "Uhhh, I'm like you, just traveling!"?? At this point I am just trying to get out as fast as I can when I hear another question. "Can I come over?" Ok, this question is just too weird for me but I figured I could just be polite and end the conversation.. I tell them "No..I'm a little busy right now!!!" Then I hear the person say nervously... "Listen, I'll have to call you back. There's an idiot in the other stall who keeps answering all my questions."

“Back several years ago when we lived in Arizona Lois and I took some time off and spent the weekend in Tucson. Happened to be the weekend of the “Big Game” (ASU & UA) and, being a big ASU fan I wanted to catch the game which for some strange reason wasn’t on TV. So we set out to find a restaurant where we could watch it. At that point you’re pretty much looking at “sports-bar” sorts of places (have a restaurant on one side, a bar on the other and TVs in between). We’re driving around having no success in finding such a place & after a while we see one place that looks like it might fill the bill. We park and I walk in with Lois behind me. Place is quite dark and you kinda walk into this lobby area where there’s a big counter and a cheaply-dressed young lady there. All I’m looking for is a TV & I notice that there are no women there. Suddenly I feel this tug from behind me and Lois is dragging me backwards out of this place. I finally understood why as I was going backwards out the door & caught a glimpse of some, for lack of a better word, “dancers.” There were women there; they were the entertainment.” [TAB]

MORALITY:

Our culture embraces an ever evolving standard of decency. “That sort of language goes back to a Supreme Court decision from 1958 in a case known as *Trop v. Dulles*. Earl Warren, the chief justice of the United States authored the majority opinion in which he cited as the justification for his decision, ‘Evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.’ If you're looking for one phrase that encapsulated that progressivist understanding of history and of morality, I don't think you could top that. And Earl Warren is, if nothing, symbolic of the progressivism that took control of the United States Supreme Court in the second half of the 20th century. It's often described as a liberal court, and liberal it was. But not in the classic sense, but rather in the updated progressivist sense.” [Albert Mohler, Daily Briefing, August 13, 2019]

In a 1994 debate with Phillip Johnson, a leading figure in the intelligent design movement, the late evolutionary biologist William Provine insisted: "No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth. These are all conclusions to which Darwin came quite clearly."

Coyne has stated that evolution "says that there is no special purpose for your life, because it is a naturalistic philosophy. We have no more extrinsic purpose than a squirrel or an armadillo."

Duke University philosophy professor Alex Rosenberg shows the same inconsistency. He co-authored an article in 2003, "Darwin's Nihilistic Idea: Evolution and the Meaninglessness of Life," in which he dismissed morality as an illusion. However, Rosenberg assured us that we have nothing to fear, because nihilism has no effect on our behavior, since "Most of us just couldn't persistently be mean, even if we tried." Rosenberg needs to take some of my

history courses — or just read the news — if he doesn't think many people could be mean to each other.

In a 2013 debate with William Lane Craig, Rosenberg objected to some of Craig's arguments as "morally offensive," because some of his relatives were murdered in the Holocaust. But if life is meaningless and morality is an illusion, why does it matter if Hitler killed millions? That would be just another meaningless event in the meaningless flow of history. Rosenberg apparently knows better.

A certain sociologist (Marc Hauser) argued that morality is biologically hard-wired into us. Find a member of the species *Homo sapiens*, he argued, and you've located an organism that knows some actions are right, and others, wrong.

Here is how he put his case in an essay:

Recent discoveries suggest that all humans, young and old, male and female, conservative and liberal, living in Sydney, San Francisco and Seoul, growing up as atheists, Buddhists, Catholics and Jews, with high school, university or professional degrees, are endowed with a gift from nature, a biological code for living a moral life. This code, a universal moral grammar, provides us with an unconscious suite of principles for judging what is morally right and wrong. It is an impartial, rational and unemotional capacity. It doesn't dictate who we should help or who we are licensed to harm. Rather, it provides an abstract set of rules for how to intuitively understand when helping another is obligatory and when harming another is forbidden.

The Apostle Paul:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness... (Romans 2:14-15) [Adapted from an article by Paul Nelson, PhD, Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and adjunct professor at Biola University]

The answer to the question, "can sexual behavior be directly linked to the survival of nations:"

J.D. Unwin, British social anthropologist, spent 7 years studying the births and deaths of 80 civilizations. His conclusions are eye-opening.

He reported from his exhaustive research that every known culture in the world's history has followed the same sexual premise: During its early days of existence, premarital and extramarital sexual relationships were strictly prohibited. Great creative energy was associated with this inhibition of sexual expression, causing the culture to prosper. Much later in the life of the society, its people began to rebel against the strict prohibitions, demanding the freedom to release their internal passions. As the mores weakened, the social energy abated, eventually resulting in the decay or destruction of the civilization.

Dr. Unwin concluded that the energy that holds a society together is sexual (moral) in nature. When a man is devoted to one woman and one family, he is motivated to build, save, protect, plan, and prosper on their behalf. However, when his sexual interests are dispersed and generalized, his effort is invested in the gratification of sensual desires. [cited by Dr. James Dobson]

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in her fertile fields and boundless prairies, and it was not there; in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." [Alexis de Tocqueville, French historian, during his 1831 visit which resulted in his 4-volume work, Democracy in America]

"A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do." [Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States]

John Steinbeck, in his book, Of Mice and Men, pointed out the decline in moral values when one of his characters commented, "There's nothing *wrong* anymore."

Daniel Webster wrote in 1823:

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end." [cited on the back of John Calvin's Golden Booklet of the true Christian Life]

In light of the news of the so-called human cloning going on, we have to ask ourselves the hypothetical question. If you pushed your naked clone off the top of a tall building, would it be: A) murder, B) suicide, or C) merely making an obscene clone fall?

"It is not the man who has lost his reason that has gone mad, it is the man who has lost everything, aside from his reason." – G.K. Chesterton

MONEY:

"Speaking of money, nobody wants to contribute nowadays to the maintenance of the ministry, and the erection of schools. When it comes to establishing false worship and idolatry, no cost is spared. True religion is ever in need of money, while false religions are backed by wealth." [Martin Luther, comment on Galatians 2:10]

MOTIVATION AND AMBITION:

According to Marcus Aralias, there are four things that drive us: 1) Fame; 2) Fortune; 3) Power; 4) Pleasure.

MUSIC:

“Billy Joel once said, ‘If the Devil were going to go into business, it would be the music business.’” [Behind the Music VH1 television special on Cat Stevens, 2000]

MYSTICISM:

"A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument." [Benny Hinn, cited in Integrative Theology III]

"Bob Dylan late in 1978 encountered what he said was ‘a presence in the room that couldn't have been anybody by Jesus. I truly had a born-again experience, if you want to call it that. . . It was a physical thing. I felt it all over me. I felt my whole body tremble.’ His albums Slow Train Coming and Saved reflected a new understanding, and on tour Dylan told audiences, ‘ I told you the times they are a-changin' and they did. I said the answer was blowin' in the wind and it was. I'm telling you now Jesus is coming back, and He is! And there is no other way of salvation.’ But in the 1980's Dylan apparently reaffirmed his Judaism." [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 55]

Some time ago it was said that a church decided to implement as one its ministries an “Evangelical Interactive Help-line” for people with psychiatric problems. If you called their 1-800 number for assistance you would get a friendly pre-recorded voice that asked you to select from the following options: “If you are obsessive-compulsive, press 1 repeatedly.” “If you are co-dependent, ask someone else to press 2.” “If you have multiple personalities, press 3,4,5,6.” “If you are paranoid, we know who you are. Just stay on the line until we trace the call.” Finally, “If you are an evangelical, just stay on the line and a still, small voice will tell you which number to press.”

Mysticism has created a theological climate that is largely intolerant of precise doctrine and sound biblical exegesis. Authoritative biblical preaching is decried as too dogmatic. It is rare nowadays to hear a preacher challenge popular opinion with clear teaching from God's Word and underscore the truth with a settled "Thus saith the Lord." . . . Mysticism also destroys discernment. Why should people think for themselves or compare what they are taught with Scripture when their teachers claim to receive truth directly from heaven? [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 180ff.]

Joseph Dillow shares this story of how a Charismatic friend tried to influence him at a critical point in his life:

"When I was a new Christian, I met a man I'll call Bill. He was given to seeing visions and regularly claimed he received direct revelation from God. he saw the Lord working in every conceivable circumstance of life. Every inner impression was examined as the Lord's leading.

One night he called me at midnight because he had a message from the Lord he had to share with me. Bill was in his forties and lived alone, an hour's drive from my house, but he wanted to come and deliver the message in person.

I was touched by his concern and told him it would be all right if he waited until tomorrow. But he insisted; so I invited him over. When he arrived, he was visibly shaken. At the time I had just decided to go to seminary. Bill was very upset about this. "The letter kills," he said, "but the Spirit gives life." And now he had a message from the Lord warning me not to go to seminary. He had been reading Isaiah and the Lord gave him a special revelation that said, "If you go to seminary your wife will be eaten by lions and you will lose your eternal salvation."

I was rather frightened, but I didn't buy it. Bill lived in a world of superstition, which his theology of tongues had fostered. The centrality of the Word had been lost in his life. The last I heard of Bill he was in jail because the lord had told him that he was to disobey constituted authority and not comply with a zoning ordinance." [cited in John MacArthur, The Charismatics, 35-36]

The following letter was written by a young man in the Charismatic movement and illustrates the casual attitude toward Scripture that experientialism breeds:

"The greatest experience in love I have ever had was at the foot of the cross as the blood of Jesus Christ poured out over me. He filled me with His Spirit. He brought me across the view into the City of Jerusalem into the Holy of Holies. There I beheld myself in him, and He in me. I received the baptism as by fire and from this His love dwells in me. From this I have communion daily. I do not feel the need for study of the Scriptures, for I know Jesus as He has revealed Himself to me within; and as He dwells in me, there is the Word. I go to Scripture, and Scripture is vital and necessary--but neither central nor crucial, for I have Him--rather He has me. Scriptures are a secondary source. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit the Word in me (the very spiritual body of Jesus Christ) is primary--I say this as a living experience out of what he has given me to say." [cited in MacArthur, The Charismatics, 38]

Mystical, experience-oriented Charismatics were even on the scene during the 16th century Reformation. It is recorded that the followers of mystic Thomas Munzer, as well as the more radical fringe of the Anabaptists gave great emphasis to their supposed gifts of the Holy Spirit--including their mystical knowledge. Their cry in supporting their extra-biblical experience was "The Spirit!" "The Spirit!" To which the great Reformer, Martin Luther replied, "I will not follow where their spirit leads." When they were granted a personal meeting with Luther, they gave their cry, "The Spirit!" "The Spirit!" Luther was not impressed and thundered back, "I slap your spirit on the snout!" [adapted from MacArthur, Colossians, 122]

NAME / NAMES:

A name is symbolic of a person's identity. This was especially true during biblical times. “Abraham” means “father of a multitude.” “Moses” means “draws out.” “Jesus” means “God saves.” In ancient tribal cultures people were often named for something in nature

such as “sitting bull” and “red cloud.” In the middle ages, children born on a saint’s day were often named after that saint. The Puritans started naming their children after virtues, such as Faith, Prudence, or after other abstractions such as Increase. Many families name their children after a loved one, such as a parent, grandparent or another ancestor or person of admiration. Today, however, it seems that the main criteria for a name is that it sounds good. Some parents, to ensure individuality, make up unique names out of unusual spellings or vocalizations. Many others name their children after pop icons (decades from now, adults will find themselves saddled with the names of then-old fashioned pos stars who happened to be popular when they were born). A new trend in baby names is taking the pop-culture influence to a new level. Cleveland Evans, a psychology professor at Nebraska’s Bellevue University and a member of the American Name Society, studied Social Security records for the year 2000 and found that many children today are being named after consumer products. 22 girls were named “Infiniti” (not with a “y” as in the attribute of God, but with an “i” as in the car brand). 55 boys were named “Chevy” and 5 girls carried the name “Celica.” Hundreds of children were named after clothing companies. There were 298 girls named “Armani,” 164 more after the more casual “Nautica,” and 6 boys were named “Timberland” (after the boot). Fabrics also come into play. 5 girls were named “Rayon,” 6 boys were named “Cashmere,” 7 were named “Denim” and 5 “Cotton” (though perhaps this was for Increase Mather’s son). 49 boys were named “Canon” (after the camera?) And 7 were named Del Monte (after the canned vegetable company?). 21 girls were named “L’Oreal” after the hair dye (maybe to let them know “you are worth it.”). 23 girls and 6 boys were named “Skyy” with two “y’s” (this is a brand of Vodka). Parents named their children after other alcoholic beverages, also. For example, 9 girls were named “Chianti.” The ultimate product for name for a new baby that was uncovered by Mr. Evans was “ESPN.” Two separate parents, one in TX and the other in MI, named their sons after the sports cable network. (A reporter for the Dallas Morning News tracked down one of the families and found that the correct pronunciation of the name is “Espan.”) Not that there’s anything wrong with having an unusual name, which, as in Johnny Cash’s “Boy Named Sue, can be a character building experience (but maybe he should have changed the spelling to “Sioux”). What’s the point? Well, for one thing, Christians find their identity in a greater name—in the name of Jesus, “God saves.” [Adapted from an article in World Magazine, Nov. 15, 2003]

NEW AGE:

The following came in via Email, April, 1998:

Greetings:

This is something near and dear to my heart, that I hope you will take a moment to read this info and go to the website: <http://www.peaceseeds.com>.

Here’s how you can participate:

1. Tell everyone you know, and/or pass this letter so that everyone can have an opportunity to participate. Feel free to copy this. The goal is to get as many people focused on this meditation.

2. Begin preparing your spirit and mind for the event by spending a few moments in silence everyday. This will help build the energy.

3. Join at least one other person for the vigil on April 23rd. This is an experience to share. "Where two or more are gathered." Online meditation groups in chat rooms and IRC channels around the globe are being formed.

The Format for the Meditation:

Everyone is being asked to follow this simple format during the meditation. As scientific studies at Princeton University show, the more focused a group meditation is, the stronger the effect.

1. Opening: Begin with this affirmation, said with commitment:

"I am an Emissary of Light. I extend this Light to all beings, in compassion love, knowing that they are one within me. This moment the world is healed - and I along with it. I will it - and it is so.

2. Then spend five minutes creating a sound (such as "Aum") to carry the spiritual energy and vibration outward. This can be done with a single tone or by singing a song such as "Amazing Grace."

3. Spend five minutes in silence allowing your spirit to receive the light and love which you yourself extend to the world.

4. End with this affirmation:

"It is done! I am one with all - and all is healed. Let love reign where fear once was. I accept this for myself and for the world. I am an Emissary of Light now and always - Amen."

5. With reverence, bow your head and thank the Father Mother God for this grand opportunity. The universe gives thanks to you for being part of this great experiment. And I thank you for your time.

A poem from a bereavement support group newsletter:

"Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the softly falling snow. I am the gentle showers of rain, I am the fields of ripening grain.

I am in the morning hush, I am in the graceful rush of beautiful birds in circling flight, I am the starshine of the night.

I am in the flowers that bloom, I am in a quiet room. I am in the birds that sing, I am in each lovely thing.

Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there . . . I do not DIE.

"Our world is in peril. Gaia, the spirit of the Earth can no longer stand the terrible destruction plaguing our planet. She sends five magic rings to five special young people: Guat, from Africa with the power of the earth; Wheeler from North America with the power of fire; from the Soviet Union, Ninka, with the power of the wind; from Asia, Gee, with the power of water; from South America, Martee, with the power of heart. When the five combine powers they summon the earth's greatest champion, Captain Planet. Planetiers, THE POWER IS YOURS!"

During the prologue, you see an angry goddess who is looking down at the Earth. She throws five rings down that reach the "special young people". There is a brief demonstration of each "power". Then the rings are joined, and "from the dust of the Earth" comes Captain Planet who flies off all over the world. Captain Planet's purpose is to stop mutant enemies from polluting or harming the Earth.

Does this sound familiar to anyone? This is the beginning of a cartoon that comes on at least five times a week for your children and/or grandchildren to watch. Is this just a fun way to teach children to be good stewards of the Earth? Or is it an evangelical show to reach children to become "planetiers" who worship Mother Earth? One of the rallying cries of the New Age religion is "You have the Power".

In the movie "Free Willie" Michael Jackson (a supporter of New Age) sings a song concerning man's relationship to whales: "...carry me like you are my brother...hold me like a mother... you are my friend...". After Michael's song there is a plea to save the whales. Starting with an ancient proverb, "We have not inherited the earth from our ancestors, We have only borrowed it from our children" gives a common sense approach to take care of the Earth. Unfortunately, it continues and they go on to talk in circles: "Several species of whales are near extinction as the ecological balance is threatened." What they are saying here is everything and everyone on the Earth are biologically connected. Somehow we are doing something to the "ecological balance" of the Earth and the Earth can no longer support them. (Something is wrong with the environment or their food chain was somehow broken.) They go on to say the whales are becoming extinct because whale hunters are killing them. That is two completely different things. One has absolutely nothing to do with the other.

Several elementary schools have visitors who come in and teach the school songs about not hurting the environment. Here is one such song that my children were taught:

"The Earth is our mother-we must take care of her-The sky is our father-we must take care of him-The animals are our brothers-we must take care of them-The planets are our sisters-we must take care of them-Hosanna... Hosanna... Hosanna..."

NOAH'S ARK:

Josephus claims that Noah's Ark settled on a mountain top in Armenia and that the Armenians call the spot "the landing place" and "they show relics of it to this day." [Ant. 1.90]

OBEDIENCE: [See also "devotion;" discipleship"]

The Civil War Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864

"By 1864 Lincoln and his generals had settled on a war of attrition: 'doing the arithmetic,' Lincoln called it, for the North could lose men and replace them, but if Southern forces lost half as many they would likely stay in that depleted condition. The night before battle Northern soldiers were writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them on the backs of their coats, so the identity of their corpses the next day could be recognized more readily. U.S. Grant's forces at Cold Harbor, VA, had 7,000 casualties, most of them during a furious 8-minute assault against the Southern lines; Robert E. Lee's army lost 1,500. When the attack ended, an Alabama colonel noted that 'the dead covered more than five acres of ground about as thickly as they could be laid.' One blood-stained diary found in the pocket of a dead soldier had this final entry: 'June 3. Cold Harbor. I was killed.'" [World Magazine, June 3, 2000, p. 25]

"It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place." [Fenelon, 17th c. French Saint, cited by John Piper "Persevering in Ministry," Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"[we] are like deep-sea divers encased in suits designed for many fathoms deep, marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bathtubs." [Peter Marshall put it this way]

"Tomorrow we shall meet, Death and I--And he shall thrust his sword Into one who is wide awake. But in the meantime how grievous the memory Of hours frittered away." [Dag Hammarskjöld, Markings, 6]

Lord, help me look into my life
And find the faults therein,
Then give me strength to
weed them out,
And keep me pure and clean.

Thy guiding hand alone can lead
Me on to daily life
A fuller richer life for Thee
My all to others give.

Keep me so busy with the task
Of keeping self in line,

I'll have no time for other's fault
Nor waste of precious time.

It's much too easy to observe
The other person's faults,
When all the while the thing I need
Is to heed what thou has taught.
[Author unknown]

"I must take care above all that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the basis of my peace--mark that--yet it will be the channel of it." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 17]

OLD AGE:

AND, ABOUT GROWING OLDER [Attributed to Will Rogers]

First, Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.
Second, The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.
Third, Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.
Fourth, When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.
Fifth, You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.
Sixth, I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.
Seventh, One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.
Eighth, One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.
Ninth, Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.
Tenth, Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf.
And finally, If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old.

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on Interstate 77. Please be careful!" "Good grief," said Herman, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

An older couple were lying in bed one night. The husband was falling asleep but the wife was in a romantic mood and wanted to talk. She said: "You used to hold my hand when we were courting." Wearily he reached across, held her hand for a second and tried to get back to sleep. A few moments later she said: "Then you used to kiss me." Mildly irritated, he reached across, gave her a peck on the cheek and settled down to sleep. Thirty seconds later she said: "Then you used to nibble my neck." Angrily, he threw back the bed clothes and got out of bed. "Where are you going?" she asked. "To the bathroom to get my teeth!"

Three sisters ages 92, 94 and 96 live in a house together. One night the 96 year old draws a bath. She puts her foot in and pauses. She yells to the other sisters, "Was I getting in or out of the bath?" The 94 year old yells back, "I don't know. I'll come up and see." She starts up the stairs and pauses "Was I going up the stairs or down?" The 92 year old is sitting at the kitchen table having tea listening to her sisters. She shakes her head and says, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful, knock on wood." She then yells, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door." .

An elderly Floridian called 911 on her cell phone to report that her car has been broken into. She is hysterical as she explains her situation to the dispatcher: "They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!" she cried. The dispatcher said, "Stay calm. An officer is on the way." A few minutes later, the officer radios in. "Disregard." He says. "She got in the back-seat by mistake."

Two elderly women were out driving in a large car - both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along, they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red, but they just went on through. The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself "I must be losing it. I could have sworn we just went through a red light." After a few more minutes, they came to another intersection and the light was red again. Again, they went right through. The woman in the passenger seat was almost sure that the light had been red but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous . At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was red and they went on through. So, she turned to the other woman and said, "Mildred, did you know that we just ran through three red lights in a row? You could have killed us both!" Mildred turned to her and said, "Oh no, you mean I'm driving?"

"Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician." [Old Union Reminder]

"The only way to look younger is not to be born so soon." [Old Union Reminder]

The music starts of the 60s and 70s today with revised titles of their past hits:

Herman's Hermits
- "Mrs. Brown, You've Got A Lovely Walker"
The Bee Gees
- "How Can You Mend A Broken Hip"
The Temptations
- "Papa's Got A Kidney Stone"
Nancy Sinatra
- "These Boots Aren't Made For Bunions"
The Beatles
- "I Get By With A Little Help From Depends"
Marvin Gaye
- "I Heard It Through The Grape Nuts"
Procol Harem
- "A Whiter Shade Of Hair"
Johnny Nash
- "I Can't See Clearly Now"

Leo Sayer
 - "You Make Me Feel Like Napping"
 ABBA
 - "Denture Queen"
 Paul Simon
 - "Fifty Ways To Lose Your Liver"
 Roberta Flack
 - "The First Time I Ever Forgot Your Face"
 Commodores
 - "Once, Twice, Three Times To The Bathroom"
 Rolling Stones
 - "You Can't Always Go When You Want"
 Bobby Darin
 - "Splish, Splash, I Was Havin' A Flash"

"We grow older. But it is by no means certain that we shall grow up." (Walter Lippmann, social and political commentator of the early 1900's)

THE LESSONS OF LIFE

I'm learning that you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.
 I'm learning that it's taking a long time to become the person I want to be.
 I'm learning that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.
 I'm learning that you can keep going long after you can't.
 I'm learning that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.
 I'm learning that either you control your attitude or it controls you.
 I'm learning that heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.
 I'm learning that money is a lousy way of keeping score.
 I'm learning that sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right not to be gracious.
 I'm learning that no matter how good friends are, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.
 I'm learning that no matter how bad your heart is broken, the world doesn't stop for your grief.
 I'm learning that our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.
 I'm learning that the most important relationship in the universe is my relationship with Jesus Christ and that it is utter foolishness to waste the short time on earth which is our lives for things that have no eternal value.

At a nursing home in Florida, a group of senior citizens were sitting around talking about their aches and pains. "My arms are so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee," said one. "I know what you mean. My cataracts are so bad I can't even see my coffee," replied another. "I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a third, to which several nodded weakly in agreement. "My blood pressure pills make me dizzy," another

contributed. "I guess that's the price we pay for getting old," winced an old man as he slowly shook his head. Then there was a short moment of silence. "Well, it's not that bad," said one woman cheerfully. "At least we can all still drive."

JESUS LOVES ME for Seniors

Jesus loves me, this I know
 Though my hair is white as snow
 Though my sight is growing dim
 Still He bids me trust in him!

YES, JESUS LOVES ME YES, JESUS LOVES ME
 YES. JESUS LOVES ME THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

Though I am no longer young,
 I have much which he's begun
 Let me serve Christ with a smile.
 Tho' my teeth have been gone for a while!

"Four major poets who lived to be over 80 years of age did more work in the last decade of their lives than they did between ages 20 and 30. William Gladstone took up a new language when he was 70, and at 83 he became the Prime Minister of Great Britain--for the 4th time. . . . Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote "Crossing the Bar" when he was 80. John Wesley was 88 and still preaching daily with eminent success, eloquent power, and undiminished popularity. . . . Michelangelo painted his world-famous "The Last Judgment" when he was 66." [C. Swindoll, Strike the Original Match, 178]

J. Oswald Sanders writes about men who excelled in their later years:

"The late Canon C.H. Nash who founded the Melbourne Bible Institute and trained a thousand young men and women for Christian service, retired from his principalship at the age of 70. At 80, he received assurance from the Lord that a further fruitful ministry of 10 years lay ahead of him. This assurance was abundantly fulfilled. During those years he was uniquely blessed in a ministry of Bible teaching to key groups of clergy and laymen--probably the most fruitful years of his life. When he was nearly 90, the author found him completing the reading of volume 6 of Toynbee's monumental history as a mental exercise. . . .

Mr. Benjamin Ririe retired as a missionary of the China Inland Mission when he reached the age of 70. When he was 80 he decided to learn New Testament Greek. . . . he became proficient in reading the Greek New Testament. At ninety, he attended a refresher course in New Testament Greek. . . . When he was a 100 years old, he was present at a meeting at which the author was speaking. In his pocket was a small well-worn Greek lexicon which he used to brush up his Greek while traveling by public transport!" [cited in C. Swindoll, Strike the Original Match, 178-79]

"I get up each morning, dust off my wits, Pick up the paper and read the obits. If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead, So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed." [J. Allen Peterson, ed. The Marriage Affair, 416]

Hold My Hand

Once, your tiny hand in mine
We walked beside the muddy creek.
My eyes were clear, my heart was young.
My step was firm and quick.
We listened to springtime sounds
And plucked violets from the earth;
We watched the ants in busy mounds
And felt the joy of spring in birth.
Your stubby legs could barely stand
And so, my dear, I held your hand.

Now, your strong young hand I need;
Now I must follow where you lead.
My hair is grey, my cheeks are pale,
My step now parallels the snail.
I yearn the joys of spring to clutch,
But feel the ache of winter's touch.
This is the way that life is planned,
Oh, child of mine, please hold my hand.
[author unknown]

Remember, old folks are worth a fortune. They have silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet, and gas in their stomachs. One "seasoned citizen" writes:

I have become a little older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly, I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing 5 gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Afterward, Charlie Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves Arthur Itis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay.

By the way, the preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do all the time. No matter where I am--in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement--I ask myself what am I here after?" [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 211]

OPEN THEISM:

. . . God took the risk in creating such beings [mankind] that we might choose to use our freedom to love or we might use it to sin. Those who utilize the freewill defense to handle the problem of evil affirm that God has taken some risks. [John Sanders, The God Who Risks: A Theology of Divine Providence, 13]

ORTHOPRAXY:

There is no fear of knowing too much, but there is much fear in practising too little. [Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 203]

"A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well . . . I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God." [A.W. Tozer]

D.A. Carson writes:

It may be entirely appropriate to engage in narrative preaching, . . . and to tell moving and thought-provoking stories; but in the postmodern environment, such approaches must be anchored in objective, propositional, confessional truth -- or the entire heritage of biblical Christianity will be sold for a mess of subjectivist pottage. I am not for a moment denying that there is an affective element to gospel preaching. . . . Far from it. . . . But the affective element must spring from the play of truth on personality. . . . American evangelicalism is in desperate need of intellectual and theological input. We have noted that not a little evangelical television is almost empty of content. It is mawkishly sentimental, naively optimistic, frighteningly ignorant, openly manipulative. Let me again insist; I am not arguing for dry intellectualism, for abstract disputation. But entertainment is not enough; emotional appeals based on tear-jerking stories do not change human behavior; subjective experiences cannot substitute for divine revelation. . . . The mentality that thinks in terms of marketing Jesus inevitably moves toward progressive distortion of him; the pursuit of the next emotional round of experience easily degenerates into an intoxicating substitute for the spirituality of the Word. There is non-negotiable, biblical, intellectual content to be proclaimed. By all means insist that this content be heralded with conviction and compassion; by all means seek the unction of the Spirit; by all means try to think through how to cast this content in ways that engage the modern secularist. But when all the footnotes are in place, my point remains the same: the historic gospel is unavoidably cast as intellectual content that must be taught and proclaimed. [D.A. Carson, The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism, Chapter 12 "On Heralding the Gospel in a Pluralistic Culture," (Zondervan, 1996), p. 507-8]

PAGANISM:

At the recent Global Gathering III, sponsored by the Methodist Church:

One speaker declared that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ revealed an abusive Heavenly Father who is not fit for Christian worship. Rather, the speaker urged the church to revere the baby Jesus along with all the world's children as equally little messiahs.

Another speaker, Nancy Pereira, a Methodist "theologian" from Brazil, rejected the atonement of Christ. "We have to stop praising Abraham's knife." We have to stop praising Solomon's sword. We have to stop praising Jesus' cross." She went on to declare that those "traditions" from the Bible falsely portray a God who welcomes "child sacrifice." "We have to find other expressions of salvation and liberation. We have developed a Christology with a tradition of the cross. That is a sacrificial Christology. It's a mechanism of salvation that heeds guilt, pain, whipping and death. We have to look at Jesus' cross as a tragedy, a human episode without any sense of meaning."

Another speaker declared that "every child in the world is Christ's child and the Christ child." [cited in AFA Journal, June 1997]

PARENTING:

Tertullian noted that, contrary to those born in pagan homes, "the children of believers were in some sense destined for holiness and salvation." (On the Soul, 39.4)

If parents would have their children blessed at church and at school, let them beware they give their children no corrupt examples at home by any carelessness, profaneness, or ungodliness. Otherwise, parents will do them more harm at home than both pastors and schoolmasters can do them good abroad. For the corrupt example of the one fighteth with the good instruction of the other, which is so much the more dangerous because that corrupt walking is armed with nature, and therefore more forcibly inclineth the affections of the children to that side. [16th c. English Puritan Richard Greenham in *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, compiled by I.D.E. Thomas, by permission of Banner of Truth, Carlisle, PA. 2000, p. 203]

The following "excuses" were taken from a recent collection of those received by Arizona school teachers:

Dear School: Please accuse John for being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. John has been absent because he had two teeth taken off his face.
Please excuse Ray Friday. He had loose vowels.
Please excuse Jimmy from being. It was his father's fault.
My daughter was absent yesterday because she was tired. She spent the weekend with the Marines.
My son is under the doctor's care and should not take P.E. Please excuse him.

Dad's Rules of Dating:

Rule One:

If you pull into my driveway and honk you'd better be delivering a package, because you're sure not picking anything up.

Rule Two:

You do not touch my daughter in front of me. You may glance at her, so long as you do not peer at anything below her neck. If you cannot keep your eyes or hands off of my

daughter's body, I will remove them.

Rule Three:

I am aware that it is considered fashionable for boys of your age to wear their trousers so loosely that they appear to be falling off their hips. Please don't take this as an insult, but you and all of your friends are complete idiots. Still, I want to be fair and open minded about this issue, so I propose this compromise: You may come to the door with your underwear showing and your pants ten sizes too big, and I will not object. However, in order to ensure that your clothes do not in fact come off during the course of your date with my daughter, I will take my electric nail gun and fasten your trousers securely in place to your waist.

Rule Four:

I'm sure you've been told that in today's world, sex without utilizing a "Barrier method" of some kind can kill you. Let me elaborate, when it comes to sex, I am the barrier, and I will kill you.

Rule Five:

It is usually understood that in order for us to get to know each other, we should talk about sports, politics, and other issues of the day. Please do not do this. The only information I require from you is an indication of when you expect to have my daughter safely back at my house, and the only word I need from you on this subject is: "early".

Rule Six:

I have no doubt that you are a popular fellow, with many opportunities to date other girls. This is fine with me as long as it is okay with my daughter. Otherwise, once you have gone out with my little girl, you will continue to date no one but her until she is finished with you. If you make her cry, I will make you cry.

Rule Seven:

As you stand in my front hallway, waiting for my daughter to appear, and more than an hour goes by, do not sigh and fidget. If you want to be on time for the movie, you should not be dating. My daughter is putting on her makeup, a process that can take longer than painting the Golden Gate Bridge. Instead of just standing there, why don't you do something useful, like changing the oil in my car?

Rule Eight:

The following places are not appropriate for a date with my daughter: * Places where there are beds, sofas, or anything softer than a wooden stool. * Places where there is darkness. * Places where there is dancing, holding hands, or happiness. * Places where the ambient temperature is warm enough to introduce my daughter to were shorts, tank tops, midriff T-shirts, or anything other than overalls, a sweater, and a good down parka zipped up to her throat. * Movies with a strong romantic or sexual themes are to be avoided; * Movies which feature chain saws are okay. * Hockey games are okay. * Old folks homes are better.

Rule Nine:

Do not lie to me. I may appear to be a potbellied, balding, middle-aged, dim-witted has-been. But on issues relating to my daughter, I am the all knowing, merciless god of your universe. If I ask you where you are going and with whom, you have one chance to tell me the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I have a shotgun, a shovel, and five acres behind the house. Do not trifle with me.

Rule Ten:

Be afraid, be very afraid. It takes very little for me to mistake the sound of your car in the driveway for a chopper coming in over a rice paddy near Hanoi. When my Agent Orange starts acting up the voices in my head frequently tell me to clean the guns as I wait for you to bring my daughter home. As soon as you pull into the driveway you should exit the car with both hands in plain sight. Speak the perimeter password, announce in a clear voice that you have brought my daughter home safely and early, then return to your car, there is no need for you to come inside. The camouflaged face at the window is mine.

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. She said, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, " 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.' " Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

A father was at the beach with his children when his four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

Let your own example teach your children that holiness and heavenliness, and blamelessness of tongue and life, which you desire them to learn and practice. The example of parents is most powerful with children, both for good and evil. If they see you live in the fear of God, it will do much to persuade them, that it is the most necessary and excellent course of life, and that they must do so too; and if they see you live a carnal, voluptuous, and ungodly life, and hear you curse or swear, or talk filthily or railingly, it will greatly embolden them to imitate you. If you speak never so well to them, they will sooner believe your bad lives, than your good words. [Richard Baxter, Christian Directory, 453]

A housewife once wrote: "I had the meanest mother in the world. While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs or toast. When others had Cokes and Candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. As you can guess, my supper was different than other kids' also. But at least I wasn't alone in my sufferings. My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother as I did.

My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were on a chain gang. She had to know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we'd be gone an hour, that we be gone one hour or less--not one hour and one minute.

I am nearly ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us. Not once, but each time we had a mind of our own and did as we pleased. That poor belt was used more on our seats than it was to hold up Daddy's pants. Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now you can see how mean she really was.

We had to wear clean clothes and take a bath. The other kids always wore their clothes for days. We reached the heights of insults because she made our clothes herself, just to save money. Why, oh why, did we have to have a mother who made us feel different from our friends?

The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine each night and up at eight the next morning. We couldn't sleep till noon like our friends. So while they slept--my mother actually had the nerve to break the child-labor law. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make beds, learn to cook and all sorts of cruel things. I believe she lay awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us.

She always insisted upon our telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us--and it nearly did.

By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser, and our life became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car for us to come running. She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us. If I spent the night with a girl friend, can you imagine she checked on me to see if I were really there. I never had the chance to elope to Mexico. That is if I'd had a boy friend to elope with. I forgot to mention, while my friends were dating at the mature age of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let me date until the age of 15 and 16. Fifteen, that is if you dated only to go to a school function. And that was maybe twice a year.

Through the years, things didn't improve a bit. We could not lie in bed, 'sick,' like our friends did, and miss school. If our friends had a toe-ache, a hang nail or other serious ailment, they could stay home from school. Our [grades] in school had to be up to par. Our friends report cards had beautiful colors on them, black for passing and red for failing. My mother, being as different as she was, would settle for nothing less than ugly black marks.

As the years rolled by, first one and then the other of us, was put to shame. We were graduated from high school. With our mother behind us, talking, hitting and demanding respect, none of us was allowed the pleasure of being a drop-out.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother. Out of four children, a couple of us attained some higher education. None of us has ever been arrested, divorced or beaten his mate. Each of my brothers served his time in the service of his county. And whom do we blame for the terrible way we turned out? You're right, our mean mother. Look at all the things we missed. We never got to march in a protest . . . nor to take part in a riot, burn draft cards, and a million and one other things that our friends did. She forced us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults.

Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller and I am filled with pride when my children call me mean. Because, you see, I thank God, He gave me the meanest mother in the world."

Years ago, popular columnist Ann Landers wrote: "Child guidance has taken on a new meaning. Parents are being guided by children. Those of us who are past 40 have witnessed a dazzling historical triple pass. In our growing up years [the] father was the undisputed head of the house. With the advent of WWII, mother displaced father. And now, in far too many families, the children are calling the signals. They are clearly in control." [cited in, Larry Christianson, The Christian Family, 113]

Saint Augustine attributed his conversion to the faithful prayers of his mother, Monica. For years he kept God at arms length. He said, "Yes, I want to be a Christian, I want to serve you, Lord--but not yet." Persistently and patiently Monica prayed, until finally God melted his heart and he came to Christ.

Several years ago, the police dept. in Houston TX drew up a list of "12 rules for raising delinquent children." They are as follows:

1. Begin with infancy to give the child everything he wants. In this way he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him. This will make him think he's cute. It will also encourage him to pick up 'cuter' phrases that will blow off the top of your head later.
3. Never give him any spiritual training. Wait till he is 21 and then let him decide for himself.
4. Avoid use of the word 'wrong.' It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later, when he is arrested for stealing a car, that society is against him and he is being persecuted.
5. Pick up everything he leaves lying around--books, shoes and clothing. Do everything for him so he will be experienced in throwing all responsibility on to others.
6. Let him read any printed matter he can get his hands on. Be careful that the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let his mind feast on garbage.
7. Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. In this way they will not be too shocked when the home is broken up later.
8. Give a child all the spending money he wants. Never let him earn his own. Why should he have things as tough as you had them?
9. Satisfy his every craving for food, drink and comfort. See that every sensual desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.
10. Take his part against neighbors, teachers and policemen. They are all prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourself by saying 'I never could do anything with him.'
12. Prepare for a life of grief. You will be apt to have it. [cited in Larry Christianson, The Christian Family, 88-89]

"It is difficult to see how Christianity can have any positive effect on society if it cannot transform its own homes." [John MacArthur, Colossians, 166]

Excerpt from a letter written by John Knox in 1557 before leaving Scotland for exile in Geneva. Knox addressed the letter to "His Brethren in Scotland," that is, Christ's brethren, the Church. This part of the letter addresses the duty of the head of the household to read and discuss the Bible with his family:

"[Dear brethren, if you look for a life to come, of necessity it is that you exercise yourselves in the book of the Lord your God. Let no day slip or want some comfort received from the mouth of God. Open your ears, and he will speak even pleasant things to your heart. Close not your eyes, but diligently let them behold what portion of substance is left to you within your Father's testament. Let your tongues learn to praise the gracious goodness of him, whose mere mercy has called you from darkness to life. Neither yet may you do this so quietly that you admit no witness. No, Brethren, you are ordained of God to rule your own houses in his true fear, and according to his word. Within your houses, I say, in some cases, you are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God's true knowledge, how you have studied to plant virtue in them, and [to] repress vice. And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in reading, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least. But above all things, dear brethren, study to practice in life that which the Lord commands, and then be you assured that you shall never hear nor read the same without fruit. And this much for the exercises within your homes."

Parenting Inventory in the form of 5 questions:

1. Do I believe that my children are not my own, but a gift from God who entrusted them to me?
2. Have I completely surrendered and dedicated them, and their future, to the Lord?
3. Are my children loved unconditionally, regardless of their performance, and do they know that I love them in this way?
4. Am I living a life where I could say to them as the Apostle Paul did, imitate me as I imitate Christ, or do they see little more than Christian hypocrisy in our home?
5. Do my children see God's Word lived in our home and am I teaching it to them in word and in deed?

Who Am I To Teach?

(Leslie P. Hill)

Lord, who am I to teach the way
To little children, day by day,
So prone, myself to go astray?

I teach them knowledge, but I know
How faint the flicker and how low
The candles of *my* knowledge glow.

I teach them power to will and do,

But only to learn anew
My own great weakness, through and through.

I teach them love for all mankind
And all God's creatures, but I find
My love comes lagging far behind.

Lord, if their guide I still must be,
O let the little children see
Their teacher leaning hard on Thee.

"One major change is in the form of middle class mothering. For a mother to work voluntarily when the children were young was once seen as a sign of bad parenting, a rejection of the maternal role. But, today, going to work and placing a child with a caretaker or in a daycare center (or at a preschool) is accepted practice. For many children, that means coming home to empty house after school and tending to their own hygiene, clothing, and meals." [Quoted from Psychology Today and cited in MacArthur, The Family, 75]

Children are a gift from God created by Him through you. In a similar sense as God is the potter over the clay of his creation (Rom. 9), you are the potter over the clay that is your children. What are you "molding?" Children have no greater influence than that of their parents, for good or for evil. That perspective has been summed up in a poem by Dorothy Law Nolte entitled "Children Learn What They Live:"

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

"In the ancient world children were very much under the domination of their parents. The supreme example was the *Roman Patria Potestas*, the law of the father's power. Under it a parent could do anything he liked with his child. He could sell him into slavery; he could make him work like a labourer on his farm; he had even the right to condemn his child to death and to carry out the execution." [Barclay, Colossians, 161]

According to the cultural practices of the day, a newborn child could be placed at its father's feet and if the father picked it up, the child was welcomed into the home; if he walked away, the baby was left to die. [cited in MacArthur, Ephesians, 316]

Many discarded babies were collected and taken each night to a town forum where they could be "adopted" for use as potential slaves or prostitutes. [cited in MacArthur, Ephesians, 316]

Ancient papyri in the form of a personal letter written in 1 BC by a man named Hilarion to his wife, Alis, reads: "Heartiest greetings. Note that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not worry if when all others return, I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech you to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages I will send them to you. If--good luck to you--you have another child, if it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it." [Papyri Oxyrhynchus 4.744]

The Roman statesman, Seneca, who was a contemporary of Paul, wrote: "We slaughter a fierce ox; we strangle a mad dog; we plunge a knife into a sick cow. Children born weak or deformed we drown." [cited in MacArthur, Ephesians, 316]

Harvard University sociologist Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck developed a test that proved to be 90% accurate to determine whether children 5 and 6 years old would later become delinquent. They determined 4 key factors were: 1) loving, firm and consistent discipline by the father; 2) companionship and supervision by the mother during the day; 3) love and affection displayed in the home; 4) family time spent together where all members participated. [adapted from MacArthur, Ephesians, 316]

"Bengel speaks of "the plague of youth, a broken spirit (*fractus animus pestis iuventutis*)." [cited in Barclay, Colossians, 163]

"Spare the rod and spoil the child. It is true. But beside the rod keep an apple to give him when he does well." [Martin Luther, cited in Barclay, Colossians, 163]

Martin Luther's father was so unkind to him that Luther had great difficulty praying in his earlier years "Our Father." [Barclay, Colossians, 163]

John Newton once remarked: "I know that my father loved me--but he did not seem to wish me to see it." [cited in Barclay, Colossians, 163]

A child was born, Nov. 12, 1934. Born to a 16 year old Kathleen Maddox. And he was entered into the ledgers as "No-name Maddox." He was a classic abused child, left by his mother alone for days during the first years of his life. In 1939 she was arrested for armed robbery and sentenced to 5 years in the penitentiary. When his mother returned, "No-name" was 8 years old, and his life became a long line of run-down hotels and brutal uncles who, like his mother, drank heavily. When he was 12 his mother tried to place him in a foster home, but since one wasn't available, he was sent to a boy's home in Indiana. It was the first time in a long line of progressively more restrictive institutions and after 10 months there he ran away; but his mother rejected him. He then drifted into a life of crime: at 13 he was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to an institution from which he escaped; at 16 he had a long series of crimes under belt. Now in federal prison he was homosexually attacked and raped. At 17 he placed a razor blade against a fellow inmates' throat and sodomized him. He was transferred again and again and classified as dangerous, with a long record of violent activity. At the age of 33, after ten years of activity, he was released from Terminal Island

Prison in California, against his wishes. He told his jailers that prison was his only home. He became obsessed with the Satanic. Upon his release, "No-Name Maddox" launched a reign of terror that eventually took the lives of 40 people. And you know him as Charles Manson. (Once he was somebody's little baby!) [cited from the video, God's Pattern for Children, John MacArthur, Moody Press, 1982]

PASTORATE:

"The pastor ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep; and another, for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The Scripture supplies him with the means of doing both." [John Calvin]

Jonathan Edwards graduated from Yale College with high honors. He went on to receive an M.A. from Yale. Although he temporarily filled the pulpit at a small church, he would not accept a permanent position until he had spent *six years in study* after his graduation from college. In this way, Edwards was like John Calvin, who, even after the publication of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "did not consider himself as sufficiently mature in knowledge to undertake the pastoral office." Dr. Samuel Miller adds:

"When will young men, unspeakably inferior to these master-minds, both in capacity and attainment, learn to resist that spirit of superficial presumptuous haste, which is hurrying them prematurely into the pulpit, and burdening the church, to a lamentable extent, with 'blind leaders of the blind'?" [cited by Philip E. Howard, Jr. in *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989 reprint), 17]

"Take care that you use your talents for your Master, and for your Master only. It is disloyalty to our Lord if we wish to be soul-winners in order to be thought to be so. It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we even preach sound doctrine with the view of being thought sound, or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our Lord's glory with a single eye, and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord's gospel, and our Lord's people, and our Lord's talents, for our Lord, and for Him alone." [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students*, from the chapter entitled "Stewards". Now published by Banner of Truth Trust]

"The second duty of a pastor towards his flock (after the faithful teaching and preaching of God's Word) is continual fervent prayer for them. . . . Without this, no man can or doth preach to them as he ought, nor perform any other duty of his pastoral office. From hence may any man take the best measure of the discharge of his duty towards his flock. He that doth constantly, diligently, fervently, pray for them, will have a testimony in himself of his own sincerity in the discharge of all other pastoral duties. . . . And as for those who are negligent herein, be their pains, labor, and travail in other duties never so great, they may be influenced from other reasons, and so give no evidence of sincerity in the discharge of their office. In this constant prayer for the church, which is so incumbent on all pastors as that whatever is done without it is of no esteem in the sight of Jesus Christ, respect is to be had, [first] unto the success of the word, unto all the blessed ends of it, among them. These are no less than the improvement and strengthening of all their graces, the direction of all their duties, their edification in faith and love, with the entire conduct of their souls in the life of God, unto the enjoyment of him. To preach the word, therefore, and not to follow it

with constant and fervent prayer for its success, is to disbelieve its use, neglect its end, and to cast away the seed of the gospel at random." [John Owen, *The True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government*; from chapter 5, *The Especial Duty of Pastors of Churches*. In *Works of John Owen*, Volume 16]

When Chuck Swindoll was with other pastors they would challenge each other with the following questions.

- 1) Have you been with a woman anywhere this past week that might be seen as compromising?
- 2) Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
- 3) Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
- 4) Have you spent adequate time in Bible study & prayer?
- 5) Have you given priority time to your family?
- 6) Have you fulfilled the mandates of your calling?
- 7) Have you just lied to me?

"We pastors are being killed by the professionalizing of the pastoral ministry. The mentality of the professional is not the mentality of the prophet. It is not the mentality of the slave of Christ. Professionalism has nothing to do with the essence and heart of the Christian ministry. The more professional we long to be, the more spiritual death we will leave in our wake. For there is no professional childlikeness (Matthew 18:3); there is no professional tenderheartedness (Ephesians 4:32); there is no professional panting after God (Psalm 42:1). But our first business is to pant after God in prayer. Our business is to weep over our sins (James 4:9). Is there professional weeping? Our business is to strain forward to the holiness of Christ and the prize of the upward call of God (Philippians. 3:14); to pummel our bodies and subdue them lest we be cast away (1 Corinthians 9:27); to deny ourselves and take up the blood-spattered cross daily (Luke 9:23). . . . God has exhibited us preachers as last of all in the world. We are fools for Christ's sake. But professionals are wise. We are weak. But professionals are strong. Professionals are held in honor. We are in disrepute. We do not try to secure a professional lifestyle, but we are ready to hunger and thirst and be ill-clad and homeless. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things (1 Corinthians 4:9-13). Or have we? Brothers, we are not professionals! We are outcasts. We are aliens and exiles in the world (1 Peter 2:11). Our citizenship is in heaven, and we wait with eager expectation for the Lord (Philippians 3:20). You cannot professionalize the love for his appearing without killing it. And it is being killed." [John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals! A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*, Broadman and Holman, 2002]

"I shall go on to argue that one can make a virtual correlation between the degree to which the clergy are professionalized and the degree to which they will have forfeited or deliberately abandoned their fundamental task of being brokers for truth. The minister's authority and professional status rides not on his or her character, ability to expound the Word of God, or theological skill in relating the Word to contemporary world, but on interpersonal skills now, administrative talents, the ability to organize the community. This means that the determination of what is to be studied in our seminaries is no longer grounded in theology, as has been the case over most of the church's life, but in the vocation to which the student is headed, the unifying center, therefore, is no longer theological truth, but whatever it is the student needs in order to become a religious professional. . . . Ministers are

among the homeless of the modern world. They have neither a place in secularized society, nor, as it turns out, in the church. Because they are the purveyors of belief, the modern world shunts them to the margins of importance. Because the expectations of what a minister is and does have expanded mightily in the twentieth century, few satisfy their congregations for long and many burn out trying to do so. To find respite they flit from church to church like wandering itinerants, which they are not. They are thus strangely dislodged from both the church and society.” [David Wells, No Place For Truth, read by John Piper in the “Bethlehem Conference for Pastors” cassette recording entitled “The Gospel Alternative” 2/2/98, side one]

"A minister may fill his pews, his communion role, the mouths of the public, but what the minister is on his knees in secret before Almighty God, that he is and no more." [John Owen, cited in I.D.E. Thomas, A Puritan Golden Treasury, 192]

It was told of the Puritan Pastor, Richard Baxter, that the members of his congregation in response to his often confrontive preaching, would say, "We take all things well from one who always and wholly loves us."

A secular columnist with no love for Christianity writes derisively,

"Here are the exact words said to me by the senior minister of a Presbyterian Church of 1500 members. 'Just play the game . . . just say the sweet things they want to hear, don't upset anyone with biblical and religious scholarship. Look at this beautiful church building I've got, plus all the perks, free golf and country club memberships, bit salary.' I said to him, 'Jack, you're pathetic, you're a wimp. you're the problem.'" [The Berean Call, July 1996]

"I've been in the pastorate for 30 years and have never had such hurt and pain as this," a pastor recently lamented. "I didn't realize how easily people you've helped can turn against you." [cited by Alfred H. Ells, Hope of Hope Counseling, Inc., in the leaflet, "Counselor's Corner," 1997]

I am very tired and frustrated. Yes, depressed. I'm tired of sacrificing my life for the church when it appears that so little sacrifice is present among the members of the church. I love the church and the people of the church. I'm not just "doing my job," it's much more than that. Yet, I wonder how many in the church really love and appreciate me. Sometimes I truly believe that they could basically "take or leave me and my ministry." As long as the church and I "perform" well and I preach good sermons they're satisfied. At least for now.

Why is it that the pastor is expected to be loyal and devoted to those within his church, but when it comes to the average church member, no such devotion exists? I feel that I have poured my life into the church--I've not sought my own will or well-being, I've tried to always seek the best for the church. It's really never been a matter of what's best for me in my own eyes.

I've always dreamed that I could guide a church established on the teaching of God's Word, and then true biblical love in the body would be realized. There would be a wealth of people who would stick beside me through thick and thin. After all, isn't that the way the church

is supposed to be? When problems arose in the first century church, or when first century Christians grew tired of the same old ministry, the members didn't run off to the next church on the block. They couldn't. But in twentieth century America there's plenty of churches to "try out." It seems like the average Christian treats the local church like the average unbeliever treats marriage. It's "till death do us part" at the beginning of the partnership; it's divorce and on to a new partner after a year or two. It seems to be the Christian's "seven year itch." After a few years, or months, it's time to move on. A family comes in thinking everything's wonderful. But after a year or two, the bloom is off the rose and off they go. Don't they really care about the church? Don't they really care about me? Do they only care about themselves and what they are "getting out of a church" rather than what they can put into a church? [TAB letter written to CBF Elders, 10/22/97]

Letter from a young pastor to his mentor:

Dear Jim:

I'm through. yesterday I handed in my resignation to take effect at once and this morning I began work for the land company. I will not return to the pastorate. I think I can see into your heart as you read these words and behold not a little disappointment if not disgust. I don't blame you at all, I'm somewhat disgusted with myself. Do you recall the days in the seminary when talked of the future and painted pictures of what we were to do for the Kingdom of God? And we saw the boundless need for unselfish Christian service and longed to be out among men doing our part toward the world's redemption. I'll never forget that last talk on the night before graduation: you were to go to the mission field and I went to the church. And we had grave dreams of usefulness (and you've realized yours). As I look back over these years, I can see some lives that I've helped and some things which I have been permitted to do, and some of them are worthwhile. But sitting here tonight I am more than half convinced that God probably never even intended me to be a minister. If He did I'm not big enough and brave enough to pay the price. And even if it leads you to write me down a coward, I'm going to tell you why I quit. In these years I have not found but a few earnest, unselfish, consecrated Christians. And I don't believe that I am specially morbid or unfair in my estimate. So as far as I know my own heart I'm not even bitter. But for all these years the conviction has been growing within me that the average church member cares precious little about the Kingdom of God and its advancement or the welfare of his fellow-man. He's a Christian in order that he may save his soul from hell and for no other reason. He does as little as he can and lives as indifferently as he dares. If he thought he could gain heaven without ever lifting his finger for others he'd jump at the chance. Never have I know but a small minority of any church that I have served to be really interested and unselfishly devoted to God's work. It took my whole time to pull and push and urge and persuade the reluctant members of my church to undertake a little something for their fellow man. They took a covenant to be faithful in attendance on the services of the church and not 1 out of 10 ever thought about attending a prayer time. A large percentage seldom attended church in the morning and a pitifully small number in the evening. It didn't seem to mean anything to them that they had dedicated themselves to the service of Jesus Christ. I'm tired. I'm tired of being the only one in the church from whom real sacrifice is expected. I'm tired of straining and tugging to get Christian people to live like Christians. I'm tired of planning work for my people

and then being compelled to do it myself, or see it left undone. I'm tired of dodging my creditors when I wouldn't need to if I had what was due me. I'm tired of a vision of a penniless old age. I'm not leaving Christ. I love Him. And I'll still try to serve Him. Judge me leniently old friend, I certainly can't bear to lose your friendship.
Yours, William.

The Pilot and the Minister. A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans. Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?" The guy replies, "I'm Peter Pilot, retired American Airlines Pilot from Dallas." Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom." the pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff. Next it's the minister's turn. He stands erect and booms out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Saint Mary's in Pasadena for the last 43 years." Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom." "Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff, and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?" "Up here - - we work by results," says Saint Peter, "While you preached - - people slept; while he flew - - people prayed."

PASSOVER & O.T. SACRIFICES:

Jesus himself draws a parallel between the deliverance he would bring and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt by instituting the new covenant meal at the Passover itself (Luke 22:20). Thus, in both covenants, God's people are delivered by "the lamb of God"(Ex. 12:1-7; John 1:29). In addition, Jesus is portrayed as leading his own "exodus" from Egypt when in Matthew 2:15 he leaves Egypt in fulfillment of Hosea 11:1: "Out of Egypt I called my son." Similarly, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is speaking to Moses and Elijah about his "exodus"(exodon), which "he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"(Luke 9:31). [Andreas Kostenberger and Michael Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy*, chapter 4]

“You have to understand, for a Jew, it was a horrific time. Every time you sinned you needed to make another sacrifice. And Every time you had to make another sacrifice you had to take the best animal you had! It was ridiculous--you work all the time to breed good animals and you wind up killing them all! It was a bloodbath. You went all the way trekking down to Jerusalem, you took the best animal you had, made all the rest of the sacrifices . . . went through the whole [thing], the whole deal was done, you got on the road back, got in a fight with your wife and you're back to square one. [You] go back, get the next best [animal] that's left, go back and go through the bloodbath again. You live your whole life like that! . . . The priests were butchers. They'd be neck-deep in blood every day. At the Passover, any given Passover, they would slaughter half a million lambs--in a week. And the blood would run out of the Eastern side of the Temple Mount, down the back side of that hill and into the Kidron Valley brook. It would turn it bright red as it went down the Valley of Hinnom to the South. . . . You know what the whole point was? Finally, the Jew would come to the recognition, “I can't do this.” [John MacArthur, Jr. cassette message, “The Theology of Faith” (Part 1) delivered at Scottsdale Bible Church on 4/12/97 (side 1)]

PATIENCE:

Having a Bad Day? (File under "Patience")

August 2014. I called Time Warner (TW) last month to see if I could get a static IP address. They tell me that the only way to do that is to get a business account. Okay, sign me up. The reason why I wanted a static IP address was so that OpenDNS would work more effectively. But after the new installation OpenDNS wasn't working at all. Over a period of 10 days I had several go-rounds with Open DNSsupport - to no avail. They tell me to call TW who in turn informs me that their static IP addresses all go through their own servers. This means I can't possibly use OpenDNS with a TW static IP address. (Meanwhile, in one month our internet service went out twice requiring several phone calls and two visits from two different TW techs.)

Once I found out that OpenDNS wouldn't work with my new static IP address, I told TW that I wanted to go back to my old residential service without any penalty for early termination. No problem, they said. But I would have to wait until Sept. 8 to have the service disconnected. Wait a minute! I don't want to be disconnected, I just want to plug my old modem back in and go back to the residential rates. Simple enough, right? Well I was on the phone with no less than 20 different TW reps over the course of 3 days. Those 20 reps agreed with each other as to what I needed to do about as much as 20 different congressmen agree on how to balance the budget.

Last week, I finally got a breakthrough.

Sales rep Rochelle had me in a conference call with TW upper-level support. They said that the scheduled Sept. 8 disconnect needed to be cancelled or I would get an early termination charge. They could do the change in office and I would get a new customer discount to boot! After working through the initial details, Rochelle told me that she would call me back on Tuesday to set up my old modem. Then we'd be done.

Tuesday rolled around. No call from Rochelle. No call on Wednesday or Thursday, either. So I called TW myself on Friday afternoon. Keep in mind that with each call I have to go through the same litany of automatic questions, the answer to which the computer voice often misinterprets.

The first person I talked with told me that the information I received last week was wrong. No, the switch over couldn't be done in office. And she wondered why my Sept. 8 date for cancellation was cancelled! I told her that it was cancelled last week while I was on the phone with TW. They said it needed to be done. They said that the reversion back to residential service could be done in office. With my consent, they cancelled my Sept. 8 disconnect. "Nay, nay a thousand times nay. You were given bad information. We need to reschedule your business class disconnect for Sept. 8," I'm told.

Done.

And then I'm informed that I need to connect to residential sales so that I can set up a new account for that same date. That way, I won't have a lapse in service. I'm put on hold while my call is transferred.

After a 3 minute wait I get a man who says, "Thank you for calling Time Warner. How can I help you?" What? You mean you don't know? I go through the entire story with him (about the 10th time I've done so). He tells me that he can't help me. I have to talk with the business class department. "Hang on. I'll transfer you there."

More waiting while on hold. "Thank you for calling Time Warner. How can I help you?" (Arrgghh!) Once again I share my dilemma. I'm asked where I'm located. "Upstate New York? This is the number for North Carolina. I'll have to transfer you to Albany."

More waiting.

Melissa answers: "Thank you for calling Time Warner. How can I help you?" Of course, she has no idea why I'm calling, so I go through the entire story with her. She's sympathetic. She apologizes. She needs to talk to her supervisor.

Back on hold.

She comes back online. They have it all straightened out. They *can* make the switch 'in office.' She can do it all while sitting at her computer terminal (the Hallelujah Chorus fires off in my head). Everything is all set. She tells me that all I need now is to talk with technical support so that they can configure my old modem into their system.

Back on hold.

A man answers: "Thank you for calling Time Warner. How can I help you?" I bite my tongue. Pause. I take a deep breath and explain the whole story to him. He tells me that this change can't be done in office. My business service will have to be disconnected on Sept. 8 and then I'd have to talk to residential sales.

NOOOOO!

"Oh, and where are you located? New York? I'll have to transfer you."

This time I'm connected to Kathleen: "Thank you for calling Time Warner. How can I help you?"

Face palm.

I explain the entire story to her. She's sympathetic and apologizes (gee, it's not her fault, it's the dweebs in the corporate office). I'm told that the changeover can be done in office. I'm again put on hold.

After 5 minutes she comes back on. "In order to put this through, I need to do some research and talk to a supervisor. Give me your number and I'll call you back." She calls 25 minutes later. Everything was all set. I just need to talk to tech to get my modem back online. (I've heard this before.)

Another transfer to another person (I can't even remember now) who has no idea what's going on. It's all a blur.

Finally, I get my old modem up and running, but I'm told that my router will have to be reconfigured by Cisco. I'm given an 800 number.

I call the number.

I'm put on hold.

I wait.

The rep answers and asks me why I'm calling. I tell him. He tells me that they no longer handle residential cases. I'll have to contact LinkSys. I'm given their 800 number.

I call the number.

I'm put on hold.

I wait.

The system tells me that the wait time is 20 minutes. Every so often there's a break in the music and a friendly voice tells me that my time is important to them. That's why they are hard at work serving other customers so that they can get to me as quickly as possible. Right. If my time was important to them they'd hire enough service personnel so that I wouldn't be on old for 20 minutes. But that's another story.

I finally get through. The LinkSys agent tells me that (bad news) my router is no longer covered, but (good news?) I can get tech support for the low price of 30.00. Okay, I'd give 300 and my left ear lobe to get all this behind me. The rep gets my name, address, credit card type, billing address, and expiration date.

But I'll have to be transferred to their secured automated system to enter my card number. A few moments later I'm asked by a computer voice to enter my credit card numbers the touch pad on my phone. I pulled my cell phone from my ear. The screen was black. Hmmm. How do I get the screen to come back on. I try the sound button. Nothing. I try the Android navigation buttons on the bottom. Nothing. Meanwhile, the computer voice is growing impatient and repeats her hungry plea for my credit card numbers. Only one button left: the power button. Maybe that will turn my display back on. I hold my breath and push it in. My phone hangs up. I've been disconnected.

I stare at the phone in disbelief.

I stare into the sky in silent prayer.

I check my phone settings and disable the "hang up by pressing power button" option. I call back. Good, the wait time is only 15 minutes now.

Another agent answers. I fight back tears as I tell him my story (did I just hear a sympathy snuffle?). This time I get the credit card data entered correctly and I'm back live with technical support who systematically walks me step by step through a reconfiguration process that takes nearly an hour.

Everything is up and going now.

Well, not everything. Now my internet phone isn't working.

P.S. This happened later that evening. My mom was in town and she, along with the rest of the family, were going out to dinner. I was busy recovering from my day and said I'd finish up what I was doing and meet them there. I decided it was a nice evening to ride my motorcycle. I noticed that I was on reserve (about out of gas), so after dinner I swung by the gas station. I put my credit card in the card reader at the pump . . . and waited . . . and waited. Finally, a message comes up on the terminal: "See Cashier". Ugh. Being a man what do I do? I don't go to the cashier, I try another pump on the other side of the island. That one takes my card. Now I go back to my bike and start pushing it around to the other side. Before I can get there a car pulls up to my new pump – yes, the one that took my credit card. As I push my bike toward his rear fender my helmet falls off the handlebar with a bang and part of the face shield flies off! The guy looks in his side mirror opens his door and asks, "You need this spot?" I told him my pump didn't work and I had just put my credit card through on this one. He kindly moved. I filled up and very carefully road home and went to bed. [TAB, 2014]

“Patience is the ability to idle your motor when you feel like stripping the gears.” [Old Union Reminder]

The following letters were taken from an actual incident between a London hotel and one of it's guests. The Hotel submitted the letters to the London Sunday Times for their humor column.

Dear Maid,
Please do not leave any more of those little bars of soap in my bathroom since I have brought my own bath-sized Dial. Please remove the six unopened little bars from the shelf under the medicine chest and another three in the shower soap dish. They are in my way.
Thank you,
S. Berman

Dear Room 635,
I am not your regular maid. She will be back tomorrow, Thursday, from her day off. I took the 3 hotel soaps out of the shower soap dish as you requested. The 6 bars on your shelf I took out of your way and put on top of your Kleenex dispenser in case you should change your mind. This leaves only the 3 bars I left today which my instructions from the management is to leave 3 soaps daily. I hope this is satisfactory.
Kathy, Relief Maid

Dear Maid - I hope you are my regular maid.

Apparently Kathy did not tell you about my note to her concerning the little bars of soap. When I got back to my room this evening I found you had added 3 little Camays to the shelf under my medicine cabinet. I am going to be here in the hotel for two weeks and have brought my own bath-size Dial so I won't need those 6 little Camays which are on the shelf. They are in my way when shaving, brushing teeth, etc. Please remove them.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,
My day off was last Wed. so the relief maid left 3 hotel soaps which we are instructed by the management. I took the 6 soaps which were in your way on the shelf and put them in the soap dish where your Dial was. I put the Dial in the medicine cabinet for your convenience. I didn't remove the 3 complimentary soaps which are always placed inside the medicine cabinet for all new check-ins and which you did not object to when you checked in last Monday. Please let me know if I can of further assistance.
Your regular maid,
Dotty

Dear Mr. Berman,
The assistant manager, Mr. Kensedder, informed me this morning that you called him last evening and said you were unhappy with your maid service. I have assigned a new girl to your room. I hope you will accept my apologies for any past inconvenience. If you have any future complaints please contact me so I can give it my personal attention. Call extension 1108 between 8AM and 5PM.
Thank you,
Elaine Carmen
Housekeeper

Dear Miss Carmen,
It is impossible to contact you by phone since I leave the hotel for business at 7:45 AM and don't get back before 5:30 or 6PM. That's the reason I called Mr. Kensedder last night. You were already off duty. I only asked Mr. Kensedder if he could do anything about those little bars of soap. The new maid you assigned me must have thought I was a new check-in today, since she left another 3 bars of hotel soap in my medicine cabinet along with her regular delivery of 3 bars on the bath-room shelf. In just 5 days here I have accumulated 24 little bars of soap. Why are you doing this to me?
S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,
Your maid, Kathy, has been instructed to stop delivering soap to your room and remove the extra soaps. If I can be of further assistance, please call extension 1108 between 8AM and 5PM. Thank you,
Elaine Carmen,
Housekeeper

Dear Mr. Kensedder,

My bath-size Dial is missing. Every bar of soap was taken from my room including my own bath-size Dial. I came in late last night and had to call the bellhop to bring me 4 little Cashmere Bouquets.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

I have informed our housekeeper, Elaine Carmen, of your soap problem. I cannot understand why there was no soap in your room since our maids are instructed to leave 3 bars of soap each time they service a room. The situation will be rectified immediately. Please accept my apologies for the inconvenience.

Martin L. Kensedder

Assistant Manager

Dear Mrs. Carmen,

Who [in the world] left 54 little bars of Camay in my room? I came in last night and found 54 little bars of soap. I don't want 54 little bars of Camay. I want my one [stupid] bar of bath-size Dial. Do you realize I have 54 bars of soap in here. All I want is my bath size Dial. Please give me back my bath-size Dial.

S. Berman

Dear Mr. Berman,

You complained of too much soap in your room so I had them removed. Then you complained to Mr. Kensedder that all your soap was missing so I personally returned them. The 24 Camays which had been taken and the 3 Camays you are supposed to receive daily. I don't know anything about the 4 Cashmere Bouquets. Obviously your maid, Kathy, did not know I had returned your soaps so she also brought 24 Camays plus the 3 daily Camays. I don't know where you got the idea this hotel issues bath-size Dial. I was able to locate some bath-size Ivory which I left in your room.

Elaine Carmen

Housekeeper

Dear Mrs. Carmen,

Just a short note to bring you up-to-date on my latest soap inventory. As of today I possess:

- On the shelf under medicine cabinet - 18 Camay in 4 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 2.
- On the Kleenex dispenser - 11 Camay in 2 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 3.
- On the bedroom dresser - 1 stack of 3 Cashmere Bouquet,
- 1 stack of 4 hotel-size Ivory, and 8 Camay in 2 stacks of 4.
- Inside the medicine cabinet - 14 Camay in 3 stacks of 4 and 1 stack of 2.
- In the shower soap dish - 6 Camay, very moist.
- On the northeast corner of tub - 1 Cashmere Bouquet, slightly used.
- On the northwest corner of tub - 6 Camays in 2 stacks of 3.

Please ask Kathy when she services my room to make sure the stacks are neatly piled and dusted. Also, please advise her that stacks of more than 4 have a tendency to tip. May I suggest that my bedroom window sill is not in use and will make an excellent spot for future soap deliveries. One more item, I have purchased another bar of bath-sized Dial which I am keeping in the hotel vault in order to avoid further misunderstandings.

S. Berman

PEACE:

"I must take care above all that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the basis of my peace--mark that--yet it will be the channel of it." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 17]

"The peace of the Christian infinitely differs from that of the worldling, in that it is unfailing and eternal peace. That peace which carnal men have in the things of the world, is, according to the foundation that it is built upon, of short continuance; like the comfort of a dream, 1 John ii. 17, 1 Cor. vii. 31. These things, the best and most durable of them, are like bubbles on the face of the water; they vanish in a moment, Hos. x. 7. But the foundation of the Christian's peace is everlasting; it is what no time, no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies; it will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life." [Jonathan Edwards, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

PERFECTIONISM:

An acquaintance of mine who spent some in Morocco told me that the artisans there had a custom of intentionally putting a flaw in their work. In other words, if they were making a plate of brass or some kind of tapestry, they would either leave the plate unfinished in one place or they would put a visible defect on it. They did this out of respect for God who alone can make something perfect. When I heard this story (in 2001) it ministered to me in my struggle with perfectionism. Yes, it's true! Only God can make something that's perfect and it's presumptuous on my part, and even sinful, to think that I can or should even burden myself with the desire to be perfect in what I do. [TAB]

PERSECUTION:

When the world ceases persecuting the church, the sheep turn against each other. Comfortable religiosity is fertile ground for self-interest. [TAB]

PHILOSOPHY:

What is existentialism as a philosophy? The idea is basically that nothing determines what you will be except yourself. You come into this world existing and then determine what you will be. "Existence precedes essence." John Paul Sartre:

"What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means first of all, man exists, turns up appears on the scene, and only afterwards defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something and he himself will have made what he will be. . . There is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this

thrust toward existence. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism." [Sartre, "Existentialism and Humanism," Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: Meridian Publishing Co., 1989), 340.]

PLURALISM:

"There is no idea so stupid that you can't find a professor who will believe it." (or we could add, "teach it") [H.L. Mencken, circa 1950, cited in Neil Postman, Technopoly, 57]

PERSEVERANCE:

Then I saw in my dream, that the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a place where was a Fire burning against the wall, and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it, to quench it; yet did the Fire burn higher and hotter.

Then said Christian, What means this?

The Interpreter answered, This Fire is the Work of Grace that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil: But in that you see the Fire notwithstanding burn higher and hotter, you will also see the reason of that. So he had him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a Man with a Vessel of Oil in his hand, of which, he did also continually cast (but secretly) into the Fire.

Then said Christian, What means this?

The Interpreter answered, This is Christ, who continually with the Oil of His Grace maintains the work already begun in the heart: By the means of which, notwithstanding what the Devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still. And in that you saw, that the Man stood behind the wall to maintain the Fire; this is to teach you, That it is hard for the Tempted to see how this Work of Grace is maintained in the soul.

"Perseverance is more than endurance. It is endurance combined with absolute assurance and certainly that what we are looking for is going to happen. Perseverance means more than just hanging on, which may be only exposing our fear of letting go and falling. Perseverance is our supreme effort of refusing to believe that our hero is going to be conquered. . . . there is a call to spiritual perseverance. A call not to hang on and do nothing, but to work deliberately, knowing with certainty that God will never be defeated." [Oswald Chambers, "My Utmost for His Highest," Feb. 22]

Persistence: Consider your effort as a blow of an ax-blade against a mighty oak tree. The first blow may not cause a tremor or hardly make a mark—or the second blow—or the third. Each blow in itself may seem inconsequential. Yet the accumulation of the blows will eventually cause the big oak to fall.

A.J. Gordon in his book, The Holy Spirit in Missions, said:

"It was 7 years before Carey baptized his first convert in India. It was 7 years before Judson won his first disciple in Burma. Morrison toiled 7 years before the first Chinaman was brought to Christ. Moffat declared that he had waited 7 years to see the first evident moving of the Holy Spirit upon the Bekiwanas of Africa. Henry Richards wrought 7 years in the Congo before the first convert was gained [there]." [Cited by John Piper, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts," Cassette Message on Isaiah 6:1-8, Jan. 1, 1984 a.m., © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"Lack of a due sense of the sinfulness of our best works lead to dreams of self-perfection, self-righteousness and self-justification. Such dreams lead to contempt of Christ and his righteousness. Who would look for another righteousness when he is convinced that he can justify himself before God by his own righteousness?

Before people will come to Christ and stay with Christ, they need to know that they are lost, condemned sinners, standing accursed in God's sight. They need to see that Christ alone has made perfect satisfaction for the pardon of their sins and so their deliverance from eternal punishment.

People also need to know that without Christ they have no righteousness with which to stand before God and that only Christ can clothe them with that perfect righteousness which is acceptable to God, having met all the demands of his holy law.

This is the faith of God's elect against which all the works and deceits of Satan cannot prevail. The marriage of divine revelation with true experience is invincible. But those who have never seen their desperate need of Christ for these things will never persevere in believing in him, nor remain in him by faith in times of persecution and strong temptations." [John Owen, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

"If it should ever come to pass
That any sheep of Christ should fall away,
My feeble, fickle soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day;
Were not thy love as firm as free,
Thou soon wouldst take it Lord, from me."
(author unknown)

PHILOSOPHY:

"[Bertrand] Russell's rejection of God was not motivated just by intellectual factors. In *My Father, Bertrand Russell*, his daughter, Katharine Tait, writes that Russell was not open to any serious discussion of God's existence: 'I could not even talk to him about religion.' Russell was apparently turned off by the kind of religious believers he had encountered. 'I would have liked to convince my father that I had found what he had been looking for, the ineffable something he had longed for all his life. I would have liked to persuade him that the search for God does not have to be vain. But it was hopeless. He had known too many

blind Christians, bleak moralists who sucked the joy from life and persecuted their opponents; he would never have been able to see the truth they were hiding.'

Tait, nevertheless, believes that Russell's 'whole life was a search for God.... Somewhere at the back of my father's mind, at the bottom of his heart, in the depths of his soul, there was an empty space that had once been filled by God, and he never found anything else to put in it.' He had the 'ghostlike feeling of not belonging, of having no home in this world.' In a poignant passage, Russell once said: 'Nothing can penetrate the loneliness of the human heart except the highest intensity of the sort of love the religious teachers have preached.'" [Roy Abraham Varghese in the Preface to Antony Flew, *There is a God*, xx-xxi]

"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins — all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. . . .

"Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; . . . proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power." [Bertrand Russell, cited by Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 76]

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS:

There are many, many instances in today's society where things have been taken much too far in an effort to be "politically correct" and keep everybody's feeling intact. And one of the most hilarious and idiotic suggestions for PC language happened in June, in Ireland of all places. The Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Investment (DETI) in Belfast decided that from now on, when executives get together at a company to toss ideas around and generate discussion among their staff, they shouldn't use the term "brainstorming." Let that one sink in for a minute. Can you guess why civil servants in Ireland won't be brainstorming anymore? Why, it's because they'll be developing "thought-showers" instead. That's right, the DETI has decided that the term "brainstorming" may be offensive to people with epilepsy, as well as those with brain tumors or brain injuries. A spokeswoman said, "The DETI does not use the term 'brainstorming' on its training courses on the grounds that it may be deemed pejorative."

The Campaign for Plain English has complained loudly that some decisions made in today's

business world have "reached the point of real ridicule." According to spokesman John Wild, 'You do sometimes wonder if some people haven't got anything better to do with their time. Do they just sit down and search out enough words until eventually they can say: 'I can make that out to be politically incorrect?' Of course there are certain terms that should be deemed out of bounds, but then sometimes things go too far. I am certain that those who dreamt this up are not suffering from any brain disease or injury. They just want to find offence anywhere they can stumble across it."

Perhaps the Campaign for Plain English should have a talk with the British Potato Council. Seems potato farmers in Britain have decided to take issue with the expression "couch potato," even staging a rally in London to demand that it be struck from the Oxford English Dictionary on the grounds that it harms the vegetable's image. (No, I'm not making this up.) Kathryn Race, head of marketing at the Council said the group had sent written complaints to the Oxford University Press but did not receive a response. Imagine that. "We are trying to get rid of the image that potatoes are bad for you," she said. "The potato has had its knocks in the past. Of course it is not the Oxford English Dictionary's fault, but we want to use another term than couch potato because potatoes are inherently healthy." As for the Oxford English Dictionary, their editor, John Simpson, said the dictionary added the term "couch potato" in 1993, and said "dictionaries just reflect words that society uses." [collected from the internet, 2006]

POLITICS:

"What good fortune for governments that men do not think." – Adolf Hitler

"When the people find they can vote themselves money that will herald the end of the republic" Alexis de Tocqueville

"Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters." Benjamin Franklin

"Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes away and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide." John Adams

"[The apostle] Paul was the great Coryphaeus [i.e. *band leader*], and first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus." [Thomas Jefferson, to William Short, April 13, 1820]

Two elderly women were walking around an overcrowded English country churchyard and came upon a tombstone. The inscription read: "Here lies John Smith, a politician and an honest man." "Good heavens!" one lady said to the other. "Isn't it awful that they had to put two people in the same grave!"

A first grade teacher explained to her class that she was a liberal Democrat. She then asked her students to raise their hands if they were liberal Democrats, too. Not really knowing what a liberal Democrat was, but wanting to please their teacher, hands exploded into the air like fleshy fireworks. There was, however, one exception. A girl named Lucy had not gone along with the crowd. The teacher asked Lucy why she decided to be different. "Because I'm not a liberal Democrat," Lucy said. The teacher asked, "Then what are you?" "I'm a proud

conservative Republican" said the little girl. The teacher, a little perturbed & red-faced, asked Lucy why she was a conservative Republican? Lucy proclaimed, "Well, I was brought up to trust in myself and freedom, instead of relying on an intrusive government to care for me and do all of my thinking. My Dad and Mom are conservative Republicans, and I am a conservative Republican too." The teacher calmly pointed out, "That's no reason. What if your Mom and Dad were both morons? What would you be then?" Lucy answered, "Then, I'd be a liberal Democrat."

PORNOGRAPHY:

"As Playboy and Penthouse Fade, Newer Magazines Tilt Artistic" - By Ravi Somaiya, New York Times, 01/18/15. Commentary by Albert Mohler [Daily Briefing for January 20, 2015]

"Another article from the New York Times also should have our attention, this one appeared in yesterday's edition; the headline, 'As Old Pornographic Magazines Ebb, Newer Entries to Genre Tilt Artistic.' Well, buckle your seatbelts. It turns out that the old mainstays of adult male pornography – that is Penthouse and Playboy – have been doing very poorly in terms of their print runs. As Ravi Somaiya writes,

'Pornography used to mean Playboy or Penthouse or another of the hundreds of glossy magazines kept on high shelves and purchased furtively. In the not too distant past, Playboy and Penthouse each sold five million or more copies a month, and were so much a part of the culture that in 1986 a federal judge ruled that denying blind people a Braille version of Playboy violated their First Amendment rights. . . . But traditional pornographic magazines have been hit hard, falling victim to boundless quantities of nudity online and rapidly declining print sales. Last summer, Larry Flynt, the founder of Hustler, acknowledged that the print version of his magazine was not going to be around much longer.'

So here's the lesson from a Christian worldview. Sin finds a way to repackage and re-market itself and in terms of pornography, the new marketing angle is, 'it's not photography, it is art.' The problem is that's not a new argument at all. That's exactly the argument that Hugh Hefner made, as historians have carefully noted, back in the late 1950s and in the 1960s when he tried to argue that his pornographic magazine playboy was actually for highbrow gentlemen. Somaiya writes,

'Though they remain focused on the naked body, these relatively new magazines are seeking to move sex in print periodicals from under the mattress up onto the coffee table. In stark contrast to online pornography, with much of it free, these niche publications sell for a premium — often more than \$20 — to thousands of people, or tens of thousands, rather than millions.'"

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/19/business/media/as-playboy-and-penthouse-fade-newer-pornographic-magazines-tilt-artistic.html?_r=0]

Valerie Martiniz says a pornography addiction drove her husband to suicide. Her former husband, Bob, was spending up to \$5,000 per year on films and magazines. Sometimes he would watch 10-15 pornographic films per week, watching them late into the night.

Bob was an active church member and a drummer in a Christian band. Just prior to his death, Bob called their pastor for counseling. However, their pastor was too busy to talk at the time. The next morning, Bob drove his Volkswagen bug into a Tucson highway abutment at 70 miles an hour and was killed. Bob's addiction spanned 10 years.

Early in my ministry I knew of a man, an older gentleman, who, along with his wife, had been active Christians for years. He served with me as a deacon in our church. Some time later I was shocked to learn that he and his wife had divorced. I came to find out that he was addicted to pornography. When his marriage became threatened by this he decided to see a psychologist who told him, "Of course you like pornography. You're a man! There's nothing wrong with that." Unfortunately, this man bought into that godless advice and went deeper into his perverse lifestyle which cost him his marriage and likely his soul.

PRAGMATISM:

The Sophist philosopher of the 5th c. B.C., Protagoras of Abdera, is considered the father of pragmatism. Protagoras taught that true wisdom is what works. The ends justify the means.

"The church growth movement stands at the top of a slippery slope that leads to a pit of pragmatism and a denial of the sufficiency of God's Word." [TAB]

"Once at a pastor's conference a man asked me, 'What's the real secret of Grace Community Church's vitality and growth?' I said, 'The clear and forceful teaching of the Word.' I was shocked when he countered, 'Don't give me that. I tried it and it doesn't work. What's the real secret?'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 118-19]

PRAYER:

Take one step at a time - every step under clear warrant and divine direction. Never venture to plan for yourself, except in simple dependence on God. It is nothing less than self-idolatry to conceive, that we can carry on even the ordinary matters of the day without his counsel. He loves to be consulted. Therefore take all thy difficulties to be resolved by him. Be in the habit of going to him in the first place before self-will, self-cleaning, self-wisdom, human friends, conveniences, expediency. Before any of these have been consulted go to God at once. Consider no circumstance too clear to need his direction. (Charles Bridges, An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs, 1865)

The Valley of Vision - LORD, HIGH AND HOLY, MEEK AND LOWLY,

Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision,
where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights;
hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold thy glory.

Let me learn by paradox
that the way down is the way up,
that to be low is to be high,
that the broken heart is the healed heart,

that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,
that to have nothing is to possess all,
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,
that to give is to receive,
that the valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,
and the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine;

Let me find thy light in my darkness,
thy life in my death,
thy joy in my sorrow,
thy grace in my sin,
thy riches in my poverty
thy glory in my valley.

[Taken from Valley of Vision, a Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions, Banner of Truth, pp. xxiv-xxv]

"Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God has promised, or according to the Word of God, for the good of the church, with submission in faith to the will of God." [John Bunyan]

"Faith asks no signal from the skies,
To show that prayers accepted rise,
Our Priest is in his holy place,
And answers from the throne of grace."

"It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; the truth is, whilst in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer, is to continue praying; for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray." --- George Muller ['A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller.' Muskegon, MI: Dust & Ashes Publications, 2003. 1:44.]

"It is very certain that we cannot attain to the understanding of the Scripture either by study or by the intellect. Your first duty is to begin by prayer. . . . There is no other interpreter of the Word of God than the Author of this Word . . . Hope for nothing from your own labors, from your own understanding; trust solely in God and in the influence of his spirit. Believe this on the word of a man who has had experience." [Martin Luther, cited in Merle D'Aubigne, p. 106]

This is an apocryphal story about a pastor who had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and was then afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, etc. The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided

that if he tied a rope to his car he could bend the tree down enough to get the kitten. He did all this, checking his progress frequently. But as he moved the car a little further forward, the rope broke. The tree went "boing!" and the kitten instantly sailed through the air - out of sight.

The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighborhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, "Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping," and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He was amazed to see she was buying cat food. Now this woman was a cat-hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?" She replied, "You won't believe this," and told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mom finally told her little girl, "Well if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." (Can you see where this is heading?)

She told the pastor, "I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her."

Telephone Prayerline Outsourced to India by J. Elmer Dinwiddie, Sacred Sandwich Reporter.

May 2005 --- Roscoe Honeycutt, a frequent caller to the Prayerline, knew something was different when he heard the Punjabi accent coming from the prayer counselor on the phone. "He sounded like Deepak Chopra," explained Honeycutt, "but he said his name was Bob." What Honeycutt and other callers are finding out is that the Prayerline ministry has recently been outsourced to a call center in New Delhi, India, in order to save money and upgrade their customer service. Fern Wimbley, a spokesperson for Prayerline, confirmed the move. "Certainly the switch to India will be more cost-effective, but frankly, we were looking for some new blood anyway. Our local pool of prayer volunteers had dwindled down to retired folks like Herb Schmidt, a former Wal-Mart greeter with prostate trouble. When we started missing calls because Herb was in the bathroom, we knew we needed to make a change."

Wimbley blames the lack of local prayer volunteers on recent technological advancements in the church. "Let's face it, phone prayer is considered a dinosaur these days. It just doesn't have the glamour and panache of text-messaging prayer. I just wish the kids today would realize that all those confusing abbreviations are the tools of Satan." Added Wimbley with a sigh, "I guess I'm just a traditionalist."

When asked about possible problems in forwarding Christian prayer requests to a country that is over 80 percent Hindu, Wimbley seemed undaunted. "I admit that most of the counselors are cow-worshippers, but we feel confident that the prayer team in India has been extensively trained to follow computer screen instructions based on Matthew 6 to pinpoint the caller's needs and provide them with the proper prayer

support. All counselors are taught the latest Christian prayer terminology, like 'Lord, we lift up so-and-so' and 'Amen.' We believe the prayer experience of our callers will feel just like home."

But are callers to the Prayerline liking the change? Overall, caller Honeycutt was very pleased with his recent experience. "Not only did Bob help me pray for a bigger house, but afterwards he asked if I was having any trouble with my computer. Hey, Herb never did that."

"The second duty of a pastor towards his flock (after the faithful teaching and preaching of God's Word) is continual fervent prayer for them. . . . Without this, no man can or doth preach to them as he ought, nor perform any other duty of his pastoral office. From hence may any man take the best measure of the discharge of his duty towards his flock. He that doth constantly, diligently, fervently, pray for them, will have a testimony in himself of his own sincerity in the discharge of all other pastoral duties. . . . And as for those who are negligent herein, be their pains, labor, and travail in other duties never so great, they may be influenced from other reasons, and so give no evidence of sincerity in the discharge of their office. In this constant prayer for the church, which is so incumbent on all pastors as that whatever is done without it is of no esteem in the sight of Jesus Christ, respect is to be had, [first] unto the success of the word, unto all the blessed ends of it, among them. These are no less than the improvement and strengthening of all their graces, the direction of all their duties, their edification in faith and love, with the entire conduct of their souls in the life of God, unto the enjoyment of him. To preach the word, therefore, and not to follow it with constant and fervent prayer for its success, is to disbelieve its use, neglect its end, and to cast away the seed of the gospel at random." [John Owen, The True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government; from chapter 5, The Especial Duty of Pastors of Churches. In Works of John Owen, Volume 16]

"Before they call, I will answer!" Isaiah 65:24. This story was written by a doctor who worked in South Africa.

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all we could do she died leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a crying two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive, as we had no incubator. (We had no electricity to run an incubator.) We also had no special feeding facilities.

Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst. Rubber perishes easily in tropical climates. "And it is our last hot water bottle!" she exclaimed.

As in the West it is no good crying over spilled milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. They do not grow on trees, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways.

"All right," I said, "put the baby as near the fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. "Your job is to keep the baby warm."

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle.

The baby could so easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

During the prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. "Please, God," she prayed, "send us a water bottle. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon." While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added by way of a corollary, "And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she'll know You really love her?"

As often with children's prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, "Amen?!" I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know that He can do everything. The Bible says so. But there are limits, aren't there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the homeland.

I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the verandah, was a large twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly. Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box. From the top, I lifted out brightly colored, knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas-that would make a batch of buns for the weekend.

Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt the.....could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out -- yes, a brand-new, rubber hot water bottle. I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that He could. Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, "If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!"

Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted! Looking up at me, she asked: "Can I go over with you, Mummy, and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?"

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months. Packed up by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African

child-five months before -- in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it "that afternoon." "Before they call, I will answer!" Isaiah 65:24

Oh, how we need to wake up to how much "nothing" we spend our time doing. Apart from prayer, all our scurrying about, all our talking, all our study amounts to "nothing." For most of us the voice of self-reliance is ten times louder than the bell that tolls for the hours of prayer. The voice cries out: "You must open the mail, you must make that call, you must write this sermon, you must prepare for the board meeting, you must go to the hospital." But the bell tolls softly: "Without Me you can do nothing." Both our flesh and our culture scream against spending an hour on our knees beside a desk piled with papers. . . . And sometimes I fear that our seminaries conform to this deadly pragmatism which stresses management and maneuvering as ways to get things done with a token mention of prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit. . . . Take one of your days off and go away by yourself and pray about how you should pray. Say to yourself right now: "God help me to do something radical in regard to prayer!" Refuse to believe that the daily hours Luther and Wesley and Brainerd and Judson spent in prayer are idealistic dreams of another era. . . . Are our packed calendars and handheld computers really fulfilling our hunger for life in Christ, let alone the hunger of our people and the world? Are not our people really yearning to be around a man who has been around God? Is it not the lingering aroma of prayer that gives a sense of eternity to all our work? [John Piper, *Brothers We Are NOT Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Broadman and Holman, 2002), p. 55-58.]

"Not only does sin hinder prayer; prayer hinders sin. The two are always opposed. The more careless we are about sin, the less we will pray. The more we pray, the less careless we will be about sin. Both sin and prayer are powerful forces. Which one is moving you?" [Dr. Alvin Vander Griend - National Facilitator of Lighthouse Ministries for The Mission America Coalition]

Andrew Murray, in addressing the discipline of prayer:

The unconverted man says, "Conversion is easy tomorrow, but hard today. I'll put it off." Even so, prayer that is now difficult appears easy in the future. Alas, you will find it just as hard in the future as now. ... Reading a book about prayer, listening to lectures and talking about it is very good, but it won't teach you to pray. You get nothing without exercise, without practice. I might listen for a year to a professor of music playing the most beautiful music, but that won't teach me to play an instrument.

A mother was teaching her three-year-old The Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, the child repeated it after the mother. Then one night the child was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride to the carefully enunciated words, right up to the end: ". . .and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some e-mail..."

"The condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings. So is the prayer meeting a grace-ometer, and from it we may judge of the amount of divine working among a people. If God be near a church, it must pray. And if he be not there, one of the first tokens of his absence will be a slothfulness in prayer." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in Tom Carter, comp., Spurgeon at His Best (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p. 155: selections from the 1873 edition of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, p. 218.]

Charles Spurgeon once remarked that "the best style of prayer is that which cannot be called anything else but a cry." [cited by Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, 55]

"Satan's main strategy with God's people has always been to whisper, 'Don't call, don't ask, don't depend on God to do great things. You'll get along fine if you just rely on your own cleverness and energy.' The truth of the matter is that the devil is not terribly frightened of our human efforts and credentials. But he knows his kingdom will be damaged when we lift up our hearts to God." [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, 56]

Speaking of God's immutability in relationship to the believer's prayer, the Puritan Stephen Charnock wrote:

"What comfort would it be to pray to a god that, like the chameleon, changed color every moment? Who would put up a petition to an earthly prince that was so mutable as to grant a petition one day, and deny it another?" [Cited by A.W. Pink, The Attributes of God, 39]

If you've ever read a biography of the great WW2 general, George Patton, you may have been surprised to find a story about prayer taken from this very gruff commander's life. Patton was known more for his profanity and abrasiveness than for his prayerfulness. That's what makes the story all the more poignant.

In 1944, several months before the war's end, Patton and his troops found themselves on the brink of an important mission in northern Europe. It was Dec., and while folks back home were dreaming of a white Christmas, heavy snowfall was the last thing Patton and his men hoped for as the campaign approached.

Unfortunately, temperatures dropped, clouds rolled in, and a winter blizzard began to threaten the success of the Allied forces. With the battle jeopardized and few options remaining, Patton decided to appeal directly to the source of the bad weather: He called for his company chaplain.

In perhaps one of the most unorthodox strategic maneuvers of modern warfare, the general ordered the chaplain to draft a prayer that would improve the weather conditions for battle. The chaplain did as he was told and eventually supplied his commander with a finished copy of the prayer.

We're certainly not sure exactly how God was working in the events surrounding the battle, but we do know what history tells us about the outcome. Two days before Christmas, the foul weather broke, the skies cleared, and the campaign advanced just as Patton had planned.

Some claim that after the favorable change in the weather, Patton suggested decorating the chaplain who wrote the prayer. Patton apparently believed that the prayer--like some magic wand--had done the trick.

This story is relevant not because it teaches us something about the power of prayer, but because it reminds us how misguided our approach to prayer can sometimes be. [adapted from "Grace to You Newsletter, Sept. 18, 1995].

Many years ago a saint of God prayed this prayer (which I hope is yours as well).

O Lord, in prayer I launch far out into the eternal world and on that broad ocean my soul triumphs over all evils on the shores of mortality. Time, with its amusements and cruel disappointments, never appears so inconsiderate as then. In prayer, O God, I see myself as nothing. I find my heart going after Thee with intensity, and I long with vehement thirst to live with Thee. Blessed by the strong winds of the Spirit that speed me on my way to the new Jerusalem. In prayer all things here below vanish and nothing seems important but holiness of heart and the salvation of others. In prayer all my worldly cares and fears and anxieties disappear and are as little in significance as a puff of wind. In prayer my soul inwardly exalts with thoughts of what Thou art doing for Thy church, and I long that Thou shouldest get Thyself a great name from sinners returning to Thee. In prayer I am lifted above the frowns and flatteries of life to taste the heavenly joys. Entering into the eternal world I can give myself to Thee with all my heart forever. In prayer I can place all my concerns in Thy hands to be entirely at Thy disposal, having no will or interest of my own. In prayer I can intercede for my friends, ministers, sinners, the church, Thy kingdom, with greatest freedom and brightest hope as a son to his Father and as a lover to his beloved. And so, O God, help me to pray always and never to cease." [cited in MacArthur, Colossians, 382]

In the 17th century a man named Johann Burchard Freystein wrote the following hymn: Rise my soul to watch and pray, From thy sleep awaken. Be not by the evil day Unawares or taken. For the foe well we know Oft his harvest reapeth While the Christian sleepeth. Watch against the devil's snares Lest asleep he find thee, For indeed no pains he spares To deceive and blind thee. Satan's prey oft are they Who secure are sleeping And no watch are keeping. But while watching also Pray to the Lord unceasing. O Lord bless in distress And let nothing swerve me From the will to serve Thee.

Over 100 years ago Charlotte Elliot wrote the words:

Christian, seek not yet repose, Cast thy dreams of ease away; Thou are in the midst of foes; Watch and pray. Principalities and power, Mustering their unseen array, Wait for thy unguarded hours; Watch and pray. Watch as if on that alone Hung the issue of the day, Pray that help may be sent down; Watch and pray.

In 1540 Luther's great friend and associate, Friedrich Myconius, became sick and was near death. On his deathbed he wrote Luther a loving farewell note with his trembling hand. Luther received the letter and sent back a reply: "I command thee in the name of God to live because I still have need of thee in the work of reforming the church. . . . The Lord will never let me hear that thou art dead, but will permit thee to survive me. For this I am praying, this is my will, and I may my will be done, because I seek to glorify the name of God." It is recorded that Myconius had lost his ability to speak when Luther's letter came, but recovered completely and lived six more years to survive Luther by two months. [cited in MacArthur, Colossians, 181-82]

Richard Trench (1807-1886), great N.T. Scholar and Archbishop of Dublin: "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of his willingness." [cited in Wiersbe, Colossians, 138]

A century ago, a gentleman was visiting the great Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. He was being escorted around the facilities by the church's pastor, Charles Spurgeon, when Spurgeon asked him: "Would you like to see the powerhouse of this ministry?" With that he brought the gentleman into a lower auditorium and remarked: "It is here that we get our power, for while I am preaching upstairs, hundreds of my people are in this room, praying." [cited in Wiersbe, Colossians, 140]

A Puritan saint of generations ago once prayed:

"Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of grace. I am guilty but pardoned. I am lost but saved. I am wandering but found. I am sinning but cleansed. Give me perpetual broken-heartedness. Keep me always clinging to Thy cross." [cited in MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 394]

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." [prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi]

Medieval parable of 2 angels sent to earth by the Lord to gather all the prayers of the saints. One was to gather all the petitions, the other the thanksgivings. The angel responsible for the petitions was not able to carry them back to heaven in one load, while the angel responsible for the thanksgivings carried his back in one hand.

Theodorus once said of Luther: "I overheard him in prayer, but, good God, with what life and spirit did he pray! It was with so much reverence, as if he were speaking to God, yet with so much confidence as if he were speaking to his friend." [cited in Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 45]

"We have all heard how the enemies of the Protestant cause dreaded the prayers of John Knox more than they feared armies of 10,000 men. The famous Welch was also a great intercessor for his country; he used to say, 'he wondered how a Christian could lie in his bed all night and not rise to pray.'" "When his wife, fearing that he would take cold, followed him into the room to which he had withdrawn, she heard him pleading in broken sentences, 'Lord, wilt thou not grant me Scotland?'" [cited by Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 46-47]

See also, Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, Lectures 3 and 4.

Thomas Shepherd, Pilgrim Father and founder of Harvard, wrote in his diary: "It is sometimes so with me that I will rather die than pray."

Spurgeon, citing a story by another pastor on prayer, writes: "I was reading yesterday a book by Father Faber, late of the Oratory, at Brompton, a marvelous compound of truth and error.

In it he relates a legend to this effect: 'A certain preacher, whose sermons converted men by scores, received a revelation from heaven that not one of the conversions was owing to his talents or eloquence, but all to the prayers of an illiterate lay-brother, who sat on the pulpit steps, pleading all the time for the success of the sermon.'" Spurgeon concludes, "It may, in the all-revealing day, be so with us. We may discover, after having labored long and wearily in preaching, that all the honor belongs to another builder, whose prayers were gold, silver, and precious stones, while our sermonizings begin apart from prayer, were but hay and stubble. [Lectures to my Students, 45-46]

Hudson Taylor was 17 years old and had yet to address the issue of his relationship with Jesus Christ. One afternoon, his mother, feeling especially burdened for him, left her friends to go and pray. Meanwhile, young Hudson had just come home to an empty house, himself burdened. He happened into his father's study, and opening one of the many books there, he came across the words: "It is finished--a full and perfect atonement for sin." Suddenly the truth became real to him and he dropped to his knees confessing Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Shortly thereafter his mother returned home and he rushed to greet her with the good news. But before he could open his mouth she smiled and said, "I know, I know, I have been rejoicing in the good news that you have to tell!" [paraphrased from Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret, 13-14]

"Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend. Tell him your troubles, that he may comfort you; tell him your joys, that he may sober them; tell him your longings, that he may purify them; tell him your dislikes, that he may help you to conquer them; talk to him of your temptations, that he may shield you from them; show him the wounds of your heart, that he may heal them; lay bare your indifference to good, your depraved tastes for evil, your instability. Tell him how self-love makes you unjust to others, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, how pride disquiets you to yourself as to others." The great saint of the middle ages, Fenelon [cited in McGee, James, 91]

"The largest radio receiver on earth (as of 1990) is in New Mexico. Pilots call it 'the mushroom patch.' Its real name is the 'Very Large Array,' or 'VLA.' The VLA is a series of huge satellite disks stationed on 38 miles of railway. Together the dishes mimic a single telescope the size of Washington, D.C. Astronomers come from all over the world to analyze the optical images of the heavens composed by the VLA from the radio signals it receives from space. Why such a huge satellite station? Because it's said that the radio waves it receives are so faint that their total energy barely equals the force of a snowflake hitting the ground."

This monstrosity searches in vain for "a word from the heavens." We have "a word from the heavens"--a word from God (2 Peter 1:19). God not only has spoken to us through His Word, He also has a Very Large Ear continuously open to us. He hears every prayer uttered by His elect. [from a January 1990 program, "Infinite Voyage," broadcast on WTTW, PBS in Chicago, cited by D. Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 61]

One writer asks the question:

"Suppose Jesus appeared to you personally, much as He did to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation 1, and said that He expected you to pray. Wouldn't you become more faithful in prayer, knowing specifically that Jesus expected that of you? Well, the words of Jesus [as revealed in His Word] are as much His will for you as if He spoke your name and said them to you face to face." [Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 63]

The reason we don't pray is not because of lack of discipline (though that's part of the problem). The reason we don't pray is because we don't really understand what prayer is. When you pray you are communicating with Almighty God. It's as if He were on the other end of the telephone line, or more accurately, as if he were sitting in the same room with you looking at you face-to-face. If we really believed this, we would neither be bored in prayer nor lacking in prayer. We are too often like Peter in Mark 14:37-38 where Jesus said to him, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation." [TAB]

"As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray" [Martin Luther, cited in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 64]

"Prayer is a walkie talkie for spiritual battle, not a mobile phone for increasing our personal conveniences."

"Pray as you think. consciously embrace with your heart every gleam of light and truth that comes to your mind. Thank God for and pray about everything that strikes you powerfully." [John Owen, cited in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 68]

"'Ask and you shall receive; everyone that asks, receives.' This is the fixed eternal law of the kingdom: if you ask and receive not, it must be because there is something amiss or wanting in the prayer. Hold on; let the Word and the Spirit teach you to pray aright, but do not let go the confidence He seeks to waken: Everyone who asks receives. . . . Let every learner in the school of Christ therefore take the Master's word in all simplicity. . . . Let us beware of weakening the Word with our human wisdom." [Andrew Murray, cited in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 74]

"I cannot imagine any one of you tantalizing your child by exciting in him a desire that you did not intend to gratify. It were a very ungenerous thing to offer alms to the poor, and then when they hold out their hand for it, to mock their poverty with a denial. It were a cruel addition to the miseries of the sick if they were taken to the hospital and there lie there untended and uncared for. Where God leads you to pray, He means you to receive." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 75]

"The great fault of the children of God is, they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God's glory, they should pray until they get it. Oh, how good, and kind, and gracious, and condescending is the One with Whom we have to do! He has given me, unworthy as I am, immeasurably above all I had asked or thought." [George Muller, cited in Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 77]

The Jewish "Tephillah" or "18 Benedictions" were a series of formal prayers prayed three times a day. For a listing of the 18 prayers, see the Dictionary of New Testament Theology 2:865-66.

As Robert Law stated: "Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven. It's getting God's will done on earth." [cited in Wiersbe, James: Be Mature, 171]

"The Jews had a saying that he who prays surrounds his house with a wall stronger than iron." [Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter, 131]

"It is reported that when Dr. R.A. Torrey was at the Montrose Bible Conference his last summer, one of the speakers by way of encouragement said to him: 'Dr. Torrey, back in Australia, some of the strongest Christian laymen we have were saved during your campaign there 27 years ago.' Dr. Torrey said, 'Praise God. Could you give me some of the names?' His informer thought a few minutes and then mentioned half a dozen prominent soul-winning laymen of that land. Dr. Torrey, responded: 'Some of these names were made known to me at the time they confessed Christ, and I put them on my prayer list. Some of these men I have mentioned before God every day for 27 years.'" [Lauren, Colossians, 37]

There was a minister who received a call to pastor a much larger church with a substantial increase in salary from that which he was currently receiving. He replied, "I'll pray about it while my wife packs!"

"How much of a blessing we may have missed through remissness in supplication we can scarcely guess, and none of us can know how poor we are in comparison with what we might have been if we had lived habitually nearer to God in prayer. Vain regrets and surmises are useless, but an earnest determination to amend will be far more useful. We not only ought to pray more, but we must. The fact is, the secret of all ministerial success lies in prevalence at the mercy-seat." [Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 49]

C.H. Spurgeon, in speaking of the mystery of spiritual anointing in prayer, also addressed the excesses of such. He wrote: "It is as easy as it is foolish to counterfeit it, as some do who use expressions which are meant to betoken fervent love, but oftener indicate sick sentimentalism or mere cant. 'Dear Lord!' 'Sweet Jesus!' 'Precious Christ!' are by them poured out wholesale, till one is nauseated. These familiarities may have been not only tolerable, but even beautiful when they first fell from a saint of God, speaking, as it were, out of the excellent glory, but when repeated flippantly they are not only intolerable, but indecent, if not profane. Some have tried to imitate unction by unnatural moans and whine; by turning up the whites of their eyes, and lifting up their hands in a most ridiculous manner. Certain brethren aim at inspiration through exertion and loud shouting; but it does not come: some have been known to stop the discourse and exclaim, 'God bless you,' and others gesticulate wildly, and drive their finger nails into the palm of their hands as if they were in convulsions of celestial ardor. Bah! The whole thing smells of the green-room and the stage." [Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 49-50]

Two Memorable Minutes

Step into the time tunnel and travel back with me to a field in PA. The year is 1863. The month is July. The place is Gettysburg. Today it is a series of quiet rolling hills full of

markings and memories. But back then it was a battle ground . . . more horrible than we can imagine.

During the first day of that month, 51,000 were killed, wounded, or missing in what would prove the decisive Union victory of the Civil War. Anguished cries of the maimed and dying made a wailing chorus as the patients were hurried to improvised operating tables. One nurse recorded there words in her journal: "For seven days the tables literally ran with blood." Wagons and carts were filled to overflowing with amputated arms and legs, wheeled off to a deep trench, dumped, and buried. Preachers quoted the 23rd Psalm over and over as fast as their lips could say it while brave soldiers breathed their last.

The aftermath of any battlefield is always grim, but this was one of the worst. A national cemetery was proposed. A consecration service was planned. The date was set: November 19. The commission invited none other than the silver-tongued Edward Everett to deliver the dedication speech. Known for his cultured words, patriotic fervor, and public appeal, the orator, a former congressman and governor of Mass. was a natural for the historic occasion. Predictably, he accepted.

In October President Lincoln announced his intentions to attend the ceremonies. This startled the commissioners, who had not expected Mr. Lincoln to leave the Capitol in wartime. Now, how could he not be asked to speak? They were nervous, realizing how much better an orator Everett was than Lincoln. Out of courtesy, they wrote the President on November 2, asking him to deliver "a few appropriate remarks." Certainly Lincoln knew the invitation was an afterthought, but it mattered little. When the battle of Gettysburg had begun, he had dropped to his knees and pleaded with God not to let the nation perish. He felt his prayer had been answered. His sole interest was to sum up what he passionately felt about his beloved country.

With such little time for preparation before the day of dedication, Lincoln worried over his words. He confided to a friend that his talk was not going smoothly. Finally, he forced himself to be satisfied with his "ill-prepared speech." He arrived at Gettysburg the day before the ceremonies in time to attend a large dinner that evening. With Edward Everett across the room, surrounded by numerous admirers, the President must have felt all the more uneasy. He excused himself from the after-dinner activities to return to his room and work a bit more on his remarks.

At midnight a telegram arrived from his wife: "The doctor has just left. We hope dear Taddie is slightly better." Their 10 year old son Tad had become seriously ill the day before. Since the President and his wife had already lost two of their four children, Mrs. Lincoln had insisted that he not leave. But he had felt he must. With a troubled heart, he extinguished the lights in his room and struggled with sleep.

About nine o'clock the next morning, Lincoln copied his address onto two small pages and tucked them into his coat pocket . . . put on his stove-pipe hat, tugged white gloves over his hands, and joined the procession of dignitaries. He could hardly bear the sight as they passed the blood-soaked fields where scraps of men's lives littered the area . . . a dented canteen, a torn picture of a child, a boot, a broken rifle. Mr. Lincoln was seized by grief. Tears ran down into his beard.

Shortly after the chaplain of the Senate gave the invocation, Everett was introduced. At age 69, the grand old gentleman was slightly afraid he might forget his long, memorized speech, but once he got into it, everything flowed. His words rang smoothly across the field like silver bells. He knew his craft. Voice fluctuation. Tone. Dramatic gestures. Eloquent pauses. Lincoln stared in fascination. Finally, one hour and 57 minutes later, the orator took his seat as the crowd roared its enthusiastic approval.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Lincoln was introduced. As he stood to his feet, he turned nervously to Secretary Seward and muttered, "They won't like it." Slipping on his steel spectacles, he held the two pages in his right hand and grabbed his lapel with his left. He never moved his feet or made any gesture with his hands. His voice, high-pitched, almost squeaky, carried over the crowd like a brass bugle. He was serious and sad at the beginning . . . but a few sentences into the speech, his face and voice came alive. As he spoke, "The world will little note nor long remember . . .," he almost broke, but then he caught himself and was strong and clear. People listened on tiptoe.

Suddenly, he was finished. No more than two minutes after he had begun he stopped. His talk had been so prayer-like it seemed almost inappropriate to applaud. As Lincoln sank into his settee, John Young of the Philadelphia Press whispered, "Is that all?" The President answered, "Yes, that's all."

Over [130] years have passed since that historic event. Can anyone recall one line from Everett's 2 hour Gettysburg address? Depth, remember, not length, is important. Lincoln's two minutes have become among the most memorable two minutes in the history of our nation. [taken from Charles Swindoll, The Quest for Character, 119-123]

A nurse taught a very disgruntled and unhappy man how to pray. It changed his life and he became a man of joy. Much of the nurse's work was done with her hands, and she used her hands as an illustration for prayer. Each of her fingers stood for someone. Her thumb was closest to her and reminded her to pray for those closest and dearest to her. The 2nd finger was used for pointing. Those that teach use it to point to us when they ask us a question. She prayed for them. The 3rd finger is the tallest and stood for the V.I.P's, the leaders in every sphere of life. The 4th finger is the weakest (as every piano player knows) and stood for the weak, the troubled, those in pain. The 5th finger was the smallest and most insignificant. And for the nurse, it stood for herself. (from George Reindrop's book, No Common Task)

PREACHING & TEACHING: [General; Accountability; Diligent Study; Importance of; Prayer and; Pride; Shallowness; Worship and]

General

It's not our business to make the message acceptable, but to make it available. We are not to see that they like it, but that they get it." – Vance Havner

C.H. Spurgeon was converted through the ungifted preaching of a Methodist lay-minister who haltingly expanded upon Isaiah 45:22. Through the weakness of the messenger the power of the Gospel rang in the young Spurgeon's heart:

"There and then, the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; I could have risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him."

I once heard a guest speaker in a church preface his message with this: "This morning as I share with you I really hope to be relative and aplice." (He meant to say "relevant" and "applicable.") Sadly, that may have been the highpoint of the message [TAB]

"That narrow chest does not indicate a man formed for public speech. You may think it odd, but still I feel very well assured, that when a man has a contracted chest, with no distance between his shoulders, the all-wise Creator did not intend him habitually too preach. If he had meant him to speak he would have given him in some measure breadth of chest, sufficient to yield a reasonable amount of lung force. When the Lord means a creature to run, he gives it nimble legs, and if he means another creature to preach, he will give it suitable lungs." [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, 34-35]

"There's a broken heart in every pew. Preach to the sorrowing and you will never lack for a congregation." [Joseph Parker, cited in "Pulpit Helps", July 2003, 25]

The Latin phrase speaks to the principle of repetition that is so often observed in Scripture: *Repetitio mater studiorum est* = ("repetition is the mother of all learning").

In 1731, Jonathan Edwards (perhaps America's greatest theologian) preached a sermon to his own congregation entitled "Stupid as Stones." Listen to what he said:

"Men's wills are opposite to the gospel. The Gospel, the Savior, and His way of salvation don't suit with their natural inclination. The way of salvation is too holy for them, it ascribes too much to God and not enough to themselves. They can see no beauty in Christ wherefore they should desire. And it is impossible that they should be persuaded to love Christ since they see no beauty in Him. They see no excellency, no fitness in salvation; but . . . it is a way contrary to their strongest bent and inclination of their souls. Why? Because they are stupid as stones!"

He goes on to say:

"In telling men of their perishing necessity of a Savior, their guilt, and in setting forth the sufficiency of Christ for salvation, telling them what a complete redemption Christ has wrought and how fully his blood has satisfied divine justice; how acceptable was Christ's obedience to God, and how safe it is appearing in his righteousness, and how glorious the blessings are that he has purchased, and how amiable this person of Jesus Christ is, and how willing he is, and how he has invited them to him; it all signifies nothing to them. Why? Because they are stupid as stones!"

If you think that's bad, you have to go to the conclusion of the sermon. In the conclusion he changes the pronoun:

"Why do you not respond as you should? Because you are stupid as stones!" [Taken from a sermon by Al Mohler, 2004 Shepherd's Conference, General Session #5]

R.C. Sproul tells the story about his going from the classroom full-time to being the pastor and preacher in a local church. He was talking to a young man about that one day and the young man remarked, "What's it like to take a step down like that?" In other words, to be a seminary professor was the highest one could get and to be a meager preacher was something else entirely (like going from CEO to trash collector). If I remember right, Sproul said something about having never heard a stupid question in his life . . . until then. In no simple terms, he then went about setting the young man straight on the fact that being a preacher, a herald of God's Word was the grandest calling imaginable. [TAB]

"The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the word." [John Owen, cited in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds., page 232]

"I remember it as if it were yesterday, though in fact it was an evening in 1948, when I was a Christian four years old in the faith. I had been told that this man and his ministry were in a class by themselves, and was trying to imagine what might be special about them. My friend led me straight to a front pew a little left of centre at the back of a great tiered gallery that ran all round the building; he told me it was the best place to see from, and seeing was important. . . . The preacher was a small man with a big head and evidently thinning hair, wearing a shapeless-looking black gown. His great domed forehead caught the eye at once. He walked briskly to the little pulpit desk in the centre of the balcony, said, 'Let us pray' in a rather pinched, deep, Welsh-inflected, microphone-magnified voice, and at once began pleading with God to visit us during the service. The blend of reverence and intimacy, adoration and dependence, fluency and simplicity in his praying was emarkable. . . . Soon he was reading a Bible chapter (Matthew 11), briskly and intelligently rather than dramatically or weightily; and in due course the auditorium lights went out and he launched into a 45-minute sermon on history, and the story of God's kingdom as the centre of history, and the crucial place of John the Baptist in that story, as forerunner of the Saviour-King who is at the centre of the centre, Jesus Christ the Lord. The sermon (as we say nowadays) blew my away. What was special about it? It was simple, clear, straightforward man-to-man stuff. It was expository, apologetic, and evangelistic on the grand scale. It was both the planned performance of a magnetic orator and the passionate, compassionate outflow of a man with a message from God that he knew his hearers needed. He worked up to a dramatic growling shout about God's sovereign grace a few minutes before the end; then from that he worked down to businesslike persuasion, calling on needy souls to come to Christ. It was the old, old story, but it had been made wonderfully new. I went out full of awe and joy, with a more vivid sense of the greatness of God in my heart than I had known before. [J.I. Packer's foreword to Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Heart of the Gospel* (Crossway, 1991), p 7-8.]

“Our whole work must be carried on under a deep sense of our own insufficiency, and of our entire dependence on Christ. We must go for light, and life, and strength to him who sends us on the work. And when we feel our own faith weak, and our hearts dull, and unsuitable to so great a work as we have to do, we must have recourse to him, and say, ‘Lord, wilt thou send me with such an unbelieving heart to persuade others to believe? Must I daily plead

with sinners about everlasting life and everlasting death, and have no more belief or feeling of these weighty things myself? O, send me not naked and unprovided to the work; but, as thou commandest me to do it, furnish me with a spirit suitable thereto.' Prayer must carry on our work as well as preaching; he preacheth not heartily to his people, that prayeth not earnestly for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we shall never prevail with them to believe and repent. When our own hearts are so far out of order, and theirs so far out of order, if we prevail not with God to mend and help them, we are like to make but unsuccessful work”. [Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (1656), Chapter 2, Section 2, Paragraph 14]

The radio reported a church that has grown from 100 to 3000. That’s not unusual in itself. What is unusual is that the church has no preacher. They have preaching but no preacher. They play video tapes of top notch preachers and people watch a sermon on a big screen each and every Sunday. [October 9, 2004]

Preacher Dies During Sermon About Heaven. Mon Jan 10,10:43 PM ET Strange News - AP OVIEDO, Fla. - A Presbyterian minister collapsed and died in mid-sentence of a sermon after saying "And when I go to heaven . . .," his colleague said Monday. The Rev. Jack Arnold, 69, was nearing the end of his sermon Sunday at Covenant Presbyterian Church in this Orlando suburb when he grabbed the podium before falling to the floor, said the Rev. Michael S. Beates, associate pastor at Covenant Presbyterian. Before collapsing, Arnold quoted the 18th century Bible scholar, John Wesley, who said, "Until my work on this earth is done, I am immortal. But when my work for Christ is done ... I go to be with Jesus," Beates said in a telephone interview. Several members of the congregation with medical backgrounds tried to revive the minister and paramedics were called, but Arnold appeared to die instantly, Beates said. Arnold had been the senior minister at the church until the late 1990s when he began traveling to Africa and the Middle East to teach pastors. The cause of death was believed to be cardiac arrest. He had bypass surgery five years earlier. Beates also recounted Arnold's death in an e-mail he sent to members of the Central Florida Presbytery. "We were stunned," Beates said. "It was traumatic, but how wonderful it was he died in his own church among the people he loved the most."

"No man who preaches the gospel without zeal is sent of God to preach at all." [Spurgeon]

BROOKFIELD, Wis. (Monday, March 14, 2005 AP)— In a minute, a quiet church service at a suburban Milwaukee hotel turned into a bloodbath. Terry Ratzmann (search), a buttoned-down churchgoer known for sharing his homegrown vegetables with his neighbors, walked into the room and fired 22 rounds from a 9mm handgun. One of Ratzmann's friends begged him to stop, calling him by name and saying "Stop, stop, why?", police Capt. Phil Horter said. Chandra Frazier (search) dove under a chair. The man sitting in it died. "I just remember crawling on the carpet and just praying, screaming out and praying," Frazier told "Good Morning America" on Sunday. Before it was over, seven people, including the church's minister and his teenage son, were killed and four others wounded. Ratzmann, 44, then took his own life, leaving four rounds in his gun, police said. Although he left no suicide note and gave no explanation for the killings, investigators said Ratzmann was on the verge of losing his job and was upset over a sermon he heard two weeks ago. Don Free's niece, Angel Varichak, was one of the wounded. Free said she was expected to

survive. "I wanted to know where God was when this happened," Free told the Chicago Sun-Times. "He was supposed to be everywhere. He could have at least been there."

The Pilot and the Minister. A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans. Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?" The guy replies, "I'm Peter Pilot, retired American Airlines Pilot from Dallas." Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom." the pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff. Next it's the minister's turn. He stands erect and booms out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Saint Mary's in Pasadena for the last 43 years." Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom." "Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff, and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?" "Up here - - we work by results," says Saint Peter, "While you preached - - people slept; while he flew - - people prayed."

At a private school the senior girls were kissing the restroom mirror after putting on lipstick, leaving prints that had to be cleaned every night. Finally, the principal called the girls to the restroom. To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet, and cleaned the mirror with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirrors. The story continues, "There are teachers and there are educators." [cited in World Magazine, November 15, 2003, 15]

This quote is another from Charles Spurgeon, who wrote this while he, the most sought-after preacher in England, was sick and unable to preach:

"It is of the utmost importance to us to be kept humble. Consciousness of self-importance is a hateful delusion, but one into which we fall as naturally as weeds grow on a dunghill. We cannot be used of the Lord but what we also dream of personal greatness, we think ourselves almost indispensable to the church, pillars of the cause, and foundations of the temple of God. We are nothings and nobodies, but that we do not think so is very evident, for as soon as we are put on the shelf we begin anxiously to enquire, "How will the work go on without me?" As well might the fly on the coach wheel enquire, "How will the mails be carried without me?" Far better men have been laid in the grave without having brought the Lord's work to a standstill, and shall we fume and fret because for a little season we must lie upon the bed of languishing? If we were only put on one side when apparently we could be easily spared, there would be no rebuke to our pride, but to weaken our strength in the way at the precise juncture when our presence seems most needed, is the surest way to teach us that we are not necessary to God's work, and that when we are most useful he can easily do without us. If this be the practical lesson, the rough schooling may be easily endured, for assuredly it is beyond all things desirable that self should be kept low and the Lord alone magnified. [Charles Spurgeon, "Laid Aside: Why?" The Sword and Trowel, May 1876.]

This quote is from a biography of G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), perhaps the finest expository preacher of the first half of the 20th century. He began preaching at the age of 13, and was mightily used by God in evangelistic meetings while a young man. But at the

age of 25, when he tried to gain Wesleyan Methodist ordination, he was denied based on his preaching trial. He wired to his father the one word, 'Rejected,' and sat down to write in his diary: "Very dark everything seems. Still, He knoweth best." Quickly came the reply: "Rejected on earth. Accepted in Heaven. Dad." (Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word: Life of G. Campbell Morgan*, (New York: Fleming Revell, 1951) p. 60.

Campbell Morgan also had a very difficult first pastorate and upon leaving wrote in his diary, "Very glad to get away." God knew what He was doing, in Campbell's first rejection as well as in his difficult first pastorate. And He knows what He is doing when your ministry is rejected in some way. Who called you? To whom must you be faithful? "Preach the Word in season and out of season."

An increase in speculative knowledge in divinity is not what is so much needed by our people as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light and have no heart ... Our people do not so much need to have their heads turned as to have their hearts touched, and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching which has the greatest tendency to do this. -- Jonathan Edwards in *Religious Affections*.

Pray that the Lord would make you real. Pray that you would really feel the way one ought to feel about hell, and about heaven and about death and sin and forgiveness and resurrection and eternal life. This is THE GREAT battle: do we really feel and think in accord with the measure of the reality that we are speaking of. It will be very hard not to express authentic emotion if we HAVE authentic emotion. Fight the battle mainly at this point. Lord, sober me. Lord, delight me. Lord, satisfy me. Lord, frighten me. Lord, break me. Lord, make me tender. Lord, give me passion for the perishing. Lord, fill me with exultation over your gospel. This is THE battle. And it has more to do with real tone and gesture and posture than anything else. [John Piper, "Random Thoughts on Posture, Gesture, Action and Tone," unpublished class handout, 3/21/99]

"I never study the Bible to make a sermon, I study the Bible to know Christ. And out of the knowledge of Christ revealed in the Scripture I can always think of something to say." [John MacArthur, Jr.]

I scarcely ever come into this pulpit without bemoaning myself that ever I should be called to a task for which I seem more unfit than any other man that ever was born. Woe is me that I should have to preach a gospel which so overmasters me, and which I feel that I am so unfit to preach! Yet I could not give it up, for it were a far greater woe to me not to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unless the Holy Ghost blesses the Word, we who preach the gospel are of all men most miserable, for we have attempted a task that is impossible, we have entered upon a sphere where nothing but the supernatural will ever avail." [Charles Spurgeon, "Our Omnipotent Leader," a sermon on Matthew 28:18, #2465, preached April 29, 1886. The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Volume 42.]

Charles Spurgeon preached these words when he was 21 years old:

If a man be truly called of God to the ministry, I will defy him to withhold himself from it. A man who has really within him the inspiration of the Holy Ghost calling him to preach, cannot help it, - he must preach. As fire within the bones, so will that influence

be until it blazes forth. Friends may check him, foes criticized him, despisers sneer at him, the man is indomitable; he must preach if he has the call of Heaven. All earth might forsake him; but he would preach to the barren mountain-tops. If he has the call of Heaven, if he had no congregation, he would preach to the rippling waterfalls, and let the brooks hear his voice. He could not be silent. He would become a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." I no more believe it possible to stop ministers than to stop the stars of heaven. I think it no more possible to make a man cease from preaching, if he is really called, than to stay some mighty cataract, by seeking, in an infant's cup, to catch the rushing torrent. The man has been moved of Heaven, who shall stop him? He has been touched of God, who shall impede him? With an eagle's wing, he must fly; who shall chain him to the earth? With a seraph's voice, he must speak; who shall seal his lips? And when a man does speak as the Spirit gives him utterance, he will feel a holy joy akin to that of Heaven; and when it is over, he wishes to be at his work again, he longs to be once more preaching. Is not the Lord's Word like a fire within me? Must I not speak if God has placed it there? ["Preach the Gospel," a sermon on 1 Corinthians 9:16, August 5, 1855. New Park Street Pulpit Volume 1, Sermon 34]

The devil is malicious and mean, more so than any of us can imagine, and he marauds constantly with destructive intent. Though he is, as Luther said, God's devil, and is on a chain (a strong one, though admittedly a long one), he is tireless in opposing God, and sets himself to spoil and thwart all the redemptive work that God ever does in human lives. As one means to this end, he labors to ensure that preachers' messages will be either misstated or misheard, so that they will not have the liberating, invigorating, upbuilding effect that is proper to the preached word. Preaching is thus, as all real preachers soon discover, an endless battle for truth and power, a battle that has to be fought afresh each time by watchfulness and prayer. Preachers know themselves to be warriors in God's front line, drawing enemy fire; the experience is grueling, but it confirms to them the importance of their task as ambassadors for Christ and heralds of God, sowers of good seed, stewards of saving truth, shepherds of God's flock, and fathers guiding their spiritual families. . . . In the manner of front line troops they frequently get scared by the opposition unleashed against them, but they do not panic, and their morale remains high. The challenge of beating back Satan by God's strength, like that of communicating effectively for Christ, is one to which they rise. . . . Preaching God's gospel and God's counsel from the Scriptures was, and is, and always will be, the most honorable and significant activity in the world. [J.I. Packer, "Why Preach?" Introduction to *The Preacher and Preaching*, edited by Samuel T. Logan (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1986), p. 27-29.]

From the diary of David Brainerd:

October 17, 1742: Had a considerable sense of my helplessness and inability; saw that I must be dependent on God for all I want, and especially when I went to the place of public worship. I found I could not speak a word for God without His special help and assistance. I went into the assembly, trembling, as I frequently do, under a sense of my insufficiency to do anything in the cause of God as I ought to do. But it pleased God to afford me much assistance, and there seemed to be a considerable effect on the hearers. In the evening, I felt a disposition to praise God for His goodness to me, that He had enabled me in some measure to be faithful. My soul rejoiced to think that I had thus

performed the work of one day more, and was one day nearer my eternal and, I trust, my heavenly home. Oh, that I might be "faithful to the death, fulfilling as an hireling my day," till the shades of the evening of life shall free my soul from the toils of the day! . . . I scarcely ever preach without being first visited with inward conflicts and sore trials. Blessed be the Lord for these trials and distresses as they are blessed for my humbling.

September 19, 1747 (three weeks before his death at age 29): I viewed the infinite excellency of God, and my soul even broke with longings that God should be glorified. I thought of dignity in heaven, but instantly the thought returned, "I do not go to heaven to get honor, but to give all possible glory and praise." Oh, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also! Oh, I was made for eternity, if God might be glorified! Bodily pains I cared not for; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier. I felt willing to glorify God in that state of bodily distress, as long as He pleased I should continue in it. The grave appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it. But oh, that God might be glorified! this was the burden of all my cry. Oh, I knew, I should be active, as an angel, in heaven; and that I should be stripped of my filthy garments, so that there was no objection. But, oh, to love and praise God more, to please Him forever! This my soul panted after and even now pants for while I write. Oh, that God might be glorified in the whole earth! "Lord, let thy kingdom come." I longed for a spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power. I saw God "had the residue of the Spirit," and my soul longed it should be "poured from on high." I could not but plead with God for my dear congregation that He would preserve it and not suffer His great name to lose its glory in that work, my soul still longing that God might be glorified. [Jonatha

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“All originality and no plagiarism makes for boring preaching.” [C.H. Spurgeon]

Letter from the Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Asia Minor:

Paul the Apostle
c/o Aquila the Tentmaker
Corinth, Greece

Dear Paul:

We recently received a copy of your letter to the Galatians. The committee has directed me to inform you of a number of things which deeply concern us.

First, we find your language to be somewhat intemperate. In your letter, after a brief greeting to the Galatians, you immediately attack your opponents by claiming they "want to pervert the gospel of Christ." You then say that such men should be regarded as "accursed;" and, in another place, you make reference to "false brethren." Wouldn't it be more charitable to give them the benefit of the doubt--at least until the General Assembly has investigated and adjudicated the matter? To make the situation worse, you later say, "I could wish those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!" Is such a statement really fitting for a Christian minister? The remark seems quite harsh and unloving.

Paul, we really feel the need to caution you about the tone of your epistles. You come across in an abrasive manner to many people. In some of your letters you've even mentioned names; and this practice has, no doubt, upset the friends of Hymenaeus, Alexander, and others. After all, many persons were first introduced to the Christian faith under the ministries of these men. Although some of our missionaries have manifested regrettable shortcomings, nevertheless, it can only stir up bad feelings when you speak of these men in a derogatory manner.

In other words, Paul, I believe you should strive for a more moderate posture in your ministry. Shouldn't you try to win those who are in error by displaying a sweeter spirit? By now, you've probably alienated the Judaizers to the point that they will no longer listen to you.

By your outspokenness, you have also diminished your opportunities for future influences throughout the church as a whole. Rather, if you had worked more quietly, you might have been asked to serve on a . . . committee appointed to study the issue. You could then have contributed your insights by helping to draft a good committee paper on the theological position of the Judaizers, without having to drag personalities into the dispute.

Besides, Paul, we need to maintain unity among those who profess a belief in Christ. The Judaizers at least stand with us as we confront the surrounding paganism and humanism which prevails within the culture of the contemporary Roman Empire. The Judaizers are our allies in our struggles against abortion, homosexuality, government tyranny, etc. We cannot afford to allow differences over doctrinal minutiae to obscure this important fact.

I also must mention that questions have been raised about the content of your letter, as well as your style. The committee questions the propriety of the doctrinaire structure of your letter. Is it wise to plague young Christians, like the Galatians, with such heavy theological issues? For example, in a couple of places, you allude to the doctrine of election. You also enter into a lengthy discussion of the law. Perhaps you could have proved your case in some other ways, without mentioning these complex and controverted points of Christianity. Your letter is so doctrinaire, it will probably serve only to polarize the differing factions within the churches. Again, we need to stress unity, instead of broaching issues which will accent divisions among us.

In one place you wrote, "Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing." Paul, you have a tendency to describe things strictly in black and white terms, as if there are no gray areas. You need to temper your expressions, lest you become too exclusive. Otherwise your outlook will drive away many people, and make visitors feel unwelcome. Church growth is not promoted by taking such a hard line and remaining inflexible.

Remember, Paul, there is no such thing as a perfect church. We have to tolerate many imperfections in the church, since we cannot expect to have everything at once. If you will simply think back over your own experience, you will recall how you formerly harassed the church in your times of ignorance. By reflecting on your own past, you might acquire a more sympathetic attitude toward the Judaizers. Be patient, and give them some time to come around to a better understanding. In the meantime, rejoice that we all share a common profession of faith in Christ, since we all have been baptized in his name.

Sincerely,
{signed}
Charles Phinney

Coordinator, Committee on Missions
[Reprinted by permission from the Trinity Review, July/August, 1988, MD. Originally published in "Journey" magazine, Lynchburg, VA]

"Many of you would preach ten times better than I do if you could get your tongues loosened to say what you feel. What red-hot sermons you would preach, and how earnest you would be in their delivery! The sermon that you could not preach will be set down to your account, while perhaps that discourse of mine will be a failure because I may not have preached it as I should have done, with pure motives and a zealous spirit. God knows what you would do if you could, and He judges, not so much according to what you do, as

according to your will to do it." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 90-91]

"Among the things that hinder spiritual results, fine preaching must have place among the first. Fine preaching is that kind of preaching where the force of the preacher is expended to make the sermon great in thought, tasteful as a work of art, perfect as a scholarly production, complete in rhetorical finish, and fine in its pleasing and popular force. In true preaching, the sermon proceeds out of the man. It is part of him, flowing out of his life. Fine preaching separates between the man and the sermon. Such sermons will make an impression, but it is not the impression that the Holy Ghost makes. Influence it may have, but the influence is not distinctly spiritual, if spiritual at all. These sermons do not reach the conscience, are not even aimed at it." [E.M. Bounds, cited in Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, 145-46]

Some may preach the gospel better than I can, but they cannot preach a better gospel.

After the church service, a little boy told the pastor, "When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money." "Well, thank you," the pastor replied, "but why?" "Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

Surprisingly, Maclaren was haunted all his life by a sense of failure. Often he suffered "stage fright" before a service, but in the pulpit he was perfectly controlled. He sometimes spoke of each Sunday's demands as a "woe," and he was certain that his sermon was not good enough and that the meeting would, be a failure. . . . After the meeting he would lament that he had done poorly. Sometimes he became depressed, but then he would say, 'Well, I can't help it, I did my best, and there I leave it.'" Maclaren was a perfectionist and an idealist. Hence he was never satisfied with his own work." [Warren Wiersbe, Walking with the Giants, 38]

"Dr. John Henry Jowett said, 'Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing.' He was right. A pastor friend and I once heard a young man preach an eloquent sermon, but it lacked something. 'There was something missing,' I said to my friend; and he replied, 'Yes, and it won't be there until his heart is broken. After he has suffered awhile, he will have a message worth listening to.'" [Warren Wiersbe, Be Encouraged, 51]

As Martin Luther exhorted his friend Philip Melancthon when he was setting out on his journey as a preacher: "Always preach in such a way that if the people listening do not come to hate their sin, they will instead hate you."

"[John Knox] had been teaching in St. Andrews. His teaching was supposed to be private but many came to it, for he was obviously a man with a message. So the people urged him "that he would take the preaching place upon him. But he utterly refused, alleging that he would not run where God had not called him. . . . Whereupon they privily among themselves advising, having with them in council Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, they concluded that they would give a charge to the said John, and that publically by the mouth of their preacher."

So Sunday came and Knox was in Church and John Rough was preaching. "The said John Rough, preacher, directed his words to the said John Knox, saying: 'brother, ye shall not be offended, albeit that I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present, which is this: In the name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of these that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy vocation, but . . . that you take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure, and desire that he shall multiply his graces with you.' And in the end he said to those that were present: 'Was not this your charge to me? And do ye not approve this vocation?' They answered: 'It was, and we approve it.' Whereat the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behavior, from that day till the day that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any sign of mirth in him, neither yet had he pleasure to accompany any man, many days together."

John Knox was chosen; he did not want to answer the call; but he had to, for the choice had been made by God. Years afterwards the Regent Morton uttered his famous epitaph by Knox's grave side: 'In respect that he bore God's message, to whom he must make account of the same, he, albeit he was weak and an unworthy creature, and a fearful man, feared not the faces of men.' The consciousness of being chosen gave him courage." [William Barclay, DSB: 1 Timothy, 49-50]

"I would argue that the reason so many unbelievers can sit comfortably in our churches and even call themselves born-again Christians is that we give them very little to deny. The offensive message of the cross has been replaced with 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,' with the cross tucked somewhere underneath it." [Michael Horton in Christ The Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation, 54-55.]

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan had four sons, all of whom became preachers. Somebody asked one of Morgan's grandsons, "When you grow up, are you going to be a preacher like your father and your grandfather?" "No," the boy replied. "I'm going to work for a living."

Phillips Brooks once defined preaching as "the communication of divine truth through human personality."

Harmony requires that the voice of one doctrine shall not drown the rest, and it also demands that the gentler notes shall not be omitted because of the greater volume of other sounds. Every note appointed by the great minstrel must be sounded; each note having its own proportionate power and emphasis . . . all revealed truth in harmonious proportion must be your theme. [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 77-78]

It was actually believed that a man's responsibility to his Rabbi superseded his responsibility to his own parents--his parents only brought him into this world, but his Rabbi would bring him into the world to come. It was believed that if a man's Rabbi and his teacher were both taken hostage the man was to ransom his Rabbi before his own parents.

When Cicero addressed the Senate, everyone said "how beautifully he speaks!!" but remained seated. When Demosthenes addressed his troops, they all stood and said, "Let us march!" [cited in Peter Kreeft, Ecumenical Jihad, 45]

John Knox who wept so uncontrollably his first time in the pulpit they had to remove him.

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, understood the seriousness of preaching. When he was called by the church to preach, his biographer records that "he burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day till the day the he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart." Years afterward, the Regent Morton uttered his famous epitaph by Knox's grave side: "In respect that he bore God's message, to whom he must make account for the same, he (albeit he was weak and an unworthy creature, and a fearful man) feared not the faces of men." [cited in Barclay, The Pastoral Epistles, 50]

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the great 20th c. preacher of England, wrote that teaching the Word is such an awesome task that a godly man "shrinks from it. Nothing but the overwhelming sense of being called, and of compulsion, should ever lead anyone to preach." [Preachers and Preaching, 107]

"There's no special honor in preaching, there is only special pain. The pulpit calls those anointed to it like the sea calls its sailors. And like the sea it batters and bruises and does not rest. To preach, to really preach, is to die naked a little at a time and to know each time you do it you must do it again." [Bruce Thielman]

How utterly dependent we are on the Holy Spirit in the work of preaching! All genuine preaching is rooted in a feeling of desperation. You wake up on Sunday morning and you can smell the smoke of hell on one side and feel the crisp breezes of heaven on the other. You go to your study and look down at your pitiful manuscript, and you kneel down and cry, "God, this is so weak! Who do I think I am? What audacity to think that in three hours my words will be the odor of death to death and the fragrance of life to life (2 Cor 2:16). My God, who is sufficient for these things?" . . . The dangers of self-reliance and self-exaltation in the ministry of preaching are so insidious that God will strike us if he must in order to break us of our self-assurance and the casual use of our professional techniques. [John Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching, Baker, 1990, p. 37-38]

One German expositor, after lecturing on the book of Isaiah for 20 years, had finally reached the middle of the 2nd chapter. Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones was in the book of Romans for 12 years and never finished chapter 14. (cited by J. MacArthur, GC 54-33)

Puritan giant William Gouge (1575-1653) preached over a thousand sermons on the book of Hebrews over a thirty year period at Blackfriars, and died before he finished. His son took up where he left off and finished the book for him!

Some of you may be familiar with the name "Thomas Brooks." Brooks was a minister in England who died September 27, 1680. He had a tremendous impact & his works are still in print today, over 300 yrs. later. He had a profound love for his church, as any good pastor

does, & before he died he left his congregation some advice, which he called their "legacy." Here are some of the things he wrote:

- * Secure your interest in Christ.
- * Make Christ and Scripture the only foundation for your souls.
- * Take more pains to keep yourselves from sin than from suffering. (Acts 2:40, Revelation 3:4)
- * Be always doing or receiving good. This will make your lives comfortable, and your deaths happy, and your account glorious in the great day of the Lord.
- * Set the highest examples of grace and godliness before you for imitation. Next to that of Christ, the pattern of the choicest saints. For faith, Abraham; for courage, Joshua; for uprightness, Job; for meekness, Moses.
- * Hold fast your integrity. Let all go rather than let that go. (Job 27:5,6)
- * Let not a day pass without calling the whole man to an exact account. "Hands What have you done for God today?" "Tongue, What have you spoken," etc.
- * Labor for a healing spirit. Away with all discriminating names that may hinder the applying of balm to heal our wounds. Discord and division become no Christian.
- * Be most in the spiritual exercises of religion, meditation, self-examination. Bodily exercise without these will profit nothing.
- * Look upon the things of this world as you will when you come to die.
- * Always make the Scripture, and not your carnal reason, or your bare opinion (or that of others) the rule by which to judge of your spiritual condition.
- * Walk by no rule but such as you dare die by, and stand by in the day of Jesus Christ. Walk not with the multitude.
- * Lastly, Sit down and rejoice with fear. Rejoice in what God hath done for your souls by the everlasting gospel. Weep that you have done no more to improve it, and that you have so neglected the opportunities of enriching your souls. [cited from Papercut Press PO Box 594, Flourtown PA 19031 <http://www.papercutpress.com>]

We can go to the 4th c. church & John Chrysostom. He was considered:

"...the greatest pulpit orator of the Greek church [who had no] superior or equal among the Latin Fathers. There were Four chief characteristics of his preaching. First, he was biblical. Not only did he preach systematically through several books, but his sermons are full of biblical quotations and allusions. Secondly, his interpretation of the Scriptures was simple and straightforward. He followed the Antiochene school of 'literal' exegesis, in contrast to fanciful Alexandrian allegorizations. Thirdly, his moral applications were down to earth. Reading his sermons today, one can imagine without difficulty the pomp of the imperial court, the luxuries of the aristocracy, the wild races of the hippodrome, in fact the whole life of the oriental city at the end of the fourth century. Fourthly, he was fearless in his condemnations. In fact, 'he was a martyr of the pulpit, for it was chiefly his faithful preaching that caused his exile'" [adapted from a quote by John Stott, Between Two Worlds, 21]

The 19th c. saw great preachers such as Joseph Parker & Alexander Maclaren. Joseph Parker, pastored The City Temple of London for 33 yrs & is remembered as a great man of God. Beginning in 1869, he preached every week to about 3,000 people, twice on Sunday.

In those 33 years he went through the entire Bible 7 times. The result: A set of books called The People's Bible, 25 vol. of his expositions.

"A man does not qualify to be a preacher of the Word by making weekly sallies into the good book to discover some peg on which to hang some scattered observations" [John Huxtable, cited in Stott, *ibid*, 178]

The English Puritan John Flavel:

"It is not with us, as with other labourers: they find their work as they leave it [in other words- if you're job is building houses, you start a house one day, you go home & you return to it in the morning pretty much as you left it] Flavel says, that's not true of us [preachers]. Sin and Satan unravel almost all we do, the impressions we make on our people's souls in one sermon vanish before the next." [cited in Thomas, A Puritan Golden Treasury, 193]

A leader in Robert Murray M'Cheyne's (1813-1843) church in Scotland noticed the awe on the face of a visitor during one of M'Cheyne's sermons. Afterward he invited the visitor into M'Cheyne's study. The visitor asked him, "Tell me, having sat under this godly man's ministry, what is the secret of his success." The old sexton told the visitor to sit at M'Cheyne's desk. Then he asked the man to put his hands on the desk. Then to put his face in his hands and weep. Next the two men walked into the church sanctuary and ascended to the pulpit. "Lean over the pulpit," the worker said. "Now stretch out your hands and weep." [Cited in *Whatever Hammed to the Reformation*, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds.]

A great preacher is one who is able to look at the horizon rather than at an enclosed field, or a local landscape. He [has] a marvelous way of connecting every subject with eternity past and with eternity to come. . . . It is as though you were looking at a bit of carved wood in a Swiss village window, and you lifted your eyes and saw the forest where the wood was nourished, and, higher still, the everlasting snows! Yes, that was Binney's way, Dale's way, the way of Bushnell, and Newman, and Spurgeon—they were always willing to stop at the village window, but they always linked the streets with the heights, and sent your souls a-roaming over the eternal hills of God. [John Henry Jowett, *The Preacher: His Life and Work* (New York: Harper, 1912), 95]

Accountability

A doctor's mistake is buried. A lawyer's mistake is imprisoned. An accountant's mistake is written off. A dentist's mistake is pulled. A plumber's mistake is stopped. An electrician's mistake is shocked. A printer's mistake is reprinted. But a teacher's mistake is never erased." [cited in 7 Laws of the Teacher, 2]

"A teacher affects eternity; no one can tell where his influence stops." [Henry Brooks Adams, cited in *Walk Through the Bible* 7 Laws of the Teacher, 2]

"There's a high price tag to good teaching, and it's not available in a bargain basement sale. You've got to be willing to pour your life out like a drink offering." [Howard Hendricks, cited in *Walk Through the Bible* 7 Laws of the Teacher, 56]

"A great teacher has always been measured by the number of students who surpass him."

Let us see to it that there is nothing else about our person or character which may bring the gospel into discredit. We have heard of a wonderful preacher, of whom they said that he preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit, they thought he ought never to come out of it; but when he was out of the pulpit, they changed their minds, and sorrowfully concluded that he ought never to go into it again. Every man should be clean—it is a natural, sanitary duty; but there is a special precept which says, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord", and this relates to moral and spiritual character. An unholy minister is unclean with a vengeance. Prominent persons are looked at through microscopes. The more light you have, the more will your faults be shown up and observed. [Charles Spurgeon, *Sermons in Candles*, Lecture 2. Available on the web at <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/candles2.htm>]

Diligent Study

"If you want to sow dead leaves, use a rake; if you want gold be prepared to use a shovel."

John a Mitchell, one of the cofounders of Multnomah School of the Bible, went to hear G. Campbell Morgan preach. Young Mitchell was very impressed at how well the older preacher knew the text. He went up afterward to ask Morgan how he had gained his knowledge of Scripture. "If I told you, you wouldn't do it," the older man said. "Just try me," Mitchell insisted. "Before I study a book, I read it fifty times," the veteran explained. [cited in *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching* by Paul D. Wegner, 90]

"Some of our people think that we have little or nothing to do but to stand in the pulpit, and pour out a flood of words two or three times a week; but they ought to know that, if we did not spend much time in diligent study, they would get poverty-stricken sermons. I have heard of a brother who trusts in the Lord, and does not study; but I have also heard that his people do not trust in him; in fact, I am informed that they wish him to go elsewhere with his inspired discourses, for they say that, when he did study, his talk was poor enough, but now that he gives them that which comes first to his lips, it is altogether unbearable. If any man will preach as he should preach, his work will take more out of him than any other labour under heaven. If you and I attend to our work and calling, even among a few people, it will certainly produce a friction of soul and a wear of heart which will tell upon the strongest. I speak as one who knows by experience what it is to be utterly exhausted in the Master's service. No matter how willing we may be in spirit, the flesh is weak; and He who made a tender apology for His sleeping servants in the garden knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. We need that the Master should say to us, every now and then, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while;" and He does say so. [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, Chapter 5, "A New Departure".]

Alexander Maclaren pastored Union Baptist Chapel in Manchester, England for 45 years! He was a gifted expositor who was known to spend 60 hours in the preparation of a single

message. One listener said of him, "This man is a prophet and you must either listen and swallow or flee." The result of his diligent study & ministry of the Word of God is the monumental work Expositions of Holy Scripture, which encompasses an encyclopedic 32 Volumes of biblical exposition.

The Reformers of the 15th & 16th c. were also deeply committed to the exposition of Scripture. Martin Luther, for example, often preached 4 times on Sundays. Every 3 months he would teach a two-week series on doctrine, using a catechism. We today have over 2000 of his sermons in written form. John Calvin ministered in Geneva, Switzerland from 1541 until his death in 1564. He preached twice on Sunday, and every other week he preached each week night. His preaching on Sunday covered the NT; his weekday sermons covered the TO. Those sermons were recorded as he preached them by stenographers & those transcriptions formed the basis of his extensive commentaries on the Old & New Testaments. For example, he produced commentaries on: Gen., Deut., Judg., Job, Psalms, 1&2 Sam., 1 Kings, & all the Major & Minor prophets. He also composed a harmony of the gospels, commentaries on Acts, 1&2 Cor., Gal, Eph., 1&2 Thess., & the pastoral epistles.

"I cannot help wondering if this may not be why there are so few preachers whom God is using today. There are plenty of popular preachers, but not many powerful ones, who preach in the power of the Spirit. Is it because the cost of such preaching is too great? It seems that the only preaching God honours, through which His wisdom and power are expressed, is the preaching of a man who is willing in himself to be both a weakling and a fool. God not only chooses weak and foolish people to save, but weak and foolish preachers through whom to save them, or at least preachers who are content to be weak and seem foolish in the eyes of the world. We are not always willing to pay this price. We are constantly tempted to covet a reputation as men of learning or men of influence; to seek honour in academic circles and compromise our old-fashioned message in order to do so; and to cultivate personal charm or forcefulness so as to sway the people committed to our care." [John Stott, The Preacher's Portrait, 122]

Warren Wiersbe, in his book "Walking with the Giants," notes that a common thread among the great preachers/pastors of the past was: ...constant dissatisfaction with their own preaching. "I am still learning how to preach!" said Charles H. Spurgeon at the height of his ministry. Alexander Maclaren often came away from hearing another man preach, saying to himself, "I will never preach again!" Alexander Whyte toiled over his manuscripts, always aiming for perfection and always frustrated because it eluded him. [Walking with the Giants, 223]

Importance of

Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the word of God. . . . Let them constrain all the power, glory, and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose thunder and lightning, if necessary, but let them do all according to the word of God. [From Calvin's sermon number

61 on Deuteronomy. Cited in John Piper, John Calvin and His Passion for the Majesty of God]

[The] Word of God is the means by which God accomplishes his saving work in his people, and this is a work that no evangelist and no preacher can do. This is why the dearth of serious, sustained biblical preaching in the Church today is a serious matter. When the Church loses the Word of God it loses the very means by which God does his work. In its absence, therefore, a script is being written, however unwittingly, for the Church's undoing, not in one cataclysmic moment, but in a slow, inexorable slide made up of piece by tiny piece of daily dereliction. [David Wells, Above All Earthly Pow'rs (Eerdmans, 2005), p. 9]

I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And then, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip and my Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all. [Martin Luther, as quoted in Portrait of Faithful Saints by Herman Hanko (Reformed Free Publishing Association, no date), <http://www.prca.org/books/portraits/>]

What is the chief end of preaching? . . . To give men and women a sense of God and His presence. . . . I can forgive a man for a bad sermon, I can forgive the preacher almost anything if he gives me a sense of God, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me the sense that, though he is inadequate himself, he is handling something which is very great and very glorious, if he gives me some dim glimpse of the majesty and the glory of God, the love of Christ my Saviour, and the magnificence of the Gospel. If he does that I am his debtor, and I am profoundly grateful to him. Preaching is the most amazing, and the most thrilling activity that one can ever be engaged in, because of all that it holds out for all of us in the present, and because of the glorious endless possibilities in an eternal future. . . . There was a very great preacher in the U.S.A. just over a hundred years ago, James Henry Thornwell. . . . Consider what Thornwell himself said about preaching, and about himself as a preacher:

It is a great matter to understand what it is to be a preacher, and how preaching should be done. Effective sermons are the offspring of study, of discipline of prayer, and especially of the unction of the Holy Ghost. . . . They should be seen to come from the heart, and from the heart as filled with the love of Christ and the love of souls. Depend upon it that there is but little preaching in the world, and it is a mystery of grace and of divine power that God's cause is not ruined in the world when we consider the qualifications of many of its professed ministers to preach it. My own performances in this way fill me with disgust. I have never made, much less preached, a sermon in my life, and I am beginning to despair of ever being able to do it. . . . There is nothing to add to that. Any man who has had some glimpse of what it is to preach will inevitably feel that he has never preached. But he will go on trying, hoping that by the grace of God one day he may truly preach. [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers (Zondervan, 1971), p. 97-99.]

“[The Puritans believed in] the supreme importance of preaching. To the Puritans, the sermon was the liturgical climax of public worship. Nothing, they said, honours God more than the faithful declaration and obedient hearing of his truth. Preaching, under any

circumstances, is an act of worship, and must be performed as such. Moreover, preaching is the prime means of grace to the church. . . .

Preaching is thus a very solemn and momentous enterprise. Both minister and congregation should recognize that their Sunday sermons are the most important and significant events of the week. Whatever else is neglected, sermons must not be.

Therefore, the minister who knows his priorities will plan his week round the allotted time for sermon preparation. And he will take care not to skimp his preparation. One meets on occasion, among students who are starting to preach, the idea that, after a time, if they walk faithfully with God, sermons will begin to come naturally, and the need for special preparation will grow less and less. Preachers in the Puritan tradition have not thought so, nor found it so. . . . Baxter states the principle positively:

If we give to reason, memory, study, books, methods, forms, etc., but their proper place, in subordination to Christ and to his Spirit, they are so far from being quenchers of the Spirit, that they are necessary in their places, and are such means as we must use, if ever we will expect the Spirit's help. . . .

Of Simeon's sermons, Bishop Daniel Wilson . . . wrote: 'Few cost him less than twelve hours of study - many twice that time: and some several days.' . . . To prepare good sermons may take a long time - but who are we, whom God has set apart for the ministry, to begrudge time for this purpose? We shall never perform a more important task than preaching. If we are not willing to give time to sermon preparation, we are not fit to preach, and have no business in the ministry at all. [J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan View of the Christian Life* (Crossway, 1990), p. 281-82]

Read a wonderful quote from John Stott in a recent interview on the importance of preaching and learning:

"I think we need to encourage each other in the proper use of the mind. Preachers are still the key people; the church is always a reflection of the preaching it receives. It is not an exaggeration to say that the low standards of Christian living throughout the world are due more than anything else to the low standards of Christian preaching and teaching. If we can recover true expository preaching as being not only exegesis but an exposition and application of the Word of God, then congregations will learn it from us preachers and go and do the same thing themselves. We need to help our congregations to grasp and use the hermeneutical principles that we are using ourselves. We need to be so careful in the development of our evangelical hermeneutic that the congregation says, 'Yes, I see it. That is what the text means, and it couldn't mean anything else.' The worst kind of preaching allows people to say, 'Well, I'm sorry, I don't agree with you. I think you're twisting the Scripture.'" [John Stott, cited in an interview in *Christianity Today*, January 8, 1996]

Prayer and

"It is very certain that we cannot attain to the understanding of the Scripture either by study or by the intellect. Your first duty is to begin by prayer. . . . There is no other interpreter of

the Word of God than the Author of this Word . . . Hope for nothing from your own labors, from your own understanding: trust solely in God and in the influence of his spirit. Believe this on the word of a man who has had experience." [Martin Luther, cited in Merle D'Aubigne, p. 106]

The heart makes the preacher. Men of great hearts are great preachers. . . . We have emphasized sermon-preparation until we have lost sight of the important thing to be prepared -- the heart. A prepared heart is much better than a prepared sermon. A prepared heart will make a prepared sermon. Volumes have been written laying down the mechanics and taste of sermon-making, until we have become possessed with the idea that this scaffolding is the building. The young preacher has been taught to lay out all his strength on the form, taste, and beauty of his sermon as a mechanical and intellectual product. We have thereby cultivated a vicious taste among the people and raised the clamor for talent instead of grace, eloquence instead of piety, rhetoric instead of revelation, reputation and brilliancy instead of holiness. By it we have lost the true idea of preaching, lost preaching power, lost pungent conviction for sin, lost the rich experience and elevated Christian character, lost the authority over consciences and lives which always results from genuine preaching.

It would not do to say that preachers study too much. Some of them do not study at all; others do not study enough. Numbers do not study the right way to show themselves workmen approved of God. But our great lack is not in head culture, but in heart culture; not lack of knowledge but lack of holiness is our sad and telling defect -- not that we know too much, but that we do not meditate on God and his word and watch and fast and pray enough. The heart is the great hindrance to our preaching. . . .

Can ambition, that lusts after praise and place, preach the gospel of Him who made himself of no reputation and took on Him the form of a servant? Can the proud, the vain, the egotistical preach the gospel of him who was meek and lowly? . . . God's revelation does not need the light of human genius, the polish and strength of human culture, the brilliancy of human thought, the force of human brains to adorn or enforce it; but it does demand the simplicity, the docility, humility, and faith of a child's heart. . . . Our great need is heart-preparation. Luther held it as an axiom: "He who has prayed well has studied well." We do not say that men are not to think and use their intellects; but he will use his intellect best who cultivates his heart most. [E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*. From Chapter 12, "Heart Preparation Necessary."]

Spurgeon, citing a story by another pastor on prayer, writes: "I was reading yesterday a book by Father Faber, late of the Oratory, at Brompton, a marvelous compound of truth and error. In it he relates a legend to this effect: 'A certain preacher, whose sermons converted men by scores, received a revelation from heaven that not one of the conversions was owing to his talents or eloquence, but all to the prayers of an illiterate lay-brother, who sat on the pulpit steps, pleading all the time for the success of the sermon.'" Spurgeon concludes, "It may, in the all-revealing day, be so with us. We may discover, after having labored long and wearily in preaching, that all the honor belongs to another builder, whose prayers were gold, silver, and precious stones, while our sermonizings begin apart from prayer, were but hay and stubble. [*Lectures to my Students*, 45-46]

"The minister who does not earnestly pray over his work must surely be a vain and conceited man. He acts as if he thought himself sufficient of himself, and therefore, needed not to appeal to God. Yet what a baseless pride to conceive that our preaching can ever be in itself so powerful that it can turn men from their sins, and bring them to God without the working of the Holy Ghost." [Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 47]

Pride

"Take care, brethren; for if we think we can do anything of ourselves, all we shall get from God will be the opportunity to try. He will thus prove us, and let us see our inability. A certain alchemist, who waited upon Pope Leo X, declared that he had discovered how to transmute the baser metals into gold. He expected to receive a sum of money for his discovery, but Leo was no such simpleton; he merely gave him a huge purse in which to keep the gold which he would make. There was wisdom as well as sarcasm in the present. That is precisely what God does with proud men; He lets them have the opportunity to do what they boasted of being able to do. I never heard that so much as a solitary gold piece was dropped into Leo's purse, and I am sure you will never be spiritually rich by what you can do in your own strength. Be stripped, brother, and then God may be pleased to clothe you with honor, but not till then." [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, Chapter 6, "Light, Fire, Faith, Life, Love."]

Sir Thomas Browne wrote: "Scholars are men of peace, they bear no arms, but their tongues are sharper than Actius' razor; their pens carry farther, and give a louder report than thunder: I had rather stand the shock of a basilisco that the fury of a merciless pen." [cited in Barclay, *James*, 92]

Shallowness

"Too few preachers have so married content and passion that they have taught their people to think biblically and love and honor God passionately. The books on many church bookstalls are a disgrace - thousands of pages of sentimental twaddle laced with the occasional biblical gem. There is very little effort to build up a biblical mind in our churches. . . . [Jesus commands us] to love the Lord your God "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). . . . The "heart" in biblical thought is not so much the seat of the emotions as the seat of thought and of the whole person. . . . [Thus,] both "loving God with your heart" and "loving God with your mind" are bound up with thinking the right things about God. . . . Whatever the full sweep of this injunction, it cannot mean less than a God-inspired delight in all of God's thoughts insofar as he has disclosed them, and a God-given determination to dethrone all competing systems of thought and bring them into captivity to the gospel. . . . And that requires constant, thoughtful, Bible reading, theological reflection, interaction with Christian thinkers from the past, humble assessment of the currents of our age and courageous determination not to become their slave. . . . [D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, (Zondervan, 1996), p. 484, 489.]

One of the great perils that face preachers . . . is the constant danger of lapsing into a purely cerebral form of proclamation, which falls exclusively upon the intellect. Men become obsessed with doctrine and end up as brain-oriented preachers. There is consequently a

fearful impoverishment in their hearers emotionally, devotionally, and practically. Such pastors are men of books and not men of people; they know the doctrines, but they know nothing of the emotional side of religion. They set little store upon experience or upon constant fellowship and interaction with almighty God. It is one thing to explain the truth of Christianity to men and women; it is another thing to feel the overwhelming power of the sheer loveliness and enthrallment of Jesus Christ and communicate that dynamically to the whole person who listens so that there is a change of such dimensions that he loves Him with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. [Geoffrey Thomas (pastor of Alfred Place Baptist Church in Aberystwyth, Wales), "Powerful Preaching", chapter 14 in *The Preacher and Preaching*, edited by Samuel T. Logan (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), p. 369.

"Preaching in our day is often intriguing, but seldom commanding; often entertaining, but seldom convicting; often popular, but seldom powerful; often interesting, but less often transforming." [MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 170]

D.A. Carson writes:

It may be entirely appropriate to engage in narrative preaching, . . . and to tell moving and thought-provoking stories; but in the postmodern environment, such approaches must be anchored in objective, propositional, confessional truth -- or the entire heritage of biblical Christianity will be sold for a mess of subjectivist pottage. I am not for a moment denying that there is an affective element to gospel preaching. . . . Far from it. . . . But the affective element must spring from the play of truth on personality. . . . American evangelicalism is in desperate need of intellectual and theological input. We have noted that not a little evangelical television is almost empty of content. It is mawkishly sentimental, naively optimistic, frighteningly ignorant, openly manipulative. Let me again insist; I am not arguing for dry intellectualism, for abstract disputation. But entertainment is not enough; emotional appeals based on tear-jerking stories do not change human behavior; subjective experiences cannot substitute for divine revelation. . . . The mentality that thinks in terms of marketing Jesus inevitably moves toward progressive distortion of him; the pursuit of the next emotional round of experience easily degenerates into an intoxicating substitute for the spirituality of the Word. There is non-negotiable, biblical, intellectual content to be proclaimed. By all means insist that this content be heralded with conviction and compassion; by all means seek the unction of the Spirit; by all means try to think through how to cast this content in ways that engage the modern secularist. But when all the footnotes are in place, my point remains the same: the historic gospel is unavoidably cast as intellectual content that must be taught and proclaimed. [D.A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, Chapter 12 "On Heralding the Gospel in a Pluralistic Culture," (Zondervan, 1996), p. 507-8]

"It was observed by a very excellent critic not long ago that if you were to hear thirteen lectures on astronomy or geology, you might get a pretty good idea about the science and the theoretical position of the person who gave the lectures; however, if you were to hear thirteen hundred sermons from some ministers, you would not know anything at all about what they were preaching or what their doctrinal sentiments were. It ought not to be so." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 58]

"Certain earnest preachers are incessantly exciting the people but seldom, if ever, instructing them. They carry much fire and very little light. . . . A feather floats on the wind, but it has no inherent power to move. Consequently, when the gale is over, it falls to the ground. Such is the religion of excitement. In contrast the eagle has life within itself, and its wings bear it aloft and onward whether the breeze favors it or not. Such is religion when sustained by a conviction of the truth." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 32-33]

"When the vitality of the Word of God is missing from the pulpit, the vacuum has always been filled sometimes by eloquence, by joke-telling, by man's philosophies, or by anecdotes. Almost anything has been pulled in to fill the void, but the godly have shunned such froth. In many ways, the setting that Savonarola spoke to was like ours. The Florence of Renaissance Italy was like the capital of every diversion the world offered... But just because people have itching ears does not mean we should obligate ourselves to scratch them....

Early in his career, a young friend advised him [Savonarola] that his manner of preaching did not compare favorably to that of a great (and now forgotten) orator of his day. To which Savonarola made reply, almost in anger, 'These verbal elegancies and ornaments will have to give way to sound doctrine simply preached.'

Savonarola did not aim to impress the people with his preaching, but with the truth. In fact, his early attempts at preaching were flat and nondescript, but in time, by means of 'sound doctrine simply preached,' that delivery became so eloquent it both stung and stunned the world." [John A. Bjorlie, Uplook Magazine, Nov. 1992, p. 23]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, reflecting on the failure of many pastors to follow Paul's mandate to Timothy to "preach the word," stated that "some brethren have done with their text as soon as they have read it!" [Lectures to my Students, 75]

Unless we are instructive preachers, and really feed the people, we may be great quoters of elegant poetry, and mighty retailers of second-hand windbags, but we shall be like Nero of old, fiddling while Rome was burning, and sending vessels to Alexandria to fetch sand for the arena while the populace starved for want of corn. [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 74]

Rousing appeals to the affections are excellent, but if they are not backed up by instruction they are a mere flash in the pan, powder consumed and no shot sent home. Rest assured that the most fervid revivalism will wear itself out in mere smoke, if it be not maintained by the fuel of teaching. [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 73]

A major Christian magazine once published an article by a well-known charismatic speaker. He mused for a full page about the futility of both preaching and listening to sermons that go beyond mere entertainment. His conclusion? "People don't remember what you say anyway, so most preaching is a waste of time." "I'm going to try to do better next year," he writes; "that means wasting less time listening to long sermons and spending much more time preparing short ones. People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon." [cited in Masterpiece, Spring 1989 pp. 2-3]

Spurgeon on shallow preachers:

Certain good men appeal to me who are distinguished by enormous vehemence and zeal, and a conspicuous absence of brains; brethren who would talk for ever and ever upon nothing--who would stamp and thump the Bible, and get nothing out of it all; earnest, awfully earnest, mountains in labor of the most painful kind; but nothing comes of it all, not even the *ridiculous mus*. There are zealots abroad who are not capable of conceiving or uttering 5 consecutive thoughts, whose capacity is most narrow and their conceit most broad, and these can hammer, and bawl, and rave, and tear, and rage, but the noise all arises from the hollowness of the drum. [Lectures to My Students, 34]

The Jell-O Fruit Salad Sermon - Shaking, prancing, quivering preaching, lots of action but low calorie teaching

The Poached Egg Sermon - Soft, safe, sentimental food, soothes every mind, calms every mood

The Leftover Turkey Sermon - Meat they suspect you've served them before but disguised just enough for one Sunday more.

The Cotton Candy Sermon - Very sweet and full of air, when bitten into nothing there.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, the noted Baptist liberal, echoed the sentiments of many church pragmatists today when he wrote in a 1928 article that expository preaching is inherently irrelevant.

"Within a paragraph or two after a sermon has started, wide areas of any congregation ought to begin recognizing that the preacher is tackling something of vital concern to them. . . . And if any preacher is not doing this, even though he have at his disposal both erudition and oratory, he is not functioning at all.

Many preachers, for example, indulge habitually in what they call expository sermons. They take a passage from Scripture and, proceeding on the assumption that the people attending church that morning are deeply concerned about what the passage means, they spend their half hour or more on historical exposition of the verse or chapter, ending with some appended practical application to the auditors. Could any procedure be more surely predestined to dullness and futility? Who seriously supposes that, as a matter of fact, one in a hundred of the congregation cares, to start with, what Moses, Isaiah, Paul, or John meant in those special verses, or came to church deeply concerned about it? Nobody who talks to the public so assumes that the vital interests of the people are located in the meaning of words spoken two thousand years ago. . . .

Preachers who pick out texts from the Bible and then proceed to give their historic settings, their logical meaning in the context, their place in the theology of the writer, with a few practical reflections appended, are grossly misusing the Bible."

Fosdick, went on to give the "solution:"

"The modern preacher . . . should clearly visualize some real need, perplexity, sin, or desire in his auditors, and then should throw on the problem all the light he can find in the Scripture or anywhere else. No matter what one's theory about the Bible is, this is

the effective approach to preaching. The Bible is a searchlight, not so much intended to be looked at as to be thrown upon a shadowed spot.

There is nothing that people are so interested in as themselves, their own problems, and the way to solve them. That fact is basic. No preaching that neglects it can raise a ripple on a congregation." [cited in MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 146-47]

"The outside observer see us as staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all where we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes action. . . . Unlike the first Christians who in three centuries won the Roman world, and those later Christians who pioneered the Reformation, and the Puritan awakening and the Evangelical revival, and the great missionary movement of the last century, we lack certainty. [J.I. Packer, cited in John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 122-23]

The majestic character of God needs to be seen week in and week out not in the context of casualness and triviality and Sunday morning slapstick, but in the context of exaltation and awe and solemnity and earnestness and intensity. How will our people ever come to feel in their bones the awful magnitude of what is at stake in the eternal destiny of the unevangelized if our homiletical maxim is to start with a joke and keep the people entertained with anecdotes along the way? How will the people ever come to know and feel the crags and peaks and snowcapped heights of God's glory if our preaching and worship services are more like picnics in the valley than thunder on the ice face of Mt. Everest? [John Piper, "A Pastor's Role in World Missions," Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, Oct 31, 1984]

Worship and

"We normally think of worship as something *we* do, and since preaching is done by the preacher (and not by us), many fail to think of preaching as worship. But listening to preaching *is* something you do, and it is an act of worship when you listen with an eager mind and responsive heart. The reason it is an act of *worship* is that you are listening to *God* speak (through His Word)." [Donald Whitney, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 112]

"Once, when I was teaching a day-long seminar on puritanism at a church in London, I mentioned that puritan sermons were sometimes two hours long. At this, one person gasped audibly, and asked, "What time did that leave for worship?" The assumption was that hearing God's word preached did not constitute worship. I replied that many English Protestant Christians would have considered hearing God's word in their own language and responding to it in their lives the essential part of their worship. Whether they had time to sing together would have been of comparatively little concern. Our churches must recover the centrality of the Word to our worship. Hearing God's word and responding to it may include praise and thanks, confession and proclamation, and any of these may be in song, but none of them need be. A church built on music--of whatever style--is a church built on shifting sands. Preaching is the fundamental component of pastoring. [Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, Internet Quotation from The Expositor's Quote of the Week, 2003]

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C.H. Spurgeon, in response to those who claimed that worship is lacking where biblical sermons are given high priority in the church, wrote: "if [their] observation be meant to imply that the hearing of sermons is not worshiping God, it is founded on a gross mistake, for rightly to listen to the gospel is one of the noblest parts of the adoration of the Most High. It is a mental exercise, when rightly performed, in which all the faculties of the spiritual man are called into devotional action. Reverently hearing the word exercises our humility, instructs our faith, irradiates us with joy, inflames us with love, inspires us with zeal, and lifts us up towards heaven. . . . Hence there isn't the wide distinction to be drawn between preaching and prayer [or other aspects of worship] that some would have us admit. . . the testimony of his gospel, which preeminently glorifies him, and the obedient hearing of revealed truth, are an acceptable form of worship to the Most High, and perhaps one of the most spiritual in which the human mind can be engaged." [Lectures to my Students, 53-54]

"No man who preaches the gospel without zeal is sent of God to preach at all." [Spurgeon]

PRIDE:

In a fit of self-absorbed arrogance, someone once wrote these words:

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole
I thank whatever gods may be,
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,

I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul."

"Jonathan Edwards called pride 'the worst Viper that is in the heart' and 'the greatest disturber of the soul's peace and sweet communion with Christ;' he ranked pride as the most difficult sin to root out, and 'the most hidden, secret and deceitful of all lusts.' What a foolish, silly, miserable, blind, deceived poor worm am I, when pride works, Edwards once wrote. In his sermons and in his vast writings he constantly warned against pride, especially spiritual pride, which he viewed as the greatest cause of the premature ending of the Great Awakening, the revival that had brought so much spiritual Vitality to the church in Edward's day." [C.J. Mahaney, *Humility: True Greatness*, 34]

Satan hath his devices to ensnare and destroy the learned and the wise: and that, sometimes by working them to pride themselves in their [talents] and abilities; and sometimes by drawing them to rest upon [them] . . . and sometimes by causing them to make light and slight of those that [lack them] . . . , though they [those that lack them] excel them [those who have them] in grace and holiness . . . The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That you have nothing but what you have received, Christ being as well the tountain of common gifts as of saving grace. . . . The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That men's learning and trusting to their own wits, [talents], and abilities, have been their utter overthrow and ruin. . . . The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That you do not transcend others more in [talents] and abilities, than they do you in grace and holiness. There may be, and often is, great [talents] and abilities, where there is but little grace, yea, no grace; and there may be, and often is, a great deal of grace, where there is but weak [talents] and abilities. You may be higher than others in gifts of knowledge, utterance, and learning, and those very souls may be higher than you in their communion with God, in their delighting in God, in their dependence upon God, in their affections to God, and in their humble, holy, and unblameable walking before God. Is it folly and madness in a man, to make light and slight of another, because he is not so rich in lead or iron as he, when he is a thousand thousand times richer in silver and gold, in jewels and in pearls, than he? . . . The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there is no such way for men to have their gifts and [talents] blasted and withered, as to pride themselves in them, as to rest upon them, as to make light and slight of those that want them, as to engage them against those persons, ways, and things, that Jesus Christ hath set his heart upon. . . . (Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 194-97)

"You cannot at the same time give the impression that you are a great preacher" -- or theologian or debater or whatever -- "and that Jesus Christ is a great Savior" (James Denney). If you call attention to yourself and your own competence, you cannot effectively call attention to Jesus and his glorious sufficiency. [J.I. Packer, *Your Father Loves You*, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986]

At the feast of ego everyone leaves hungry.

"Pride is the only disease everyone hates except the one who has it."

"Take care that you use your talents for your Master, and for your Master only. It is disloyalty to our Lord if we wish to be soul-winners in order to be thought to be so. It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we even preach sound doctrine with the view of being thought sound, or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our Lord's glory with a single eye, and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord's gospel, and our Lord's people, and our Lord's talents, for our Lord, and for Him alone." [Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students*, from the chapter entitled "Stewards". Now published by Banner of Truth Trust]

"Pride is the only disease everyone hates except the one who has it."

"...it is not only man's righteousness that God means to kill, but also man's pride. O cursed pride, that is ever lifting up its head in our hearts! Pride, that would even pull down God that it might sit upon His throne. Pride, that would trample under foot the holiest things to exalt itself! Pride, that can feed upon the letter of truth as well as upon garbage! Pride, that can wrap up itself in the monk's cowl and flaunt abroad in the attire of the harlot! Pride, that can soar aloft to the heights of creature-holiness, and wallow in the filthy kennel of impurity! That monstrous creature within us, of such ravenous and indiscriminate gluttony, that the more it devours, the more it craves, and 'enlargeth its desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied' (Hab. ii.5). Pride, that chameleon which assumes every colour, that actor which can play every part, and yet which is constant to no one object or purpose but to exalt and glorify self!" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," *Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot* (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:94.]

"...there is a time to kill not only a man's pride, but also his wisdom; to slaughter it, and, as it were, drain away the life-blood from it. How delusively does this fleshly wisdom of ours act, in endeavoring to substitute the mere knowledge of truth in the letter, for the teaching of God in the soul! And how many are deceived in various ways by leaning to their own wisdom, instead of feeling fools before God, and looking up to Him for His blessed instruction! But the Lord will effectually kill creature-wisdom in the hearts of His people, by bringing them into those straits and difficulties, into those sharp and severe exercises, into those bitter and distressing temptations, where all human reasoning gives up the ghost, where knowledge and understanding are baffled and confounded, and the arm of the creature is so palsy-stricken that it cannot take any one promise out of the Word of God, to administer comfort to the troubled soul." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," *Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot* (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:95.]

"One young gentleman with whose presence I was honored, has left on my mind the photograph of his exquisite self. That same face of his looked like the title-page to a whole volume of conceit and deceit. He sent word into my vestry one Sunday morning that he must see me at once. His audacity admitted him; and when he was before me he said, 'Sir, I want to enter your college, and should like to enter it at once.' 'Well Sir,' said I, 'I fear we have not room for you at present, but your case shall be considered.' 'But mine is a very remarkable case, Sir; you have probably never received such an application as mine before.' 'Very good, we'll see about it; the secretary will give you one of the application papers, and

you can see me on Monday.' He came on the Monday bringing with him the questions, answered in a most extraordinary manner. As to books, he claimed to have read all ancient and modern literature, and after giving an immense list he added, 'this is but a selection; I have read most extensively in all departments.' As to his preaching, he could produce the highest testimonials, but hardly thought they would be needed, as a personal interview would convince me of his ability at once. His surprise was great when I said, 'Sir, I am obliged to tell you that I cannot receive you.' 'Why not, Sir?' 'I will tell you plainly. You are so dreadfully clever that I could not insult you by receiving you into our college, where we have none but rather ordinary men; the president, tutors, and students, are all men of moderate attainments, and you would have to condescend too much in coming among us.' He look at me very severely, and said with dignity, 'Do you mean to say, that because I have an unusual genius, and have produced in myself a gigantic mind such as is rarely seen, I am refused admittance into your college?' 'Yes,' I replied, as calmly as I could, considering the overpowering awe which his genius inspired, 'for that very reason.' 'Then, Sir, you ought to allow me a trial of my preaching abilities; select me any text you like, or suggest any subject you please, and here in this very room I will speak upon it, or preach upon it without deliberation, and you will be surprised.' 'No, thank you, I would rather not have the trouble of listening to you.' 'Trouble, Sir! I assure you it would be the greatest possible pleasure you could have.' I said it might be, but I felt myself unworthy of the privilege, and so bade him a long farewell.

Spurgeon went on to say that this young man went on to garner a reputation that brought great reproach upon the name of Jesus Christ. [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 36-37]

A pastor, a boy scout, and a world-renown scientist were the only three passengers on a small plane. In the middle of the flight, the pilot came back to the cabin and said that the plane was going down and there were only 3 parachutes on board. I pilot added, "I should have one of the parachutes because I'm married and have 4 small children." So he quickly took a parachute and jumped.

The scientist looked at the pastor and the boy scout and said, "I should have one of the parachutes because I am the most brilliant man in the world and far more important than you two." So the scientist took a parachute and jumped.

Well, the pastor looked at the young boy with a smile and said, "I've lived most of my life already and you are still very young, so you hurry and take the last parachute and I'll go down with the plane."

The boy scout smiled back at the pastor and replied, "don't worry sir, the most brilliant man in the world just picked up my backpack and jumped out."

Dr. Alan Redpath, who once pastored the famous Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, once stated: "When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and crushes him." [cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 146]

It is said that, when Harvard's Emerson Hall was in process of construction, the Department of Philosophy was planning to place an inscription over the doorway reading, "Man is the

measure of all things." But President Eliot heard of it and quietly decided otherwise. When the summer vacation was over the professors returned to the almost completed building and discovered the words engraved in the stone, "What is man that Thou are mindful of him?" [cited by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., Bib. Sac.]

The renown Florentine preacher of the 15th c., Savanarola, one day saw an elderly woman worshipping at the statue of Mary which stood at the entrance to the city's great cathedral. On the following day he saw the same woman again on her knees before the statue. With great interest he observed that day after day the same woman would return to the statue to worship. "Look how she reverences the mother Mary," Savanarola whispered to one of his fellow ministers. "Don't be deceived by what you see," the friend replied. "Many years ago an artist was commissioned to create a statue for the cathedral. As he sought a young woman to pose as the model for his sculpture, he found one who seemed to be the perfect subject. She was young, beautiful, and had a mystical quality to her face. The image of that young woman inspired his statue of Mary. The woman who now worships the statue is the same one who served as its model many years ago." The essence of pride is "self-worship" [paraphrased from Campolo, 7 Deadly Sins, 74]

PRIORITIES:

No one on his death bed ever said, "I wish I had spent more time on my business."

"Someone is reported to have asked a concert violinist in New York's Carnegie Hall how she became so skilled. She said it was by 'planned neglect.' She planned to neglect everything that was not related to her goal. Some less important things in your life could use a little planned neglect so that you might give yourself to studying the Word of God." [John MacArthur, Found: God's Will, 30]

PROVISION:

An article in National Geographic several years ago provided a penetrating picture of God's "wings":

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge..." (Psalm 91:4)

"Let us see that we keep God before our eyes; that we walk in His ways and seek to please and glorify Him in everything, great and small. Depend upon it: God's work done God's way will never lack God's supplies." [Hudson Taylor, Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret, 85-86]]

Diogenes, the Greek philosopher of the fourth century, lived in an empty wine barrel on the beach and once said: "When I saw a child drinking from his hand, I threw away my cup." [cited in Archetypes of Wisdom]

PROVIDENCE:

"Accept everything that happens to you, even if it seem disagreeable, because it leads to the health of the universe; for God would not lay on any man that which he suffers, if it were not useful for the continuance and perfection of the whole" [Marcus Aurelius, cited in F.B. Meyer, *The Life of Love*, 185]

The writings of an anonymous critic of Calvin's views on God's sovereignty inspired Calvin to publish a polemic in 1558 entitled, "Concerning the Secret Providence of God." One of the issues Calvin addresses is the faulty philosophy of rationalism:

"You ask me to write a refutation for you that can be understood by the people. Indeed, I do what I can to accommodate myself by bringing forth simple and pure teaching to suit the capacity of the most elementary. But if you allow no other form of reasoning except what an earthly man recognizes, then by such arrogance and disdain you deny yourself access to the very doctrine the knowledge of which is only possible to someone with a reverential spirit. I am not ignorant of the mockery that comes from you and those like you, with which you harass the mysteries of God. Everything loses its authority and grace if it does not satisfy your reason."

Calvin also wrote:

"No poisonous bites of the wicked will cause me to regret the doctrine at any time. I certainly stand firm in the conviction that its authority and source are from God. I have accomplished so much in so many contests that God has brought me into, that I am not in the least frightened by your futile clamoring." [John Calvin, "The Secret Providence of God" edited by Paul Helm, Crossway Books, 2010]

"Divine providence is that work of God by which He preserves all His creatures, is active in all that transpires in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end." [Louis Berkhof]

WACO, Texas. A pastor performing a baptism was electrocuted inside his church Sunday morning after grabbing a microphone while partially submerged, a church employee said. The Rev. Kyle Lake, 33, was standing in water up to his shoulder in a baptismal at University Baptist Church when he was electrocuted, said Jamie Dudley, a church business administrator and wife of another pastor there. Doctors in the congregation performed chest compressions for 40 minutes before Lake was taken to Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, Dudley said. Police said they weren't called and the hospital referred calls to the church. The woman Lake was baptizing was not injured, Dudley said. Pastors at University Baptist

Church routinely use a microphone during baptisms, Dudley said. "He was grabbing the microphone so everyone could hear," Dudley said. "It's the only way you can be loud enough." About 800 people attended the morning service, which was larger than normal because it was homecoming weekend at nearby Baylor University, Dudley said. Lake, who had a wife and three children, had been at the church for nine years, the last seven as pastor, Dudley said. [Copyright 2005 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed]

"Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous."

"Omnipotence has servants everywhere." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Rev. Eric Alexander, in a message on Romans 8:26-31 during the memorial service for Dr. James M. Boice, 6/25/00. Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals cassette message]]

The story is told of a king who had a close friend with whom he grew up. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation that ever occurred in his life (positive or negative) and remarking, "This is good!"

One day the king and his friend were on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. In preparing one of the guns, the friend had apparently done something wrong, for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his thumb was blown off.

Examining the situation the friend remarked as usual, "This is good!" To which the king replied, "No, this is NOT good!" and proceeded to send his friend to jail.

About a year later, the king was hunting in a dangerous area. Cannibals captured him and took him to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake and bound him to it. As they approached to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. Being superstitious, they never ate anyone that was less than whole. So after untying the king, they sent him on his way.

As he returned home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend. He went immediately to the jail to speak with his friend. "You were right," he said, "it was good that my thumb was blown off." And he proceeded to tell the friend all that had just happened. "And so I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long. It was bad for me to do this."

"No," his friend replied, "This is good!" "What do you mean, 'This is good'? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?"

"If I had NOT been in jail, I would have been with you."

OUR NATION'S GODLY HERITAGE--BULLETPROOF GEORGE WASHINGTON
The Father of our Country experienced a miracle early in his military career. This account is widely known and was included in most school history textbooks, until recent changes caused it to be deleted from many books.

During the French and Indian war at the Battle of the Monongahela, young Colonel Washington was engaged in a fierce skirmish with the Indians. An easy target in his bold red coat, he crisscrossed the battlefield carrying General Braddock's orders to the troops. The Indian warriors later acknowledged that they were targeting all officers--and particularly Washington--in the bright garb. Yet Washington survived. There were eighty-six British and American officers involved in the battle; sixty-three of them died. Colonel Washington was the only officer on horseback who was not killed, and later, the Indians testified that they repeatedly shot at him, and were surprised that he never fell. They believed he was protected by an invisible power and that no bullet, bayonet, arrow or tomahawk could harm him.

Years later, the Indian chief sought Washington out in order to tell him what had happened in the battle. The Chief said, "I am a chief and ruler over my tribes. I have traveled a long and weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. [On that day] I called to my men and said, 'Quick, let your aim be certain, and he dies.' Our rifles were leveled, rifles which, but for you, knew not how to miss--'twas all in vain, a power mightier far than we, shielded you. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle."

Washington himself later wrote to his brother John, "By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me!"

Over 150 years ago, Robert Murray McCheyne ministered in Scotland) His closest friend was a man by the name of Andrew Bonar who was also a minister in the church of Scotland, and who also wrote McCheyne's Memoirs. Andrew Bonar preached in the Glasgow for many years and enjoyed a tremendous ministry there. In fact, the church in which he ministered is still there and they have Andrew Bonar's personal Bible on display in a glass case (3 volumes with interleaved blank pages). If you leaf through it you will find every square inch covered with Hebrew words in the Old Testament and Greek words in the New, along with Bonar's personal comments. If you open the Bible to Romans 8:28 you will find that he inscribed this thought on that wonderful verse: "A Pillow on which the troubled believer may lay his head." [Rev. Eric Alexander, in a message on Romans 8:26-31 during the memorial service for Dr. James M. Boice, 6/25/00. Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals cassette message]

"It seems as though the living God is able to take the angriest, cruelest actions of sinners and turn them into an implement of His grace in the lives of His children." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited by Rev. Eric Alexander, in a message on Romans 8:26-31 during the memorial service for Dr. James M. Boice, 6/25/00. Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals cassette message]

PUNCTUALITY:

"I am not often late, for I feel that punctuality is one of those little virtues that may prevent great sins." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 96]

"He gives twice who gives quickly." [old proverb]

PURITAN QUOTES:

April 1, 1742. "I seem to be declining, with respect to my life and warmth in divine things have not had so free access to God in prayer today as usual of late. Oh that God would humble me deeply in the dust before Him! I deserve hell every day, for not loving my Lord more, who has, I trust, 'loved me and given Himself for me;' and every time I am enabled to exercise any grace renewedly, I am renewedly indebted to the God of all grace for special assistance. 'Where then is boasting?' Surely 'it is excluded,' when we think how we are dependant on God for the existence and every act of grace. O if ever I get to heaven, it will be because God pleases, and nothing else; for I never did anything of myself but get away from God! My soul will be astonished at the unsearchable riches of divine grace when I arrive at the mansions which the blessed Savior is gone before to prepare." [David Brainerd, cited in "Quotations Past and Current" Newsletter, March/April, 1998]

PSYCHICS:

"I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left me before we met." [Steven Wright]

"Why do psychics have to ask for your name?" [Steven Wright]

PSYCHOLOGY:

"If there are any of us who think that the New Testament promises to us, as a benefit of redemption, psychological wholeness and relief from the assaults of a fallen world we are going to be so terribly disappointed. . . . You will suffer deprivations, you will have wrongs done to you . . . which will never be righted in this world. You will have personal weakness that you will never master, try and struggle as you might. And wholeness, in the sense of having a beautifully tuned internal self-life that never stutters and gasps . . . just isn't going to happen. . . . The point of the New Testament is that however much we've suffered, whatever losses we've endured, whatever indignations have come our way, we nevertheless can still walk with God who is holy and loving, and we can still do right by others and not merely feel good about ourselves." [David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

The number of mental disorders according to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (THE catalogue for doctors on the subject): 1952 = 60; 1960 = 145; 1994 = 410 [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

Wendy Kaminer, for example, does not purport to be a Christian. If anything, she seems hostile to the church. She describes herself as "a skeptical, secular humanist, Jewish, feminist, intellectual lawyer." But she has seen the change of direction within Evangelicalism and she describes it with uncanny precision. She notes that religion and psychology have always more or less deemed one another incompatible. Now she sees "not just a truce but a remarkable accommodation." Even from her perspective as an unbeliever, she can see that this accommodation has meant a wholesale alteration of the fundamental message about sin and salvation. She writes:

Christian codependency books, like those produced by the Minerth-Meier clinic in Texas, are practically indistinguishable from codependency books published by secular writers. . . . Religious writers justify their reliance on psychology by praising it for "catching up" to some eternal truths, but they've also found a way to make the temporal truths of psychology palatable. Religious leaders once condemned psychoanalysis for its moral neutrality. . . . Now popular religious literature equates illness with sin. [cited in MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 30]

"Not long ago I listened aghast as a Christian psychologist on live radio counseled a caller to express anger at his therapist by making an obscene gesture at him. 'Go ahead!' He told the caller. 'It's an honest expression of your feelings. Don't try to keep your anger inside.'

'What about my friends?' the caller asked. 'Should I react that way to all of them when I'm angry?'

'Why, sure!' this counselor said. 'You can do it to anyone, whenever you feel like it. Except those who you think won't understand--they won't be good therapists for you.' That's a paraphrase. I have a tape of the entire broadcast, and what the counselor actually suggested was much more explicit, even to the point of being inappropriate to print.

The same week I heard another popular Christian broadcast that offers live counseling to callers nationwide. A woman called and said she has had a problem with compulsive fornication for years. She said she goes to bed with 'anyone and everyone' and feels powerless to change her behavior.

The Counselor suggested that her conduct is her way of striking back, a result of wounds inflicted by her passive father and overbearing mother. 'There's no simple road to recovery,' this radio therapist told her. 'Your problem won't go away immediately--it's an addiction, and these things require extended counseling. You will need years of therapy to overcome your need for illicit sex.' The suggestion was then made for the caller to find a church that would be tolerant while she worked her way out of the 'painful wounds' that were 'making' her fornicate." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 68-69]

"It is fashionable to follow the view of some psychologists that the self is a bundle of needs and that personal growth is the business of progressively meeting those needs. May Christians go along with such beliefs. . . . One mark of the almost total success of this new morality is that the Christian church, traditionally keen on mortifying the desires of the flesh, on crucifying the needs of the self in pursuit of Christ's likeness, has eagerly adopted the language of needs for itself. We now hear that Jesus will meet your every need, as though He were some kind of Divine psychiatrist or Divine detergent and as though God were simply to serve us." [Tony Walter, Need: The New Religion, cited in MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 157]

Humor - A new teacher was trying to use her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks their stupid, stand up! After a few seconds, little Johnny stood up. The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid Johnny?" "No, ma'am, but I hated to see you standing there all by yourself!"

PUNS:

Two vultures board an airplane, each carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at them and says, "I'm sorry, gentlemen, only one carrion allowed per passenger."

Two boll weevils grew up in South Carolina. One went to Hollywood and became a famous actor. The other stayed behind in the cotton fields and never amounted to much. The second one, naturally, became known as the lesser of two weevils.

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire in the craft, it sank proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it, too.

A three legged dog walks into a saloon in the Old West. He slides up to the bar and announces: "I'm looking for the man who shot my paw."

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? He wanted to transcend dental medication.

A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked, as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."

A woman has twins, and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Amal." The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Amal. Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Amal."

Three Friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that: Only Hugh can prevent florist friars.

QUESTIONS AND INQUIRY:

I Keep Six Honest serving men (by Rudyard Kipling)

I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.
I send them over land and sea,

I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me,
I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five,
For I am busy then,
As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
For they are hungry men.
But different folk have different views;
I know a person small-
She keeps ten million serving-men,
Who get no rest at all!

She sends'em abroad on her own affairs,
From the second she opens her eyes-
One million Hows, two million Wheres,
And seven million Whys!

QUIPS AND ONE-LINERS:

"Your words are so foolishly and ignorantly composed that I cannot believe you understand them." Martin Luther [From Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses, pg. 87 of Luther's Works, Vol. 31]

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."

It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.

Beauty is only a light switch away.

I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I didn't see any.

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

Never take life seriously. Nobody gets out alive anyway.

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

Whenever I feel blue, I start breathing again.

How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, "I think I'll squeeze these dangly things here, and drink whatever comes out?"

Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, and olive oil is made from olives, then what is baby oil made from?

Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

RACE:

"'Race' is usually associated with biology and linked with physical characteristics such as skin color or hair texture. 'Ethnicity' is linked with cultural expression and identification. However, both are social constructs. . ." [National Geographic]

REASON:

"Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is. Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature. Attractive because it promises true good." [Blaise Pascal, Pensées]

An example of the error of philosophical fideism is found in Blaise Pascal's Pensees:

"Who then will blame Christians for not being able to give reasons for their beliefs, since they profess belief in a religion which they cannot explain? They declare, when they expound it to the world, that it is foolishness, stultitiam; and then you complain because they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not keep their word; it is through their lack of proofs that they show they are not lacking in sense." (201)

The writings of an anonymous critic of Calvin's views on God's sovereignty inspired Calvin to publish a polemic in 1558 entitled, "Concerning the Secret Providence of God." One of the issues Calvin addresses is the faulty philosophy of rationalism:

"You ask me to write a refutation for you that can be understood by the people. Indeed, I do what I can to accommodate myself by bringing forth simple and pure teaching to suit the capacity of the most elementary. But if you allow no other form of reasoning except what an earthly man recognizes, then by such arrogance and disdain you deny yourself access to the very doctrine the knowledge of which is only possible to someone with a reverential spirit. I am not ignorant of the mockery that comes from you and those like you, with which you harass the mysteries of God. Everything loses its authority and grace if it does not satisfy your reason."

Calvin also wrote:

"No poisonous bites of the wicked will cause me to regret the doctrine at any time. I certainly stand firm in the conviction that its authority and source are from God. I have

accomplished so much in so many contests that God has brought me into, that I am not in the least frightened by your futile clamoring." [John Calvin, "The Secret Providence of God" edited by Paul Helm, Crossway Books, 2010]

When a man told C.S. Lewis about his losing confidence in reason, Lewis replied, "If you are losing your faith in reason, why did you use all those reasons to tell me so?" [cited in Pulpit Helps, June, 1998]

"It is not the man who has lost his reason that has gone mad, it is the man who has lost everything, aside from his reason" – G.K. Chesterton

REFORMATION: [General; Solas]

General

Following his return to Wittenberg, Luther published ninety-nine theses, or propositions, against the free-will theism and rationalism of the Pelagian schoolmen. Luther denied that unregenerate men have the liberty to love God and do good, not "to deprive man of [liberty], but in order that he may attain it." [page 82] For Luther, the issue centered not as much on whether man may have liberty, but if he could have liberty apart from God. In Luther's words, "True liberty is what thou needest, and God offers it thee in his gospel." [page 82] D'Aubigne lists thirty-one of these which I reproduce here:

1. It is true that man who has become a corrupt tree, can will or do naught but evil.
2. It is false that the will, left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free, but in bondage.
3. It is not in the power of Man's will to choose or reject whatever is offered to it.
4. Man cannot of his own nature will God to be God. He would prefer to be God himself, and that God were not God.
5. The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace, is the eternal election and predestination of God.
6. It is false to say that if man does all that he can, he removes the obstacles to grace.
7. In a word, nature possesses neither a pure reason nor a good will.
8. On the side of man, there is nothing that goes before grace, unless it be impotency and even rebellion.
9. There is no moral virtue without pride or without sorrow, that is to say, without sin.
10. From beginning to end, we are not masters of our actions, but their slaves.
11. We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous; but having become righteous, we do what is righteous.
12. He who says that a divine who is not a logician, is a heretic and an empiric, maintains an empirical and heretical proposition.
13. There is no form or reasoning (of syllogism) that holds with the things of God.
14. If the form of the syllogism could be applied to Divine things, we should have knowledge and not belief of the article of the Holy Trinity.
15. In a word, Aristotle is to divinity, as darkness is to light.
16. Man is a greater enemy to the grace of God than he is to the law itself.

17. He who is without God's grace sins continually, even should he neither rob, murder, nor commit adultery.
18. He sins, in that he does not fulfill the law spiritually.
19. Not to kill, not to commit adultery, externally only and with regard to the actions, is the righteousness of hypocrites.
20. The law of God and the will of man are two adversaries, that without the grace of God can never be reconciled.
21. What the law commands, the will never wishes, unless through fear or love it puts on the appearances of willing.
22. The law is the task-master of the will, who is not overcome but by the Child that is born unto us. (Isaiah ix. 6.)
23. The law makes sin abound, for it exasperates and repels the will.
24. But the grace of God makes righteousness abound through Jesus Christ, who causes us to love the law.
25. Every work of the law appears good outwardly, but inwardly it is sin.
26. The will, when it turns towards the law without the grace of God, does so in its own interests alone.
27. Cursed are all those who perform the works of the law.
28. Blessed are all those who perform the works of God's grace.
29. The law which is good, and in which we have life, is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. (Rom. v. 5.)
30. Grace is not given in order that the work may be done more frequently and more easily, but because without grace there can be no work of love.
31. To love God is to hate oneself and to know nothing out of God. [J.H. Merle D'Aubigne, History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1883), 108]

"It was not Arminian theology that provided the strength and power of the Reformation; it was 'Reformed' or 'Calvinistic' theology that called men to stand up for the truth of the Gospel against the tyranny of Rome. Modern evangelicals need to recognize that Arminianism is, at its very core, a return to the very principles that the Reformation fought against in the first place. While the outward manifestations might differ, Arminianism and Roman Catholicism stand hand-in-hand in opposing God's sovereign grace in salvation. Both place the final decision of the outcome of an individual's life completely in the hands of the man himself, and in so doing, deny God His rightful role as Creator and Sovereign of the universe. Most of modern evangelicalism does not, in reality, have anything to say to Rome, simply because it has compromised in the central issue of God's grace.

Further, since Arminianism, is, when taken to its logical conclusion, antithetical to simple Christian theism, those who embrace this system find themselves incapable of consistently dealing with the philosophies of man, simply because they have embraced some of the most fundamental concepts of those philosophies rather than accepting the revelation of the sovereign God. In a vain effort to 'win' men by seeking to avoid offence, the strong doctrines of God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe are left to the side, and the battle is joined on the home ground of the atheist or secular humanist. The Gospel is compromised in the interest of defending it! Such simply ought not be.

Many today are calling for a second Reformation, and surely we can understand the need. But such a Reformation will require some very tough stands by those seeking the truth. Worldly acceptance and friendship cannot have any place of importance for those who wish to be used of God in such a movement. Those who call themselves 'Protestants' but who deny the foundational Biblical teachings about God will have to be identified for what they really are—not for the sake of 'meanness' but so that the truth can be clearly distinguished from error. Furthermore, the Christian Church will have to reject the methodologies of men and trust solely in the Spirit of God to bring results. We must seek God's honor and glory, not numbers or 'success.'" [James R. White, cited in Quotations Past and Current (Newsletter by Tony M. Montano) dated March/April, 1998, Number 4.]

The difference between Rome and the Reformation can be seen in these simple formulas:

Roman View: Faith + Works = Justification
Protestant View: Faith = Justification + Works
[R.C. Sproul, cited in MSJ, Vol. 16, No. 2]

“Ecclesia Reformata Et Semper Reformanda” [the church reformed and always reforming]

Upon Luther's complaint that in spite of his repeated promises to God to overcome his sin, sin was always the victor within him, Staupitz replied:

"More than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the love of Christ and grant me a happy departure, when I must quit this world, I shall never, with the aid of all my vows and all my good works, stand before him. I must perish!" [D'Aubigne, page 62]

He later continued:

"Why," said he, "do you torment yourself with all these speculations and high thoughts? . . . Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you: it is here that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life—in the atonement of his death. Do not shrink back; God is not angry with you, it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favour. He says to you, You are my sheep; you hear my voice; no man shall pluck you out of my hand." [D'Aubigne, page 62]

Martin Luther was briefly encouraged by the advice of John Staupitz, but he yet again found himself in the "slough of despair." How could he find within himself, a sinner, the repentance necessary for salvation? How can he change himself when the self is sinful to the core? He found wise counsel from Staupitz here as well. The mentor encouraged him with these words:

"There is no real repentance except that which begins with the love of God and of righteousness. . . . In order that you may be filled with the love of what is good, you must first be filled with love for God. If you desire to be converted, do not be curious

about all these mortifications and all these tortures. Love him who first loved you." [D'Aubigne, page 62]

In order to repent, Luther must first love God. The words struck Luther at the core. The passages of Scripture that used to alarm him now intrigue him, even beckon to him. Repentance, once a foe, has become a friend. It is a delight to repent by virtue of the wounds of Christ!

Old habits die hard and Luther's habit of bemoaning his sin was no exception. "My sin, my sin, my sin" Luther exclaimed before Staupitz who then replied, "Well! would you only be a sinner in appearance and have a Saviour only in appearance? You know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour even of those who are great, real sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation." [Adapted from J.H. Merle D'Aubigne, History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1883), 62]

Citations taken from Merle D'Aubigne's History of the German-Swiss Reformation:

John Tetzel was a master at his craft. Upon entering a town, the cross would be erected with the arms of the pope suspended from it. Tetzel would then arise and promote the necessity of the indulgence. D'Aubigne records excerpts of a Tetzel sales-pitch on pages 86-87:

"Indulgences (said he) are the most precious and the most noble of God's gifts. This cross (pointing to the red cross) has as much efficacy as the very cross of Jesus Christ. Come and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned. I would not change my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons. There is no sin so great, that an indulgence cannot remit; and even if anyone . . . had offered violence to the Virgin Mary, mother of God—only let him pay well, and all will be forgiven him. But more than this, indulgences avail not only for the living, but for the dead. For that, repentance is not even necessary. Priest, noble, merchant, wife, youth, maiden! Do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss, 'We are suffering horrible torments! A trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it and you will not!' At the very instant that the money rattles at the bottom of chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies liberated to heaven. . . . Stiff-necked and thoughtless man, with twelve groats you can deliver your father from purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him! I shall be justified in the day of judgment, but you—you will be punished so much the more severely for having neglected so great salvation. I declare to you, though you should have but a single coat, you ought to strip it off and sell it in order to obtain this grace. . . . The Lord our God no longer reigns. He has resigned all power to the pope."

Rome was especially motivated to receive the wealth generated by indulgences in order to rebuild the Church of St. Peter. Tetzel used this to his advantage, shocking the people with descriptions of the bodies of Peter and Paul, along with other saints, being defiled by exposure due to the ruinous state of the cathedral. With his message finished,

Tetzel would rush to the money box, throwing in a coin so that the loud rattle could be heard by all. People were then exhorted to come with their money ready so that they may receive forgiveness for themselves or their loved ones. The seekers were examined as to their status in society; did the money they offered fit with their appearance? Women whose husbands forbade them to give were encouraged to give secretly. Tetzel even had a sliding scale in that different sins had a different tax. Once the penitent met the required criteria, he or she would place their offering in the money box. Then a statement of indulgence was granted them:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ have pity on thee, and absolve thee by the merits of this most holy passion! And I, in virtue of the apostolical power that has been confided to me, absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments, and penalties which thou mayst have incurred; moreover, from all excesses, sins, and crimes that thou mayst have committed, however great and enormous they may be, and from whatsoever cause, were they even reserved for our most holy father the pope and for the apostolic see. I blot out all the stains of inability and all marks of infamy that thou mayst have drawn upon thyself on this occasion. I remit the penalties that thou shouldst have endured in purgatory. I restore thee anew to participation in the sacraments of the Church. I incorporate thee afresh in the communion of saints, and re-establish thee in the purity and innocence which thou hadst at thy baptism. So that in the hour of death the gate by which sinners enter the place of torments and punishment shall be closed against thee and on the contrary the gate leading to the paradise of joy shall be open. And if thou shouldst not die for long years this grace will remain unalterable until thy last hour shall arrive. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Amen. Friar John Tetzel, commissary, as signed this with his own hand." [D'Aubigne, page 88]

Myconius, the well-known reformer and historian, was deeply influenced at a young age by John Tetzel. Upon hearing one of Tetzel's discourses, Myconius was moved to accept his offer. Myconius, however, was not convinced that forgiveness could be bought and found himself debating with the merchants over the price. Six deniers shy of the merchants final offer, Myconius declared, "You will render an account to God for having allowed a soul to be lost for six deniers." [page 90] He later wrote:

"I was very sad at being thus sent away unpitied. But I felt, however, a comforter within me, who said that there was a God in heaven who pardons repentant souls without money and without price, for the love of his Son, Jesus Christ. I took leave of these folks, the Holy Spirit touched my heart. I burst into tears, and prayed to the Lord with anguish . . . my nature changed, converted, transformed." [pages 90-91]

In an ironic twist, a Saxon nobleman, irritated at Tetzel's lies, approached him at Leipsic inquiring if he had the power to pardon sins that men have the intention of yet committing. The knight then declared that he was intending to take revenge on one of his enemies, apart from killing him, and he would like such a pardon. Tetzel did so at the price of thirty crowns. Shortly thereafter, after Tetzel departed Leipsic, he was attacked by the same nobleman who was lying in wait for him with some of his attendants. They gave Tetzel a slight beating and took away the money chest.

Afterward, Tetzel tried to prosecute the nobleman in the courts, but the latter produced the pardon signed by Tetzel himself. Duke George was forced to acquit the knight from all liability! Meanwhile, the people were losing patience with the church. They accused the church of being focused more on greed than the salvation of men as they asked why the pope does not pardon all by virtue of his power.

In response to Spalatin's question, "What is the best way to study the scripture?" Luther wrote:

"It is very certain that we cannot attain to the understanding of the Scripture either by study or by the intellect. Your first duty is to begin by prayer. . . . There is no other interpreter of the Word of God than the Author of this Word . . . Hope for nothing from your own labours, from your own understanding: trust solely in God and in the influence of his spirit. Believe this on the word of a man who has had experience." [page 106]

He also clarified the relationship between works and repentance. Writes he:

"They desire to do good works before their sins are forgiven, whilst it is necessary for sin to be forgiven before men can perform good works. It is not the works that expel sin; but the sin once expelled, good works will follow! For good works must be performed with a joyful heart, with a good conscience toward God, that is, with remission of sins." [page 117]

The disputants stood at opposite pulpits. Desiring that the debate be conducted from memory alone, Eck objected to Carlstadt having with him a copy of the Bible and some works of the church fathers. The Chancellor of Ingolstadt made the decision that the debate be conducted by memory alone. The disputation covered seventeen days. One key issue centered on the supposed free will of men. According to Carlstadt, quoting Scripture and Augustine, the will of men before conversion can perform no good deed. All good works come "entirely and exclusively from God." [page 167] D'Aubigne summarizes the position of both the reformers and Augustine when he writes:

"Every work in which the love of God and obedience towards Him do not exist is deprived in the eyes of the Almighty of all that can render it good, even should it originate in the best of human motives. Now there is in man a natural opposition to God—an opposition that the unaided strength of man cannot surmount. He has neither the will nor the power of overcome it. This must therefore be effected by the Divine will." [page 168]

The scholastics of the middle ages had so perverted the doctrine of the will that they left it unintelligible. They engaged in double-talk, claiming that the unregenerate will can do nothing pleasing to God, but that it can do something by coming halfway to meet the grace of God. This was a preparation for Divine grace that they referred to as "a merit of congruity." Aquinas wrote that "it is congruous that God should treat with particular favor him who makes a good use of his own will." [page 168] The natural powers of men to receive the grace of God has not been destroyed by sin; sin is only an obstacle to them. One of their favorite comparisons was that of a bird fastened to a post by a

string. The bird in this condition has not lost its ability to fly, it is only impeded by the obstacle of the string. As soon as God unties the string the bird is able to exercise its will in flight. This was the position that John Eck sought to defend. He accused Carlstadt of making men mere logs or stones. The reformers, however, were not denying that men have ability and choice. They were contending that natural ability and choice can produce no good work unless the hand of God be upon them. As D'Aubigne writes:

"The great doctrine of free will was being discussed; and it was easy to demonstrate that the doctrine of the reformers did not deprive man of his liberty as a moral agent and make him a mere passive machine. The liberty of a moral agent consists in his power of acting conformably to his choice. Every action performed without external constraint, and in consequence of the determination of the soul itself, is a free action. The soul is determined by motives; but we continually observe the same motives acting differently on different minds. Many men do not act in conformity with the motives of which, however, they acknowledge the full force. This inefficacy of motives proceeds from the obstacles opposed to them by the corruption of the understanding and of the heart. But God, by giving man a new heart and a new spirit, removes these obstacles; and by removing them, far from depriving him of his liberty, He takes away, on the contrary, everything that would prevent him from acting freely, from listening to the voice of his conscience, and in the words of the Gospel, makes him free indeed, John viii. 36." [pages 168-69]

Luther wrote to Spalatin that:

"the gospel cannot be defended without tumult and without scandal. The Word of God is a sword,—a war,—a ruin,—a stumbling block,—a destruction, —a poison; and as Amos says, it meets us like a bear in the road or a lioness in the forest." [page 180]

Melancthon's His response to an inquirer asking about the meaning of John 15:5 is worth repeating (as cited on page 196):

"This passage signifies that we must be absorbed in Christ, so that we ourselves no longer act, but Christ lives in us. As the divine nature was incorporated with the human in the person of Christ, so man must be incorporated with Jesus Christ by faith."

Rome battles Luther in the confessional. One new arena where Rome took up the battle against Luther was in the confessional. Priests began to query their penitents: "Have you read Luther's works? Do you regard them as true or heretical?" [page 215] If the individual failed this "test" the priest refused absolution. When the matter came to Luther's attention, he gave this advice:

"When you are asked whether you approve of my books or not, reply: 'you are a confessor and not an inquisitor . . . My duty is to confess what my conscience leads me to say: yours is not to sound and extort the secrets of my heart. Give me absolution and then dispute with Luther, with the pope, with whomsoever you

please; but do not convert the sacrament of penance unto a quarrel and combat.' And if the confessor will not give way, then 'I would rather go without absolution.' Do not be uneasy: if man does not absolve you, God will. Rejoice that you are absolved by God himself, and appear at the altar without fear. At the last judgement the priest will have to give an account of the absolution he has refused you. . . . It is not in their will or in their power, but in our own faith, that God has placed salvation. . . . The soul can do without the sacrament, but it cannot live without the Word. Christ, the true bishop, will undertake to give you spiritual food." [page 215]

On March 28, Rome issued the bull, "In Coena Domini" during a customary ceremony that marked the occasion (the Thursday before Easter). The ceremony, attended by the masses, was filled with symbolic gestures which terminated in words of imprecation against the reformer. Once he finished his address, the pope took the parchment upon which were written the decrees against Luther and tore it to shreds. He threw it down to the people who fought each other for a piece of it. Luther responded to this excommunication by publishing a satirical reply to the pope's maledictions in conversational form. A sample [from page 231] follows:

THE POPE.— "We curse all heretics,—Garasi, Patarins, Poor Men of Lyons, Arnoldists, Speronists, Passageni, Wickliffites, Hussites, Fratricelli . . ."

LUTHER.— "For they desired to possess the Holy Scriptures, and requires the pope to be sober and preach the Word of God."

THE POPE.— "And Martin Luther, recently condemned by us for a similar heresy, as well as all his adherents, and all those whosoever they may be, who show him any countenance . . ."

LUTHER.— "I thank thee, most gracious pontiff, for condemning me along with all these Christians! It is very honorable for me to have my name proclaimed at Rome on a day of festival, in so glorious a manner, that it may run through the world in conjunction with the names of these humble confessors of Jesus Christ."

THE POPE.— "In like manner, we excommunicate and curse all pirates and corsairs . . ."

LUTHER.— "Who can be a greater corsair and pirate than he that robs souls, imprisons them, and puts them to death?"

THE POPE.— "In like manner, we excommunicate and curse all those who falsify our bulls and our apostolical letters . . ."

LUTHER.— "But God's letters, the Holy Scriptures, all the world may condemn and burn."

It was Melancthon's desire to accompany his friend to Worms, but he was discouraged from doing so. In pondering his devotion to the reformer, he said: "Every time I contemplate Luther, I find him constantly greater than himself."

"Christ has vanquished! This is the joyful news! And we are saved by His work, and not by our own. The pope says differently: but I affirm that the holy mother of God herself was saved, not by her virginity, nor by her maternity, or by her purity, nor by her works, but solely by the instrumentality of faith and the works of God." [Martin Luther, page 236]

Solas

Sola Fide is the article by which the church stands or falls – Luther.

Justification by faith alone "is the hinge upon which everything turns." – Calvin

Justification by faith alone is the Atlas upon whose shoulders every other doctrine of the Christian faith rests. If Atlas shrugs, everything crashes into ruin. – J.I. Packer

On March 15, 1543 the Scottish Parliament produced an act which made free to all men and women to read the Scriptures in their own tongue, or in the English tongue, and all the acts contrary to this act were abolished. This may astonish you, but prior to this act it was forbidden to read the Bible in any other language than Greek, Hebrew, or Latin. This act placed the Bible in the hands of the people. In the past only the Roman Catholic Priests had the Scriptures and the priests were the only ones who could teach the Scriptures. But as the Reformation gained in momentum, so did the principal of Sola Scriptura. This principle says that we should put aside the traditions of men when interpreting the Scriptures and focus on what the text itself says within the context of overall Biblical revelation. [PaperCut Press, PO Box 594, Flourtown PA 19031, <http://www.papercutpress.com>, Week of 7/19]

RELIGION:

I love H. R. Niebuhr's famous quote about the dangers of those who embrace "a God without wrath, who brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment, through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." Such is the sentimental hogwash of false religionists today.

"Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is. Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature. Attractive because it promises true good." [Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*]

Religion without regeneration:

Widow Lives with Corpses of Husband, Twin. By Michael Rubinkam, AP. July 05, 2010 The Buffalo News

The 91-year-old widow lived by herself in a tumbledown house on a desolate country road. But she wasn't alone, not really, not as long as she could visit her husband and twin sister. No matter they were already dead. Jean Stevens simply had their embalmed corpses dug up and stored them at her house - in the case of her late husband, for more than a decade - tending to the remains as best she could until police were finally tipped off last month. Much to her dismay. "Death is very hard for me to take," Stevens told an interviewer.

As state police finish their investigation into a singularly macabre case - no charges have been filed - Stevens wishes she could be reunited with James Stevens, her husband

of nearly 60 years who died in 1999, and June Stevens, the twin who died last October. But their bodies are with the Bradford County coroner now, off-limits to the woman who loved them best.

From time to time, stories of exhumed bodies are reported, but rarely do those involved offer an explanation. Jean Stevens, seeming more grandmother than ghoul, holds little back as she describes what happened outside this small town in northern Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains.

She knows what people must think of her. But she had her reasons, and they are complicated, a bit sad, and in their own peculiar way, sweet. Dressed smartly in a light blue shirt and khaki skirt, silver hoops in her ears, her white hair swept back and her brown eyes clear and sharp, she offers a visitor a slice of pie, then casts a knowing look when it's declined. "You're afraid I'll poison you," she says.

On a highboy in the corner of the dining room rests a handsome, black-and-white portrait of Jean, then a stunner in her early 20s, and James, clad in his Army uniform. It was taken after their 1942 marriage but before his service in World War II, in which he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, James worked at a General Electric Corp. plant in Liverpool, N.Y., then as an auto mechanic. He succumbed to Parkinson's disease on May 21, 1999. Next to that photo there is a smaller color snapshot of Jean and June, taken when they were in their late 80s.

In many ways, Jean shared a closer bond with her twin than her husband. Though June lived more than 200 miles away in West Hartford, Conn., they talked by phone several times a week, and June wrote often. The twins - who, as it happened, married brothers - were honored guests at the 70th reunion of the Camptown High School Class of 1937.

Then, last year, June was diagnosed with cancer. She was in a lot of pain when Jean came to visit. The sisters shared a bed, and Jean rubbed her back. "I'm real glad you're here," June said. On Oct. 3, June died. She was buried in her sister's backyard - but not for long. "I think when you put them in the (ground), that's goodbye, goodbye," Stevens said. "In this way I could touch her and look at her and talk to her."

She kept her sister, who was dressed in her "best housecoat," on an old couch in a spare room off the bedroom. Jean sprayed her with expensive perfume that was June's favorite. "I'd go in, and I'd talk, and I'd forget," Stevens said. "I put glasses on her. When I put the glasses on, it made all the difference in the world. I would fix her up. I'd fix her face up all the time."

She offered a similar rationale for keeping her husband on a couch in the detached garage. James, who had been laid to rest in a nearby cemetery, wore a dark suit, white shirt and blue knitted tie. "I could see him, I could look at him, I could touch him. Now, some people have a terrible feeling, they say, 'Why do you want to look at a dead person? Oh my gracious,'" she said. "Well, I felt differently about death."

Part of her worries that after death, there's ... nothing. "Is that the grand finale?" But then she gets up at night and gazes at the stars in the sky and the deer in the fields, and

she thinks, "There must be somebody who created this. It didn't come up like mushrooms." So she is ambivalent about God and the afterlife. "I don't always go to church, but I want to believe," Stevens said.

Dr. Helen Lavretsky, a psychiatry professor at UCLA who researches how the elderly view death and dying, said people who aren't particularly spiritual or religious often have a difficult time with death because they fear that death is truly the end. For them, "death doesn't exist," she said. "They deny death."

Stevens, she said, "came up with a very extreme expression of it. She got her bodies back, and she felt fulfilled by having them at home. She's beating death by bringing them back." There was another reason that Stevens wanted them above ground. She is severely claustrophobic and so was her sister; she was horrified that the bodies of her loved ones would spend eternity in a casket in the ground. "That's suffocation to me, even though you aren't breathing," she said. So she said she had them dug up, both within days of burial.

She managed to escape detection for a long time. The neighbors who mowed her lawn and took her grocery shopping either didn't know or didn't tell. Otherwise forthcoming, Stevens is vague when asked about who exhumed the bodies and who knew of her odd living arrangement. She blames a relative of her late husband's for calling the authorities about the corpses. "I think that is dirty, rotten," she said.

State police - who haven't yet released the identities of those who retrieved the bodies - will soon present their findings to the Bradford County district attorney. A decision on charges is expected in a few weeks. Stevens has talked extensively with both the police and Bradford County Coroner Tom Carman, who calls it a "very, very bizarre case." But the coroner has nothing but kind things to say about the woman at the center of it. "I got quite an education, to say the least. She's 100 percent cooperative - and a pleasure to talk to," Carman said. "But as far as her psyche, I'll leave that to the experts."

REPENTANCE:

"The difference between true and false repentance lies in this: the man who truly repents cries out against his heart; but the other, as Eve, against the serpent, or something else." [John Bunyan]

"Repentance is necessary for God's own people, who have a real work of grace and are Israelites indeed. They must offer up a daily sacrifice of tears. The Antinomians hold that when any come to believe they have a writ of ease, and there remains nothing for them now to do but to rejoice. Yes, they have something else to do, and that is to repent. Repentance is a continuous act. The issue of godly sorrow must not be quote stopped till death." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 69]

In answering the question, "Won't repentance take away our joy?" Thomas Watson wrote: "The oil of joy is poured chiefly into a broken heart . . . in a penitent heart . . . grow the sugared joys of God's Spirit. God turns the water of tears into the juice of the grape which

exhilarates and makes glad the heart. Who should rejoice if not the repenting soul? He is heir to all the promises, and is not that matter for joy? God dwells in a contrite heart, and must there not needs be joy there? . . . Repentance does not take away a Christian's music, but raises it to a note higher and makes it sweeter." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 102-103]

"I am sure that repentance is of such importance that there is no being saved without it. After Paul's shipwreck he swam to shore on planks and broken pieces of the ship. In Adam we all suffered shipwreck, and repentance is the only plank left us after shipwreck to swim to heaven." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 12-13]

RESURRECTION:

The Body of
Benjamin Franklin, Printer
(Like the cover of an old book, its contents worn out,
And script of its lettering and gilding,
Lies here, food for worms.
But the work shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,
In a new and more elegant edition,
Revised and corrected
By The Author
[Benjamin Franklin's autobiographical epitaph]

REVELATION, BOOK OF:

C.H Spurgeon once professed profound ignorance of the meaning of Revelation and said "Only fools and madmen are positive in their interpretations."

REVENGE:

Sacrificial Sheep Shoves Egyptian to His Death (1/3/01)

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt (Reuters) - An Egyptian sheep destined for sacrificial slaughter forestalled its owner's plans by pushing him to his death from a three-storey building in Alexandria, police said on Tuesday. They said Waheeb Hamoudah, 56, who worked in the police tax evasion department, had been feeding the sheep he had tethered on the rooftop when it butted him. Neighbours found Hamoudah lying bleeding and concussed on the ground below, with several broken bones, on Monday. He died soon after reaching hospital. Hamoudah had been fattening the sheep for the past six weeks and planned to kill it for Eid al- Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice, in early March. Many Egyptian city-dwellers keep livestock on rooftops, balconies or in basements, especially in the run-up to Eid al-Adha.

REVIVAL:

"To echo an early Reformation thought, when the ploughman and the garage attendant know the Bible as well as the theologian does, and know it better than some contemporary theologians, then the desired awakening shall have already occurred." [Gordon Clark, cited by John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 142]

J.C. Ryle, speaking of the spiritual condition of England in the mid to late 1700s wrote:

"And as for the weighty truths for which Hooper and Latimer had gone to the stake, and Baxter and scores of Puritans had gone to jail, they seemed clean forgotten and laid on the shelf. When such was the state of things in churches and chapels, it can surprise no one to learn that the land was deluged with infidelity and scepticism. The prince of this world made good use of his opportunity. His agents were active and zealous in promulgating every kind of strange and blasphemous opinion. Collins and Tinclal denounced Christianity as priestcraft. Whiston pronounced the miracles of the Bible to be grand impositions. Woolston declared them to be allegories. Arianism and Socinianism were openly taught by Clark and Priestly, and became fashionable among the intellectual part of the community. Of the utter incapacity of the pulpit to stem the progress of all this flood of evil, one single fact will give us some idea. The celebrated lawyer, Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III., to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says that he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ!" [*The Christian Leaders of The Last Century*]

"Geneva was a pretty wild city back in the days before the Reformation. You'd never know it to visit it today, the Swiss are such a stolid people, but back in those days they used to have very wild times—they used to actually run around naked, sing songs and that sort of thing. It was almost like New Orleans at Mardi Gras. And they had a ruling body called the Council of 200, and they passed all kinds of laws against it, because they thought to have the city act properly you must have good laws. So they said you mustn't run around the city naked singing songs; it didn't do anything at all. So eventually they said, 'Well, maybe the answer is religion. We have been a Catholic country all this time, maybe we need to become a Protestant country.' And so, in 1535, they declared' as The Council, from that time on Geneva was going to be a Protestant country, they would align themselves with the Reformation. Do you know what happened? Nothing at all, of course! Same problems existed. But they did do something good along the way. They said, 'If we are going to be Protestant city we need a Protestant preacher.' Luther was occupied, of course. But there was this rather skinny intellectual from Paris; his name was John Calvin. And they said, 'Come on over here John and see if you can be our preacher.' So he came the following year, 1536. And he began to teach the Bible. You know what he was teaching in those days? He was teaching Calvinism, of course! And the people didn't like it then any more than they like it today or in the time of Jesus Christ. So he wasn't there very long, a couple years, and they said, 'Look, we've had enough of this, get out of here!' And so they sent him away and he went on down the Rhine to Strasbourg where he settled in for about 2 ½ more years—he liked it down there in Strasbourg. But things were not doing well in Geneva. All of the old problems were continuing. And finally they said, 'Look, we probably should bring this guy Calvin back.' And so they did; they prevailed upon him to come—he didn't

want to go—but they got him to come. And so he came back in 1541. Now he didn't have any power; he didn't have any authority—he already failed once—no political power. The first year he was there they didn't even bother to pay him. So he certainly didn't even have money. But he did have a Bible and he came back and started to teach it. And the story is he picked up in 1541 exactly where he left off in 1538, 2 ½ years before. I don't know what verse that was, but I was just talking about Romans 6:11 and if that's what he was talking about he said something like this, 'Now the last time we were studying verse 11 and I'd like you to open your Bibles to verse 12 because we are going to study verse 12 today.' And he began to teach. He taught the Bible every day, several times on Sunday. And under the impact of the preaching of the Bible by John Calvin, Geneva was radically transformed. People became converted, when the became converted they stopped behaving like pagans, they started acting like Christians. All of the immorality declined. They began to be concerned about their neighbors. There were all kinds of poor people in the city, because it was a refuge center for refugees from all over Europe because of the persecutions. They were sleeping out on the grates. They said, 'We need to do something about people.' So they built hospices to take care of them; many were sick, they built hospitals. There were children running all over the place; they said, 'Look, how are these children going to grow up to be Christians if they can't study the Bible and they cant' study the Bible if they can't read, so we better start educating them.' So they established a whole system of schools that began with the youngest grades and went right on up the great Academy established by Calvin where the teaching was for the minsters who went out and spread the Gospel all over French speaking Europe. And they got interested in industry. Calvin taught, as you know, that money was not a bad thing, it was a case of stewardship, it should be used for God. So they began to apply their resources in developing industry, they brought in the silk industry and other things, and the city began to prosper. John Knox was one who had studied there, and he said years later from where he was in Scotland that in those days Geneva had become literally a new Reformation. The way it happened was by the teaching of the Word. Nothing is more important than that." [James M. Boice, "Preaching the Bible: The Sufficiency of Scripture," cassette tape 2, side 2, Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/99]

REWARD:

The ancient Greek writer Plutarch records that when a Spartan won a victory in the games, his reward was that he might stand beside his king in a battle. A Spartan wrestler at the Olympic games was offered a very considerable bribe to abandon the struggle, but he refused. Finally, after a terrific effort, he won his victory. Someone said to him: 'Well, Spartan, what have you got out of this costly victory you have won?' He answered: 'I have won the privilege of standing in front of my king in battle.'" [cited in William Barclay, 1 Timothy 42-43]

RIGHT AND WRONG:

"Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority share in it."

-- Leo Tolstoy, A Confession

"Right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it."

-- Augustine of Hippo

"If you are afraid of being lonely, don't try to be right."

-- Jules Renard

"The eternal difference between right and wrong does not fluctuate, it is immutable."

-- Patrick Henry

RIDDLES:

Did you hear what happened to the cannibal who ate a charismatic?.....He threw up his arms.

"what is more wicked than Satan, greater than God, and if you eat it you will die?" (answer: "nothing").

A Few to Think About:

- * A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where train stops. On my desk, I have a work station...

- * If quitters never win, and winners never quit, what fool came up with "quit while you're ahead"?

- * I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible whole lot more as they get older, then it dawned on me. they were cramming for their finals.

- * I thought about how mothers feed their babies with little tiny spoons and forks, so I wonder what Chinese mothers use...Toothpicks?

- * Why do they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do...write to these men? Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the mailmen could look for them while they delivered the mail?

- * How much deeper would oceans be if sponges didn't live there?

- * If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the OTHERS here for?

- * Go ahead and take risks....just be sure that everything will turn out OK.

- * If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

- * Ever wonder what the speed of lightning would be if it didn't zigzag?

- * Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

- * How come you don't ever hear about grunted employees? And who has been dissing them anyhow?

- * Since light travels faster than sound, isn't that why people appear bright until you hear them speak?

- * How come "abbreviated" is such a long word?

- * If it's zero degrees outside today and it's supposed to be twice as cold tomorrow, how cold is it going to be?

Question: Would you rather have a tiger attack you or a lion? Answer: The lion (you'd rather have the tiger attack the lion).

How many months have 28 days? All of them.

FIGURE THESE OUT!

The maker doesn't want it; the buyer doesn't use it; and the user doesn't see it. What is it? [Answer: A coffin]

A child is born in Boston, Massachusetts, to parents who were both born in Boston, Massachusetts. The child is not a United States citizen. How is this possible? [Answer: The child was born before 1776]

Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain on earth? [Answer: Mount Everest!]

Clara Clatter was born on December 27th, yet her birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible? [Answer: Clara lives in the Southern Hemisphere]

Captain Frank and some of the boys were exchanging old war stories. Art Bragg offered one about how his grandfather led a battalion against a German division during World War I. Through brilliant maneuvers he defeated them and captured valuable territory. After the battle he was presented with a sword bearing the inscription "To Captain Bragg for Bravery, Daring and Leadership. World War I. From the Men of Battalion 8." Captain Frank looked at Art and said, "You really don't expect anyone to believe that yarn, do you?" What's wrong with the story? [Answer: World War I wasn't called "World War I" until World War II]

What is one thing that all wise men, regardless of their religion or politics, agree is between heaven and earth? [Answer: The word "and"]

In what year did Christmas and New Year's fall in the same year? [Answer: They fall in the same year every year. New Year's Day just arrives very early in the year and Christmas arrives very late in the same year]

A woman from New York married ten different men from that city, yet she did not break any laws. None of these men died, and she never divorced. How was this possible? [Answer: The lady was a Justice of the Peace]

Why are 1990 American dollar bills worth more than 1989 American dollar bills? [Answer: One thousand nine hundred and ninety dollar bills are worth one dollar more than one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine dollar bills]

How many times can you subtract the number 5 from 25? [Answer: Only once, and then you are subtracting it from 20]

How could you rearrange the letters in the words "new door" to make one word? Note: There is only one correct answer [Answer: "one word"]

Even if they are starving, natives living in the Arctic will never eat a penguin's egg. Why not? [Answer: Penguins live in the Antarctic]

Which is correct to say, "The yolk of the egg are white" or "The yolk of the egg is white"? [Answer: Neither. The yolk of the egg is yellow]

In Okmulgee, Oklahoma, you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not? [Answer: You have to take a picture of a man with a camera, not with a wooden leg]

There were an electrician and a plumber waiting in line for admission to the International Home Show. One of them was the father of the other's son. How could this be possible? [Answer: They were husband and wife]

After the new Canon Law that took effect on November 27, 1983, would a Roman Catholic man be allowed to marry his widow's sister? [Answer: No. A dead man can marry no one]

How many outs are there in an inning? [Answer: Six. Three in each half of the inning]

How many animals of each sex did Moses take on the Ark? [Answer: Moses took no animals. It was Noah on the Ark]

A clerk in the butcher shop is 5' 10" tall. What does he weigh? [Answer: Meat]

A farmer has 17 sheep and all but 9 die. How many are left? [Answer: Nine]

ROMAN CATHOLICISM:

"That we may in all things attain the truth, that we may not err in anything, we ought ever hold as a fixed principle that when I see white I believe it to be black, if the superior authorities of the Church define it to be so." [Ignatius Loyola]

The Council of Toulouse in 1229 A.D, stated: "We prohibit laymen possessing copies of the Old and New Testament ... We forbid them most severely to have them in the popular vernacular." The Council of Trent in the 16th century placed the Bible on its list of prohibited books. People were forbidden to read the Bible without a license from a Roman Catholic bishop. The council warned: "If any one shall dare to read or keep in his possession that book, without such a license, he shall not receive absolution (from the punishment of sins) till he has given it up to his ordinary (bishop)."

What would you say of such a one, when you behold him sitting upon the throne glittering in purple and gold? Must he not be the "Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God?" [From a speech against the sacerdotal system by Arnulf, bishop of Orleans, at the Synod of Verzy in 991. Cited in Sinclair Ferguson, In The Year of Our Lord, 106]

Nicholas Ridley (1500-55) "quotes Theodoret of Cyrus explaining that, in referring to bread and wine as his body and blood, Christ 'was not changing the nature itself.' Theodoret affirms that the sacraments, 'after the sanctification, do not go out of their own nature.' Ridley describes the Roman reply to this evidence:

At these words the Papists do startle; and, to say the truth, these words be so plain, so full, and so clear, that they cannot tell what to say: but yet they will not cease to go

about to play the cuttles, and to cast their colors over them, that the truth, which is so plainly told, should not have place." [Garry J. Williams, *Silent Witnesses: Lessons on Theology, Life, and the Church from Christians of the Past*, 216]

"I have said that although justification is 'by faith alone,' faith is not the ground of justification; only Christ is that. What role, then, is played by faith? Faith is what receives the grace of God in Christ. So theologians have described its role as instrumental. Faith claims no merit for itself; it makes no claim to deserve the gift of God's righteousness. It confesses that only Christ can save, and only his righteousness can justify.

This is the main difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic views of justification. For Roman Catholicism, justification is primarily God's making us righteous, not declaring us righteous. It is not a consistently forensic concept, but overlaps sanctification. So on the Roman view, God makes us righteous within and declare us to be righteous on the basis of his 'infused righteousness.' That infused righteousness, which includes both faith and works, merits eternal life. This means, then, that salvation is based partly on our works. The consequence, then, is that we cannot be assured of our salvation in this life, because we are never sure whether our works have been sufficient." [John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 969]

"I am aware that, if I undertake to prove that Romanism is not Christianity, I must expect to be called 'bigoted, harsh, uncharitable.' Nevertheless, I am not daunted, for I believe that on a right understanding of this subject depends the salvation of millions." [T.W. Medhurst, Is Romanism Christianity in *The Fundamentals*]

"But if Peter's apostleship had a peculiar reference to the Jews, let the Romanists see on what ground they derive from him their succession to the primacy. If the Pope of Rome claims the primacy because he is Peter's successor, he ought to exercise it over the Jews." [John Calvin, comment on Galatians 2:8]

This [Paul's rebuke of Peter in Galatians 2:11ff.] is another thunderbolt which strikes the Papacy of Rome. It exposes the impudent pretensions of the Roman Antichrist, who boasts that he is not bound to assign a reason, and sets at defiance the judgment of the whole Church. Without rashness, without undue boldness, but in the exercise of the power granted him by God, this single individual chastises Peter, in the presence of the whole Church; and Peter submissively bows to the chastisement. Nay, the whole debate on those two points was nothing less than a manifest overthrow of that tyrannical primacy, which the Romanists foolishly enough allege to be founded on divine right. If they wish to have God appearing on their side, a new Bible must be manufactured; if they do not wish to have him for an open enemy, those two chapters of the Holy Scriptures must be expunged. [John Calvin, comment on Galatians 2:11]

"Here let me bring in another point. I is a most fearful fact, that in no age since the Reformation has Popery made such fearful strides in England as during the last few years. I had comfortably believed that Popery was only feeding itself upon foreign subscriptions, upon a few titled perverts, and imported monks and nuns. I dreamed that its progress was not real. In fact, I have often smiled at the alarm of many of my brethren at the progress of Popery. But, my dear friends, we have been mistaken, grievously mistaken. If you will read a valuable paper in the magazine called 'Christian Work,' those of you who are not

acquainted with it will be perfectly startled at its revelations. This great city is now covered with a new work of monks, and priests, and sisters of mercy, and the conversions made are not by ones or twos, but by scores, till England is being regarded as the most hopeful spot for Romish missionary enterprise in the whole world; and at the present moment there is not a mission which is succeeding to anything like the extent which the English mission is.

I covet not their money, I despise their sophistries, but I marvel at the way in which they gain their funds for the erection of their ecclesiastical buildings. It really is an alarming matter to see so many of our countrymen going off to that superstition which as a nation we once rejected, and which it was supposed we should never again receive. Popery is making advances such as you would never believe, though a spectator should tell it to you. Close to your very doors, perhaps even in your own houses, you may have evidence ere long of what a march Romanism is making.

And to what is it to be ascribed? I say, with every ground of probability, that there is no marvel that Popery should increase when you have two things to make it grow: first of all, the falsehood of those who profess a faith which they do not believe, which is quite contrary to the honesty of the Romanist, who does through evil report and good report hold his faith; and then you have, secondly, this form of error known as baptismal regeneration and commonly called Puseyism, which is not only Puseyism, but Church of Englandism, because it is in the Prayer Book, as plainly as words can express it—you have this baptismal regeneration preparing stepping stones to make it easy for men to go to Rome. I have but to open my eyes a little to foresee Romanism rampant everywhere in the future, since its germs are spreading everywhere in the present.

In one of our courses of legislation but last Tuesday the Lord Chief Justice showed his superstition, by speaking of 'the risk of the calamity of children dying unbaptized!' Among Dissenters you see a veneration for structures, a modified belief in the sacredness of places, which is idolatry; for to believe in the sacredness of anything but of God and of his own Word, is to idolize, where it is to believe in the sacredness of the men, the priests, or in the sacredness of the bricks and mortar, or of the fine linen, or what not, which you may use in the worship of God. I see this coming up everywhere—a belief in ceremony, a resting in ceremony, a veneration for altars, fonts, and churches—a veneration so profound that we must not venture upon a remark, or straightway of sinners we are chief. Here is the essence and soul of Popery, peeping up under the garb of a decent respect for sacred things. It is impossible but that the Church of Rome must spread, when we who are the watch-dogs of the fold are silent, and others are gently and smoothly turving the road, and making it as soft and smooth as possible, that converts may travel down to the nethermost hell of Popery.

We want John Knox back again. Do not talk to me of mild and gentle men, of soft manners and squeamish words, we want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should 'ding our pulpits into blads,' it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action. We want Luther tell men the truth unmistakably, in homely phrase. The velvet has got into our minister's mouths of late, but we must unrobe ourselves of soft raiment, and truth must be spoken, and nothing but truth; for of all lies which have dragged millions down to hell, I look upon this as being one of the most atrocious—that in a Protestant Church there should be found those who swear that baptism saves the soul. Call a man a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Dissenter, or a Churchman, that is nothing to me if he says that baptism saves the soul, out

upon him, out upon him, he states what God never taught, what the Bible never laid down, and what ought never to be maintained by men who profess that the Bible, is the religion of Protestants.

I have spoken thus much, and there will be some who will say—spoken thus much bitterly. Very well, be it so. Physic is often bitter, but it shall work well, and the physician is not bitter because his medicine is so; or if he be accounted so, it will matter, so long as the patient is cured; at all events, it is no business of the patient whether the physician is bitter or not, his business is with his own soul's health. There is the truth, and I have told it to you; and if there should be one among you, or if there should be one among the readers of this sermon when it is printed, who is resting on baptism, or resting upon ceremonies of any sort, I do beseech you, shake off this venomous faith into the fire as Paul did the viper which fastened on his hand. I pray you do not rest on baptism. 'No outward forms can make you clean, the leprosy lies deep within.' I do beseech you to remember that you must have a new heart and a right spirit, and baptism cannot give you these. You must run from your sins and follow after Christ; you must have such a faith as shall make your life holy and your speech devoid, or else you have not the faith of God's elect, and into God's kingdom you shall never come. I pray you never rest upon this wretched and rotten foundation, this deceitful invention of antichrist. O, may God save you from it, and bring you to seek the true rock of refuge for weary souls." [C.H. Spurgeon cited in *Quotations Past and Current* (Newsletter by Tony M. Montano) dated March/April, 1998, Number 4.]

"Unless with all your hearts you abandon the Papacy, you cannot save your souls. The reign of the Pope is so opposed to the law of Christ and the life of the Christian, that it will be safer to roam the desert and never see the face of man, than abide under the rule of Antichrist. I warn every man to look to his soul's welfare, lest by submitting to the Pope he deny Christ. The time is come when Christians must choose between death here and death hereafter. For my own part, I choose death here. I cannot lay such a burden upon my soul as to hold my peace in this matter: I must look to the great reckoning. I abominate the Babylonian pest. As long as I live I will proclaim the truth. If the wholesale destruction of souls throughout Christendom cannot be prevented, at least I shall labour to the utmost of my power to rescue my own countrymen from the bottomless pit of perdition." [Martin Luther, December 11, 1520, Sermon at Wittenberg. Cited in Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, Book 6, Ch 2, p 296]

I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept (cf. Mark 4:26-29) or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses against it. — Martin Luther (in a sermon)

"The Vatican II Catholic view of the Bible, influenced by Protestant neoorthodoxy, limits the veracity and authority of Scripture to those teachings that of the "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" presented to the first session of the Council expressed the traditional Catholic view that Scripture is "absolutely immune from error." This position was challenged and ultimately replaced by a more "modern" stance, the heart of which reads: "The holy books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into the sacred writings for the sake of our

salvation" (no. II). Avant-garde Catholic authorities thus insist that the so-called nonsalvific teachings of the Bible are neither inerrant nor binding on the faithful." [Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, I.134]

"Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, I much more the man who labours to restore Popery among us. In our fathers' days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets; and now there are some who would rebuild that accursed system upon its old foundation. O Lord, be pleased to thwart their unrighteous endeavours, and pull down every stone which they build. It should be a serious business with us to be thoroughly purged of every error which may have a tendency to foster the spirit of Popery, and when we have made a clean sweep at home we should seek in every way to oppose its all too rapid spread abroad in the church and in the world. This last can be done in secret by fervent prayer, and in public by decided testimony. We must warn with judicious boldness those who are inclined towards the errors of Rome; we must instruct the young in gospel truth, and tell them of the black doings of Popery in the olden times. We must aid in spreading the light more thoroughly through the land, for priests, like owls, hate daylight. Are we doing all we can for Jesus and the gospel? If not, our negligence plays into the hands of the priestcraft. What are we doing to spread the Bible, which is the Pope's bane and poison? Are we casting abroad good, sound gospel writings? Luther once said, "The devil hates goose quills" and, doubtless, he has good reason, for ready writers, by the Holy Spirit's blessing, have done his kingdom much damage. If the thousands who will read this short word this night will do all they can to hinder the rebuilding of this accursed Jericho, the Lord's glory shall speed among the sons of men. Reader, what can you do? What will you do? [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Joshua 6:26]

There is an apocryphal story of a debate that took place during the middle ages between the Roman Catholic Pope and a Jewish Rabbi. It was started when the Pope decided that all Jews were to leave the Vatican. This resulted in quite an uproar among the Jews. So the Pope made a deal. He would have a religious debate with their foremost Jewish Rabbi. If the Jews won, they could stay, if they lost they would have to leave. They chose a middle-aged Rabbi by the name of Moishe. Moishe agreed to debate on one condition, that neither he nor the Pope be allowed to talk during the debate. The Pope agreed. The day of the debate came. Moishe and the Pope sat opposite one another for a full minute staring each other in the eye. Finally the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Moishe looked back at him and raised one finger. The Pope waved his fingers in a circle around his head. Moishe then pointed to the ground. The Pope pulled a wafer and a glass of wine from his coat. Moishe pulled out an apple from his. The Pope then stood up and said, "I give up. This man is too good. He has won and the Jews can stay."

An hour later the cardinals gathered around the Pope inquiring about what had happened. The Pope said, "First I held up three fingers to represent the Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that we both believed in one God. Then I waved my finger around me to show him that God was transcendent, He was all around us. He responded by pointing to the ground showing me that God was also immanent, right here with us. I took the wine and wafer from my coat to show him that Jesus died on the cross for sin. He pulled out an apple to remind me that Adam and Eve brought sin into the world. He had an answer for everything. What could I do?

Meanwhile, the Jewish community crowded around Moishe. What happened they asked? "Well," said Moishe, "First he said to me that the Jews had three days to leave. I told him that not one of us was leaving. Then he told me that this whole city would be cleared of Jews. I let him know that we were staying right here." "And then what happened?" someone asked. "I don't know," replied Moishe. "He took out his lunch and I took out mine."

The difference between Rome and the Reformation can be seen in these simple formulas:

Roman View: Faith + Works = Justification
Protestant View: Faith = Justification + Works
[R.C. Sproul, cited in MSJ, Vol. 16, No. 2]

"I am tradition" (Pope Pius IX, Vatican I, 1870, cited in *Sola Scriptura*, 12)

In Foxes book of Martyrs, the story is told of a Christian man who was to be burned at the stake because he would not bow down to a wafer and worship it as God incarnate (as the Roman Church demanded of him). So they bound him to a stake and piled wood and straw around him. The executioner stood by and awaited word to put the torch to the kindling while a priest stood nearby and preached a sermon. The priest took for his text the first two verses of 1 Timothy 4 and applied them to the martyr who was to die as a heretic. Having finished the sermon, the priest asked: "Have you anything to say before being burned? Will you recant and receive the absolution of the Church?" The man replied, "I have nothing to say except that I wish you would read out loud the next verse following the two you have read." The priest looked at the passage which said "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." But instead of reading the words out loud, the priest gave the signal to put the torch to the coals. He then took his Bible and threw it into the fire.

"If anyone says that the faith that justifies is nothing else but trust in the divine mercy which pardons sins because of Christ, or that it is trust alone by which we are justified, let him be anathema." [Roman Catholic Council of Trent, never altered or denied by the church]

"The Pope is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under a veil of flesh." [The National Catholic, July, 1895]

"The Catholic Church is the Mother of the New Testament, and the only authority which non-Catholics have for inspiration of the Scriptures is the authority of the Catholic Church." [The Faith of Millions, 144-45]

"The Anointing of the sick is the sacrament to be administered by a priest and completes the Catholic's conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ." [Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church]

On May 31, 1995 the Vatican Information Service released these words from Pope John Paul II: "The gift of salvation cannot be limited to those who, in an explicit way, believe in Christ and have entered the church. If salvation is destined for all, it should be in reach of all . . . the divine plan has also predisposed a path of salvation for those who through no fault of their own do not know Christ and do not see themselves as Christians."

In a separate Vatican release the Pope amplified Mary's role in the salvation process when he depicted her as "the spiritual mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."

I will have no . . . complicity with Rome; because I believe Rome to be an apostate. A worshiper of Bread for God; a remover of the sovereign mediatorship of Christ; a destroyer of the true gospel, she teaches a system which, if any man believes or follows as she teaches it, he will infallibly be lost--he must be. [George Sayles Bishop, The Doctrines of Grace (1910)]

Cardinal Krol, former spiritual leader of Philadelphia's more than a million Roman Catholics, told *The Philadelphia Enquirer* that his major worries were "My salvation, getting to heaven." The Vatican's highest theological authority, Cardinal Ratzinger, expresses the same concern for his salvation. New York's Cardinal O'Connor told *The New York Times*,

"Church teaching is that I don't know, at any given moment, what my eternal future will be. I can hope, pray, do my very best--but I still don't know. Pope John Paul II doesn't know absolutely that he will go to heaven, nor does Mother Teresa of Calcutta." The latter expressed her tenuous hope at the 1993 Presidential Prayer Breakfast: "One of the most demanding things for me is traveling everywhere--and with publicity. I have said to Jesus that if I don't go to heaven for anything else, I will be going to heaven for all the traveling with all the publicity, because it has purified me and sacrificed me and made me really ready to go to heaven." [The Berean Call, July 1996]

"O gentlest heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in purgatory, have mercy on the soul of Thy departed servant, Be not severe in Thy Judgement but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames and do Thou O merciful Saviour send Thy angels to conduct Thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen." [From a Roman Catholic funeral remembrance card, dated in the 1970s]

"Although tradition goes not rule our interpretation, it does guide it. If upon reading a particular passage, you have come up with an interpretation that has escaped the notice of every other Christian for 2000 years, or has been championed by universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation." [R.C. Sproul, *The Agony of Deceit*, pp. 34-35]

"The church of God has no power to establish any article of faith; nor has it ever established any; nor will it ever establish any.... The church of God has no power to confirm articles or precepts or the Holy Writings as by a higher sanction or judicial authority; nor has it ever done this; nor will it ever do it. Rather, the church of God is approved and confirmed by the Holy Writings as by a higher and judicial authority." [Luther]

"Essence of lies, and quintessence of blasphemy, as the religion of Rome is, it nevertheless fascinates a certain order of Protestants..." [Spurgeon, C.H., "The Religion of Rome," from the January 1873 *Sword and Trowel*]

"The sooner we let certain Archbishops and Cardinals know that we are aware of their designs, and will in nothing co-operate with them, the better for us and our country. Of course, we shall be howled at as bigots, but we can afford to smile at that cry, when it comes from the church which invented the Inquisition. 'No peace with Rome' is the motto of reason as well as of religion." [Spurgeon, C.H., "The Religion of Rome," from the January 1873 *Sword and Trowel*]

". . . for all of the crowing over the chaos in Protestantism by various Catholic ex-Protestants, I know of no more practically flexible and ultimately meaningless notion of authority than that which has historically been practiced by the papacy." --Carl Trueman, *Minority Report*, 168.

RULERS:

GOD ORDAINS RULERS As we turn to the Scriptures to determine their teaching on the sovereignty of God over the nations, there are several specific truths that stand out. First, God in His sovereignty has established government for the good of all people—believer as well as unbeliever. Paul said, "There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.... For [the ruler] is God's servant to do you good" (Romans 13: 1,4). Admittedly the statement, "the ruler is God's servant to do us good," seems difficult to accept when we see some of our brothers and sisters in Christ persecuted and perhaps killed because of their Christian commitment. We should remember again that God in His infinite wisdom and sovereignty and for reasons known only to Himself, allows rulers to act contrary to His revealed will. But the evil actions of those rulers against God's children are never beyond the bounds of His sovereign will. And we should remember that God works in history from an eternal perspective, whereas we tend to view the outworking of history from a temporal perspective.

Because God has ordained rulers for our good, and because He sovereignly rules over their actions, we should pray that they will rule for our good. Paul urges that prayers be made "for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2: 2). Prayer is the most tangible expression of trust in God. If we would trust God for our persecuted brothers and sisters in other countries, we must be diligent in prayer for their rulers. If we would trust God when decisions of government in our own country go against our best interests, we must pray for His working in the hearts of those officials and legislators who make those decisions. The truth that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord is meant to be a stimulus to prayer, not a stimulus to a fatalistic attitude.

Next we see that in addition to establishing government, God determines who rules in those governments. "The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men" (Daniel 4: 17, see also verse 32). When we consider some of the evil tyrants and dictators that have reigned, as well as some of the weak and foolish men who have held high office, even in this century, we are amazed to learn that they have ruled in the sovereign will of God. But that is what Scripture tells us. Once again, we must view this truth from God's eternal perspective. Psalm 76: 10, in the King James Version, says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shall thou restrain." While more recent translations vary from that particular rendering, it is a truth supported by the whole tenor of Scripture. God will allow people, whether

strong-willed tyrants or weak-kneed politicians, to do only what ultimately results in His glory. How sin and evil ultimately redound to God's glory is a mystery, but it is a truth affirmed throughout Scripture.

Just as God determines who rules in the nations, He also determines their time of ruling. Isaiah 40: 23-24 says: 'He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.' We see this most vividly illustrated in the life of the powerful Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar. At the height of his power, Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was taken from him, and he was driven away from his people to eat grass like cattle. Seven years later, his sanity was restored to him, his advisors and nobles sought him out, and he was restored to his throne and became even greater than before (see Daniel 4: 33-36). From the greatest monarch of his time to a madman living like a wild beast to an even greater monarch, all in just over seven years, is a roller coaster series of events that could only be orchestrated by a sovereign God. And the God who ruled absolutely in the life and fortunes of the most powerful monarch of that time still rules in the fortunes and destinies of governments today. No government or dictator is so powerful as to be beyond the sway of His sovereign rule over all the nations of the earth. Jerry Bridges *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*, 69-72

SAINTS:

"Modern church saints are created by the exaltation of man and his works, whereas God creates a saint by the exaltation of Jesus Christ. The church of Rome has a canonical process by which it creates a saint. Their saints are often created for purposes of political expediency as in the case of Joan of Arc who had actually been put to death by an official Roman Catholic tribunal. Many times saints are created solely for geographical reasons in order to spread them about in strategic areas. The procedure for canonizing a saint is centuries old and always remains the same. The candidate for sainthood is first beatified, or counted as among the blessed dead, and is thus set apart in potential saintliness. . . . When the future saint has been beatified, the church authorities in charge of canonization appoint both a defender and an accuser known as an *advocatus diaboli* or "devil's advocate." The accuser brings all the charges against the candidate which can be gathered; while the defender, who has never been known to lose a single case, always manages to clear the candidate of all charges that would disqualify him from sainthood. In this manner ecclesiastical saints are created to form an order of super-heavenly beings to whom their creators ultimately address their prayers. [Roy Laurin, Colossians: Where Life is Established, 27]

SANCTIFICATION:

"My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am or shall be or feel or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has done, and in what He is now doing for me. Hallelujah!" [Charles Spurgeon, updated English by Alistair Begg]

"As we . . . when we have been engrafted in Christ, are righteous in God's sight because our iniquities are covered by Christ's sinlessness, so our works are righteous because whatever fault is otherwise in them is buried in Christ's purity, and is not charged to our account." J. Calvin, *Institutes*, III.17.10

"A Christian is not of hasty growth, like a mushroom, but that like an oak, the progress of which is hardly perceptible, but in time becomes a great deep-rooted tree." [John Newton]

"This restoration [to Christlikeness] does not take place in one moment or one day or one year; but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples, renewing all their minds to true purity that they may practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death." — John Calvin [*Institutes*, 3.16.1]

A woman was asked by a co-worker, "What is it like to be a Christian?" The co-worker replied, "It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. Then he cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc., and then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see."

In 1957, a monastery in Thailand was being relocated and a group of monks was put in charge of moving a giant clay statue of Buddha. In the mist of the move, one of the monks noticed a crack in the figure, so the work was immediately halted before more damage occurred. That night, one of the monks went to check on the statue. He aimed his flashlight all over the figure, but suddenly noticed a reflective gleam from the crack. His curiosity aroused, he procured a hammer and chisel and began widening the split. As he knocked off piece after piece of clay, the stature grew brighter and brighter—and after hours of work the clay was all gone, and in its place stood a golden image of Buddha. Many historians now believe that the original statue had been covered with a layer of clay by Thai monks several hundred years earlier, to hide its worth before an attack by the Burmese army. All of the monks present on that occasion died in the battle, and it was not until 1957 that its great value was discovered. [cited in "Pulpit Helps", August 2003, 11]

"I have thought when I was in perplexity of soul, that I never should see what it was for; and I have almost told God so. It was impossible to see the object intended. Such a cloud of pitchy darkness lowered over it, that I felt in my own mind convinced that I never should be brought to see the reason for the dispensation. But I have been brought to see the reason, and to view the merciful kindness of God in bringing me into those straits and difficulties, wherein He caused the sighs and groans of my heart to ascend to His holy ears. But when we are passing under these exercises, we seem as though we could almost dare to tell God to His face, that even He Himself cannot bring good out of them—as though the matter was too crooked even for His arm to make straight. Such poor wretches are we when left to ourselves!" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:96.]

An ancient refiner, working with silver ore separating the pure silver from the dross, knew that his job was complete when he could look into the cauldron and see his own reflection in the shining silver. It is the same with God's working in us.

"But what a different way of building up [i.e. God's work in our lives that is often misunderstood by others] this is from being build up in the Arminian method on the one hand, and the dead Calvinistic mode on the other! The Arminian says, 'You must pray, strive, and do your best; you must be active in God's cause; you must go about collecting money for the missionaries; you must be up and doing; and so in some way or other make yourself fit to receive the grace of God.' The dry Calvinist says, 'Away with your doubts and fears, we will have none of that rubbish. . . . Believers are to rejoice always, and have done with sighs and groans. The gospel is all liberty and peace. Christ is everything, all in all--and therefore way with our your rubbish of experience.' So that the Arminian on the one hand pulls down the work of Christ to substitute creature-righteousness; and the dry Calvinist on the other pulls down the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul to build up a nominal Christ." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," *Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot* (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:105-106.]

"A Christian is at the same time a sinner and a saint; he is at once bad and good. For in our own person we are in sin, and in our own name we are sinners. But Christ brings us another name in which there is forgiveness of sin, so that for His sake our sin is forgiven and done away. Both then are true. There are sins . . . and yet there are no sins. . . . Thou standest there for God not in thy name but in Christ's name; thou dost adorn thyself with grace and righteousness although in thine own eyes and in thine own person, thou art a miserable sinner." [Martin Luther, cited in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 152:608 (Oct. - Dec. 12995): 400:12, by Robert Saucy, "Sinners" Who Are Forgiven or "Saints" Who Sin?]

Tom Skinner, a black evangelist of the 1960's, who used to be a leader in a gang in Harlem NY, once said: "The Bible tells me that I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly places, which puts me in the highest social level in all the world. Therefore, I do not have to picket, demonstrate, pray-in, sit-in, wait-in to get social acceptability. Why should I break my neck to get into a society that is inferior to the one to which I already belong?" [cited in, Larry Christianson, *The Christian Family*, 207]

In his book *Folk Psalms of Faith*, Ray Stedman tells a story of a woman who had been a school teacher for 25 years. When she heard about a job that would mean a promotion, she applied for the position. However, someone who had been teaching for only one year was hired instead. She went to the principal and asked why. The principal responded, "I'm sorry, but you haven't had 25 years of experience as you claim; you've had only one year's experience 25 times." During that whole time the teacher had not improved. "A Christian is never in a state of completion," so said Luther, "but always in the process of becoming."

We often find that we were better persons just after our conversion than we are after many years of being a Christian. Every day that passes should make us more like Christ, but we tend to grow cooler rather than warmer. [Thomas A Kempis (1380–1471)]

"It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired. And we must not expect too much. Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of their imperfections. I have found that God leaves, even in the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses that seem to be entirely out of place." [Fenelon, 17th c. French Saint, cited by John Piper "Persevering in Ministry," *Cassette Message Dated Sept. 27, 1997*, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"Dear Father, help me grow old with grace, Not over-concerned with form or face. But as furrows deepen this brow of mine, To a greater faith may my heart be inclined. May my understanding of others grow; My caring increase as my steps grow slow. May love bloom forth as my skin tones fade, May I put behind me mistakes I have made. From the past recall only memories sweet, All bitterness trampled beneath my feet. May no day pass without kindly deed, Done for strangers or friend in need. May patience with self and others too, Increase in abundance as my days grow few. Help me prepare for they wonderful place, Dear Father, help me grow old with grace." [Reba Gibson, cited in *Pulpit Helps*, June, 1998]

"Both my mother and father are alcoholics and atheists, and my coming to the Lord is truly a miracle. I was not raised in a Christian home; in fact, my father knew the Bible and would vehemently deny the truths found there, calling them a bunch of 'fairy tales.' When I was ten years old, I read from a Gideon Bible in a Holiday Inn where my family was staying. I was amazed at how the Bible I was reading was not a bunch of fairy tales like my father had told me, but it all made perfect sense to me. After that day, while most kids my age were tying to get out of going to church, I was secretly going to worship every week." [cited in a Gideons International Newsletter dated May 29, 2005]

"Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former student of Karl Stern, runs in New York City the largest abortion clinic in the world, and co-founds the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Law. After being involved directly or indirectly in over 75,000 abortions (including one of his own child) and seeing his political goals achieved with the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide, he comes to understand that he has been killing human beings. In the late 1970's he become a leading pro-life advocate and produces an effective video, *The Silent Scream*. Contact with Christian pro-life workers gets him thinking about the source of their dedication: 'They prayed, they supported and encouraged each other, they sang hymns of joy. . . . They prayed for the unborn babies, and for the confused and pregnant women, and for the doctors and nursed in the clinic. . . . And I wondered: How can these people give of themselves for a constituency that is (and always will be) mute, invisible, and unable to thank them?' Nathanson in the 1990's becomes a Christian." [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 50-51]

"In 1976 Dr. David Block, a professor of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy in Sough Africa, becomes a believer in Christ. He writes, 'I'd listen . . . as the rabbis expounded how God was a personal God and how God would speak to Moses, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and wonder how I fit into all of it. And by the time I entered university I became concerned over the fact that I had no assurance that God was indeed a personal God. . . . Where was the personality and the vibrancy of a God who could speak to David Block? If God is truly God, I reasoned, then why had he suddenly changed his character?' A Christian colleague tells Block that a minister will be able to answer his questions; he reports, 'My parents had taught me to seek answers where they may be found, and so I consented to meet

with this Christian minister. [He] read to me from the New Testament book of Romans where Paul says that Y'shua (Jesus) is a stumbling block to Jewish people, but that those who would believe in Y'shua would never be ashamed. Suddenly it all became very clear to me: Y'shua had fulfilled the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as where the Messiah would be born and how he was to die. . . . I knew that Jesus was the Messiah and is the Messiah. And I surrendered my heart and my soul to Him that day.' He concluded, 'It might seem strange to some that a scientist and a Jew could come to faith in Jesus. But faith is never a leap into the dark. It is always based on evidence. That was how my whole search for God began. I looked through my telescope at Saturn and said to myself, Isn't there a great God out there? The logical next step was to want to meet this Designer face to face.'" [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 52]

SATAN & DEMONS:

"If seduction and darkness were again to begin through the wrath and decree of God (as will happen after our days, it is to be feared), and the devil were to begin to perform signs through some false prophet and perhaps cure a sick person, you would no doubt see the mob press to espouse the cause in such a way that no preaching or warning would be of any avail. . . . For in those who have no love for the truth, the devil will be powerful and strong. . . . If, then, these teachings [of a false prophet] contradict the chief doctrine and article of Christ, we should accord them neither attention nor acceptance though it were to snow miracles daily." [Martin Luther]

"A local newspaper recently told of a well-known television evangelist who was taking a nap in his home when suddenly, he claimed, Satan himself appeared, grabbed him around the neck with both hands, and tried to strangle him to death. When he cried out, his wife came running into the room and chased the devil away. That same man has reported other bizarre experiences over the years." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 183]

So that [Satan] can no sooner cast out his golden bait, but we are ready to play with it, and to nibble at it; he can no sooner throw out his golden ball, but men are apt to run after it, though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit. Ah! how many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God. Christ, and ordinances, till the devil hath set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which hath so bewitched their souls that they have grown to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections. . . . Ah! the time, the thoughts, the spirits, the hearts, the souls, the duties, the services, that the inordinate love of this wicked world doth eat up and destroy, and hath ate up and destroyed. Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings us and sinks us; it kisses us, and betrays us, like Judas; it kisses us and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honours, splendour, and all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have surfeited of these sweet baits and died for ever. [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 102-103]

Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honour, pleasure, profit, but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 30]

The devil is malicious and mean, more so than any of us can imagine, and he marauds constantly with destructive intent. Though he is, as Luther said, God's devil, and is on a chain (a strong one, though admittedly a long one), he is tireless in opposing God, and sets himself to spoil and thwart all the redemptive work that God ever does in human lives. As one means to this end, he labors to ensure that preachers' messages will be either misstated or misheard, so that they will not have the liberating, invigorating, upbuilding effect that is proper to the preached word. Preaching is thus, as all real preachers soon discover, an endless battle for truth and power, a battle that has to be fought afresh each time by watchfulness and prayer. Preachers know themselves to be warriors in God's front line, drawing enemy fire; the experience is grueling, but it confirms to them the importance of their task as ambassadors for Christ and heralds of God, sowers of good seed, stewards of saving truth, shepherds of God's flock, and fathers guiding their spiritual families. . . . In the manner of frontline troops they frequently get scared by the opposition unleashed against them, but they do not panic, and their morale remains high. The challenge of beating back Satan by God's strength, like that of communicating effectively for Christ, is one to which they rise. . . . Preaching God's gospel and God's counsel from the Scriptures was, and is, and always will be, the most honorable and significant activity in the world. [J.I. Packer, "Why Preach?" Introduction to *The Preacher and Preaching*, edited by Samuel T. Logan (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1986), p. 27-29.]

An apocryphal story about the legendary lawyer Clarence Darrow still circulates among law students: Darrow had to defend an especially unsavory client. This was a hard case to make. As the prosecutor ranted and raved to the jury about the heinous nature of the crime and the plight of the suffering victims, Darrow paid him close and courteous attention, puffing distractedly on a large cigar. The ash grew, an eighth of an inch, a half, an inch, two inches, and more--yet the ash did not fall. Darrow didn't seem to notice. He just politely concentrated on the prosecutor's words. But the jury noticed. Instead of paying full attention to the prosecutor, they were drawn again and again to Darrow's cigar--into which he had secretly inserted a thin piece of wire.

SCIENCE:

William B. Provine writes as what Lewis called 'a consistent pessimist', stating: 'There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die . . . That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.' Peter Atkins likewise affirms that (from his naturalistic perspective) when the sun dies: 'We shall have gone the journey of all purposeless stardust, driven unwittingly by chaos, gloriously but aimlessly evolved into sentience, born unchoosingly into the world, unwillingly taken from it, and inescapably returned to nothing.'

Dawkins likes to talk up the emotional rewards of science: 'All the great religions have a place for awe, for ecstatic transport at the wonder and beauty of creation. And it's exactly this feeling of spine-shivering, breath-catching awe--almost worship--this flooding of the chest with ecstatic wonder, that modern science can provide.' However, given Russell's scaffolding, such value-laden terms as 'awe' and 'beauty' refer to nothing but subjective personal reactions taking place within, and relative to, by-products of an evolutionary process lacking any intrinsic meaning or given purpose. In the final analysis, Dawkins

affirms that 'the universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.' As Lewis held (both as an atheist and a Christian): 'Either there is significance in the whole process of things as well as in human activity, or there is no significance in human activity itself . . . You cannot have it both ways. If the world is meaningless, then so are we . . .'

"Because there is a God-ordained order to the creation, human beings can discover that order. It is this order that makes science possible." [Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict*, 36]

Ted Williams, the Hall of Fame baseball player of the Boston Red Sox, was raised by his mother, a zealous member of the Salvation Army. As an adult, Williams, known for his colorful and often blasphemous language, had rejected all expressions of the Christian faith.

He died on July 5, 2002 at the age of 83. Though his will stated his desire to be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Florida Keys, Williams's son John-Henry and younger daughter Claudia conspired to have his remains frozen cryonically.

After Williams' death, an informal "family pact" was presented, signed by Ted, Claudia, and John-Henry, in which they agreed "to be put into biostasis after we die" to "be able to be together in the future, even if it is only a chance."

In a 2009 HBO documentary on the life of Williams, his daughter, Claudia, presented the family's rationale for the decision:

"We all believe in science. And that is our personal choice. It is what holds us together; what gives us hope. And, if you will, that is our faith." [Legends and Legacies: Ted Williams]

"We [scientists] know nothing about it ["nature"] at all. Our knowledge is but the knowledge of school children. . . . We shall know a little more than we do now. But the real nature of things--that we shall never know, never." [Albert Einstein, quoted by G. Crampton in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark*, 21]

"To think about the contrast between the material and the functional, and the illusionary nature of the material world, consider the following statements of one of the characters in Orson Scott Card's novel *Prentice Alvin*:

'Everything's mostly empty. That anvil, it looks solid, don't it? But I tell you it's mostly empty. Just little bits of ironstuff, hanging a certain distance from each other, all patterned there. But most of the anvil is the empty space between. Don't you see? Those bits are acting just like the atoms I'm talking about. So let's say the anvil is like a mountain, only when you get real close you see it's made of gravel. And then when you pick up the gravel, it crumbles in your hand, and you see it's made of dust. And if you could pick up a single fleck of dust you'd see that it was just like the mountain, made of even tinier gravel all over again.'

'You're saying that what we see as solid objects are really nothing but illusion. Little nothings making tiny spheres that are put together to make your bits, and pieces made from bits, and the anvil made from pieces—'

'Everything is made out of living atoms, all obeying the commands that God gave them. And just following those commands, why, some of them get turned into light and heat, and some of them become iron, and some water, and some air, and some of them our own skin and bones. All those things are real—and so those atoms are real.' [cited by John Walton in *The Lost World of Genesis One*, page 144]

The definition of a scientist: "a man who understood nothing until there was nothing left to understand." [The character Matthias in the 1971 Sci-Fi movie, *The Omega Man*]

"The universe has a beginning. . . . This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. . . . For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries." [Robert Jastrow, American astronomer, physicist and cosmologist, in *God and the Astronomers*]

"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries." [Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* NY: Norton 1978, 115-16.]

"Everyone who is seriously interested in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe—a spirit vastly superior to man, and one in the face of which we, without modest powers must feel humble." [Albert Einstein, cited in *World Magazine*, March 15, 2003, 41]

"In 1976 Dr. David Block, a professor of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy in Sough Africa, becomes a believer in Christ. He writes, 'I'd listen . . . as the rabbis expounded how God was a personal God and how God would speak to Moses, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and wonder how I fit into all of it. And by the time I entered university I became concerned over the fact that I had no assurance that God was indeed a personal God. . . . Where was the personality and the vibrancy of a God who could speak to David Block? If God is truly God, I reasoned, then why had he suddenly changed his character?' A Christian colleague tells Block that a minister will be able to answer his questions; he reports, 'My parents had taught me to seek answers where they may be found, and so I consented to meet with this Christian minister. [He] read to me from the New Testament book of Romans where Paul says that Y'shua (Jesus) is a stumbling block to Jewish people, but that those who would believe in Y'shua would never be ashamed. Suddenly it all became very clear to me: Y'shua had fulfilled the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as where the Messiah would be born and how he was to die. . . . I knew that Jesus was the Messiah and is the Messiah. And I surrendered my heart and my soul to Him that day.' He concluded, 'It might seem strange to some that a scientist and a Jew could come to faith in

Jesus. But faith is never a leap into the dark. It is always based on evidence. That was how my whole search for God began. I looked through my telescope at Saturn and said to myself, Isn't there a great God out there? The logical next step was to want to meet this Designer face to face.'" [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 52]

SCHOLARSHIP:

As an illustration of the need for good scholarship:

Bill Mounce tells the story about a woman who was being told by her elders that she was not allowed to divorce her unfaithful husband. They based their argument "on the Greek" claiming that Jesus was really saying that "But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, even including sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery" (Mt 5:32).

Mounce goes on to say: beware of people who claim authoritative knowledge based on something you can't check. If they can cite a well-known translation or commentary writer, or if they make a sensible contextual argument, that is one thing. But to dismiss interpretations to the contrary that are held by all translations, be suspicious. [Except for Adultery - Matt 5:32 (Monday with Mounce 159) 15 Oct 2012]

SECULARISM:

Ted Williams, the Hall of Fame baseball player of the Boston Red Sox, was raised by his mother, a zealous member of the Salvation Army. As an adult, Williams, known for his colorful and often blasphemous language, had rejected all expressions of the Christian faith.

He died on July 5, 2002 at the age of 83. Though his will stated his desire to be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Florida Keys, Williams's son John-Henry and younger daughter Claudia conspired to have his remains frozen cryonically.

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"We all believe in science. And that is our personal choice. It is what holds us together; what gives us hope. And, if you will, that is our faith." [Legends and Legacies: Ted Williams]

Secularists have their own religion. They worship at the altar of naturalism, while cherishing the sacrament of abortion on demand. Their praxis is licentiousness; their revolution, sexual; their unpardonable sin, bigotry. TAB

Here is the fruit of a secular worldview taken from today's news (April 9, 2018):

Casey Lawhorn, a 23-year-old from Tennessee who confessed to the murder of his mother and a friend, with a stolen rifle, reportedly wrote on his Facebook page:

"What I did is unforgivable. And prayer is a waste of time, nothing happens after death, but if there is a hell, I'm going to be in the lake of ice at the bottom. However . . . what I look forward to is the nothingness after death. I've spent a lot of time thinking about murder, wondering what it feels like. But I've barely felt anything. The whole event took probably 3 or 4 minutes. I had hoped both were going to be quick and efficient. I didn't want my mom to suffer, to die in horror, to die with the knowledge that her son did it (I didn't hurt our dog or cat, in case anyone was wondering about the animals)." [foxnews.com/us/2018/04/09/manhunt-for-tennessee-man-who-allegedly-admits-kill ed-his-mother-friend.html]

Note that:

Lawhorn denies an afterlife or final judgment, yet says that what he did is "unforgivable." He denies a final judgment while at the same time confesses that he deserves hell. His conscience dictated that he didn't want his mother "to suffer" or know "that her son did it." His conscience also dictated that he "barely felt anything" in taking human life. He seemingly has more concern for animals than for his own mother and friend, humans created in God's image.

This is an example of observing our fallen world through the lens of a Christian worldview grounded in the Bible. The biblical law that Lawhorn denies is nonetheless written on his heart (Romans 2:15). Thus, he innately understands that he has violated a moral standard and deserves to face justice. Lawhorn committed suicide one day later, eluding capture.

Secularism is inherently contradictory and devoid of meaning. In denying the God of the Bible's existence, men prove it in their moral and intellectual floundering.

"The church's lack of power is the result of its lack of truth. . . . We are saying that Christianity is intellectually defensible--that, in fact, it is the only intellectually defensible system of thought. We are saying that God has made the wisdom of this world--whether that wisdom be called science, religion, philosophy, or common sense--foolishness." [John Robbins in *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark* by W. Gary Crampton, 141]

SEX: [Moral; Immoral]

Moral

Years ago, the French Thomist philosopher, Jacques Maritain and his wife took a mutual vow of celibacy. Both were in their early 30s and had been married for 10 years. Apparently they kept their vow, for as Jacques wrote after his wife, Raissa's death, "We decided to renounce a thing which marriage fulfills, a deep need of the human being--both of body and spirit." (Cf. 1 Corinthians 7:5.) [Cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 62)]

During my hiatus from ministry I was listening to a talk radio show where a male caller was telling the host that his sex life was MIA. According to the caller, he and his wife had been sexually active before marriage and during their pre-marital counseling the pastor required that they remain celibate until after they were married. In the ensuing months following their honeymoon the wife lost interest. But what struck me was what the host said to the caller. He asked him, "Why would you ever go to a religious person for advice about sex?" My first thought was, "Because God was the creator of sex! Who better to go to!"

Immoral

Lenin pronounced his famous "Glass of Water Theory," legislating that the sexual act was of no more consequence than the quenching of thirst by a glass of water (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13). [Cited in Leadership Journal (anonymous author), *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 33]

"I began to view sex as another of God's mistakes, like tornadoes and earthquakes. In the final analysis, it only caused misery. Without it, I could conceive of becoming pure and godly and all those other things the Bible exhorted me toward. With sex, any spiritual development seemed hopelessly unattainable. Maybe Origen had the right idea after all." [anonymous author, Leadership Journal, *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 37]

"Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to." [Mark Twain, cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 57)]

Several years ago, the book Vital Signs reported that of the "Christian" households that subscribed to cable TV, 23% were receiving one or more porn channels (the same percentage as society at large). [Cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 56)]

Many nations have lowered the "Age of Consent" laws in keeping with the continuous trend toward total sexual liberation (including man-boy love as advocated and popularized by the Dutch magazine *Paidika*). Britain: age 16; Germany and Italy: age 15; Canada: age 14; Spain, Holland, Portugal: Age 12. [cited in *World Magazine*, January 3, 2004]

SELF ESTEEM & SELF LOVE:

"Everyone flatters himself and carries a kingdom in his breast. . . . to live happily the evils of false ambition and self-love must be plucked from our hearts by the roots." (John Calvin, *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*, 28-29)

"Self-love is the root of the hatred of others, 2 Tim. 3:2." -- Thomas Brooks

"Half the people you know are below average." [Steven Wright]

"Can we possibly imagine Jesus loving himself in any way at all? The portrait that comes to life for us in the Gospels is of one who is completely and compassionately concerned for all the various kinds of people he meets on the road of life, so that, quite literally, he has no

time left to 'love himself.' The very idea is, in fact, preposterous. Christ did the opposite--he 'emptied himself.'" [George A.F. Knight, Leviticus, 121-22]

"Don't be so humble - you are not that great. " [Golda Meir (1898-1978) to a visiting diplomat]

"Reformation theology failed to make clear that the core of sin is a lack of self-esteem. The most serious sin is the one that causes me to say 'I am unworthy.' For once a person believes he is an 'unworthy sinner,' it is doubtful if he can really honestly accept the saving grace God offers in Jesus Christ." [Robert Schuller, cited in "Quotations Past and Current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

This doctrine [sinfulness of man] is in serious decline these days, to the detriment of the church. We change the words of great hymns so that they don't refer to us as "wretches" or "worms." We buy into the self-esteem lie. We want to minimize our sin, eliminate our sense of shame, boost our ego, and feel good about ourselves. We want, in other words, all those things which deaden the conscience. We abhor shame, however justified. We abhor repentance because it is too hard. We avoid guilt. We want the easy street. [John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 201-202]

"The labor of self-love is a heavy one indeed. Think for yourself whether much of your sorrow has not arisen from someone speaking slightly of you. As long as you set yourself up as a little god to which you must be loyal . . . how can you hope to find inward peace?" [A.W. Tozer]

One rather well-known seminary professor, who has written a number of books--some on the subject of personal shame--has actually written that we are worthy of God's grace. He writes:

"If grace heals all our shame, it must be a grace that tells us we are worthy to have it. We need, I believe, to recognize that we are accepted not only in spite of our undeserving but because of our worth."

He goes on to distinguish the difference between "deserving" and "worthy" by saying that: "If I deserve some good that comes my way, it is because I did something to earn it. If I am worthy, it is because I am somebody of enormous value." [Lewis B. Smedes, Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve, 3-4]

Robert Schuller, considered the founder of the modern "self-esteem" movement in the church, has stated that the movement toward a "self-esteem" theology in the church is the "new reformation." While dubbing the Reformation under Martin Luther a "reactionary movement," because it focuses on man as a "sinner," he defines self-esteem as "pride in being a human being," claims that "self-esteem is the single greatest need facing the human race today," and even calls the lack of self-esteem, "the core of sin," claiming that "The most serious sin is the one that causes me to say, 'I am unworthy.'" [Robert Schuller, The New Reformation]

Robert Schuller goes so far as to deny that fallen human nature is truly evil: "By nature we are fearful, not bad. . . . Label it a 'negative self-image,' but do not say that the central core of the human soul is wickedness. If this were so, then truly, the human being is totally depraved." [Self Esteem, 65]

Just as every cult has it's prophets, the cult of "self-esteem" has it's prophets as well. For most of these prophets is Robert Schuller, whose "Hour of Power" TV show is watched by millions [info. taken from MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience., 83 ff.]

According to Schuller, the will to self love is the deepest of all human desires. Far from being sin, people's lust for self-love is a good thing that should be encouraged, fostered, and fed. He calls the church's historic disdain for pride "neurotic;" and he contends that people should not be taught to fear human pride.

Schuller has written: "The cross sanctifies the ego trip." Expounding on that statement, he declared that "Jesus had an ego. He said, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' Schuller concludes: "Wow, what an ego trip He was on!"

What does Schuller do with Sin? He defines "sin" as "psychological self-abuse. . . . any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem, and hell is simply the loss of pride that follows such an act."

What about the Bible's warnings about human pride? When asked about these passages during a recent radio interview, Schuller responded: "Just because it's in the Bible doesn't mean you should preach it."

As to "the wrath of God" "I'll never use that language. I'm interested in attracting people, not driving them farther away. The gospel message is not only faulty, but potentially dangerous if it has to put a person down before it attempts to lift him up."

The great Scottish preacher of the 19th century, Alexander Whyte, one stated that:

"It is out of self-love that all of our other evil passions spring. The whole fall and ruin and misery of our present human nature lies in this, that in every human being self-love has taken, in addition to its own place, the place of the love of God and of the love of man also. We naturally now love nothing and no one but ourselves . . . it is to kill an extirpate our so passionate self-love that is the end and aim of all God's dealings with us in this world." [Alexander Whyte, from The Minister's Obstacles, by Ralph Turnbull, 41]

"Sin has twisted our vision inward and made it self-regarding. Unbelief has put self where God should be, and is perilously close to the sin of Lucifer who said, 'I will set my throne above the throne of God.'" [A.W. Tozer]

Norway Losers Group: In September of 1996, founders of the Norway Losers Rights Union met with King Harold to explain the group's agenda of offering support for Norwegians who feel doomed to failure. Since its inception in 1993, the Union has attracted 728 active

members. ["The Edmonton Sun," cited in Tribune Newspapers Parade section, December 29, 1996]

SELFISHNESS:

The Cross of Christ and The Denial of Self: "Such a denial of self is no mere severing of this or that indulgence, but putting the axe of the Cross to the very tree of self. . . ." To one who asked George Mueller the secret of his service, he replied:

'There was a day when I died', and, as he spoke, he bent lower, until he almost touched the floor. Continuing he added, 'Died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.'" [L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 60-61]

God harden me against myself,
The coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:
Myself, arch-traitor to myself;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.
Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free.
--Christina Rossetti.

[cited in Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 56-57]

At the feast of ego everyone leaves hungry.

People want the front of the line, the back of the church, and the center of attention.

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. She said, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, " 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.' " Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

"Descending into the valley, at the last curve he lost control of the car. As it toppled over the bank at the side of the road, his only thought was: 'Well, at least my job's done.' His one, weary, happy thought. It wasn't so: He was to go on living. But not to go on with this journey. When he came to , and the solid world again took shape around him, he could hardly keep back his tears--tears of self-pity and disappointment because his vacation plans had been ruined. The one reaction was no less genuine than the other. We may be willing to turn our backs on life, but we still complain like children when life does not grant our wishes." [Dag Hammarskjold, cited in Leadership Journal, Fall Quarter, 1982, 48]

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones reported that before the outbreak of the Spanish civil war that country was experiencing such an epidemic of neuroses that psychiatrists could hardly handle them all. But the war, terrible and destructive as it was, had the unexpected effect of

"curing" many of Spain's thousands of neurotics. When they become concerned about the welfare of their families, friends, and country instead of their own, their neuroses disappeared and hospitals and clinics were almost emptied of such cases. He writes: "These neurotic people were suddenly cured by a greater anxiety," --that is an anxiety that reached beyond their own selfish welfare. [The Christian Soldier, 357-58]

"There is no smaller package than a man wrapped up in himself."

"I was not born to be free. I was born to adore and to obey." [C.S. Lewis]

A pastor, a boy scout, and a world-renown scientist were the only three passengers on a small plane. In the middle of the flight, the pilot came back to the cabin and said that the plane was going down and there were only 3 parachutes on board. I pilot added, "I should have one of the parachutes because I'm married and have 4 small children." So he quickly took a parachute and jumped.

The scientist looked at the pastor and the boy scout and said, "I should have one of the parachutes because I am the most brilliant man in the world and far more important than you two." So the scientist took a parachute and jumped.

Well, the pastor looked at the young boy with a smile and said, "I've lived most of my life already and you are still very young, so you hurry and take the last parachute and I'll go down with the plane."

The boy scout smiled back at the pastor and replied, "don't worry sir, the most brilliant man in the world just picked up my backpack and jumped out."

There were two seriously ill men who shared a single room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed happened to be by the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by the activity and color of the outside world.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the

window portrayed it with descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his head: Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It didn't seem fair.

As the thought fermented the man felt ashamed at first. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window--that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit rooms the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room, he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence--deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take it away--no words, no fuss. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to look out the window beside the bed. . . . It faced a blank wall. [From a short story by G.W. Target, cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 50]

There is an apocryphal story of a man who visited heaven and hell. In hell he saw a huge banquet table filled with all kinds of delicious food. Satan sat at the head of the table, and sitting around the table with him were thousands of lost souls. They appeared hideous and emaciated, scowls on their faces, fighting against each other. He wondered why they looked so pathetic when they had this beautiful feast at their disposal. Then, upon a closer look, he saw that their arms and hands appeared as long forks and spoons. But they were so long that none of the souls could feed themselves. They could only be tortured with the prospect of placing the food on their forks with no hope of reaching their mouths.

But when the man visited heaven he saw a similar banquet table with Christ sitting at the head of it. And around the table sat thousands of redeemed saints filled with joy. The man noticed that they too had arms and hands that appeared as long forks and spoons. But why were they so filled with joy, the man wondered? Certainly they must have the same problem feeding themselves as the others. But then he saw that instead of trying to feed themselves, these saints were feeding one another across the table.

Feeding and serving yourself will result in frustration and ruin. Feeding and serving others will result in boundless joy.

A reporter once asked D.L. Moody which people gave him the most trouble. He answered immediately, "I've had more trouble with D.L. Moody than any man alive. [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 163]

The late Samuel Hoffenstein said, "Wherever I go, I go too, and spoil everything." [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 163]

"Looking back, my life seems to be one long obstacle course, with me as the chief obstacle." [Jack Paar, cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 163]

Someone once put a sign in their office that read: "If you could kick the person responsible for most of your troubles, you wouldn't be able to sit down for weeks."

"An enemy I had, whose face I stoutly strove to know, For hard he dogged my steps unseen, wherever I did go. My plans he balked, my aims he foiled, he blocked my onward way. When for some lofty goal I toiled, he grimly said to me, 'Nay.' One night I seized him and held him fast, from him the veil did draw. I looked upon his face at last and lo . . . myself I saw." [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 163]

One of Abraham Lincoln's favorite stories was that of a man who murdered both of his parents and then, when his sentence was about to be read, pleaded for mercy on the grounds that he was an orphan. [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 170]

SELF-LOATHING:

"What I once highly esteemed I now look upon with disgust. What I once could lean upon, and prop up my soul with, and think would take me safe into eternity, I now see was only the deceits of the flesh and the delusion of Satan. Of all my sins my profession seems to be the greatest. I can look upon the street pacing harlot and think her nearer the kingdom of God than me. I can look upon those who are living in open profanity, and feel that their sins are not equal to mine; for I have been a presumptuous professor; I have touched the holy things of God with unholy hands. I have been thought more highly of by the people of God than there was any reason." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:102-103.]

There is a principle within the devout believer that Spurgeon referred to as "Happy Self-Loathing" (Ezek. 36:31). Spurgeon declared: "Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 171]

The great missionary to the Indians, David Brainard, died in his late twenties at the home of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards later wrote of Brainard in his Memoirs: "His religious illuminations, affections, and comfort, seemed to a great degree to be attended with evangelical humiliation; consisting in a sense of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness; with an answering disposition and frame of heart. How deeply affected was he almost continually with his great defects in religion; with his vast distance from that

spirituality and holy frame of mind that becomes a child of God; with his ignorance, pride, deadness, barrenness! He was not only affected with the remembrance of his former sinfulness, before his conversion, but with the sense of his present vileness and pollution. He was not only disposed to think other saints better than he; yea to look on himself as the worst and least of saints; but, very often, as the vilest and worst of mankind."

Edwards himself shared the same "happy self-loathing" as Spurgeon called it: "When I look into my heart and take a view of its wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that, were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far below the sight of everything, but the eye of sovereign grace, that alone can pierce down to such a depths. And it is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart."

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS:

"Never in any chapter of the four Gospels was Jesus astounded by anybody's righteousness. After all, he was entirely pure and holy himself. Never was he impressed with anyone's wisdom or education. Never did he say, 'Boy, Matthew sure is smart, isn't he? I really picked out a financial genius there.' But he was amazed by one thing: people's faith (Luke 7:9)." [Jim Cymbala, Fresh Faith, 39-40]

SERMONS:

Thomas Watson gave several guidelines on how to listen to a sermon: "Come to the Word with a holy appetite and a teachable heart. Sit under the Word attentively, receive it with meekness, and mingle it with faith. Then retain the Word, pray over it, practice it, and speak to others about it." Then, Watson also warned his people: "Dreadful is there case who go loaded with sermons to hell." By contrast, those who respond to Scripture as a "love letter sent you from God will experience its warming transforming power." [Cited in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds., page 232]

Augustine - begins his classic "confessions" "Let me seek you, then, Lord, even while I am calling upon you, and call upon you even as I believe in you; for to us you have indeed been preached. My faith calls upon you, Lord, this faith which is your gift to me, which you have breathed into me through the humanity of your Son and the ministry of your preacher." [Confessions, page 3]

"There is not a sermon which is heard, but it sets us nearer heaven or hell" [John Preston, A Pattern of Wholesome Words, quote in Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, 2nd ed., 46]

"Reckon that every sermon is a wasted sermon which is not Christ's Word. Believe that all theology is rotten rubbish which is not the Word of the Lord. Do not be satisfied with going to a place of worship and hearing an eloquent discourse, unless the sum and substance of it is the Word of the Lord. My brothers and sisters, whether you teach children or their parents,

do not think you have done any good unless you have taught the Word of the Lord. For saving purposes we must have the Lord's Word, and nothing else." [Charles Spurgeon]

SERVANTHOOD:

Some 300 years ago two Moravian missionaries attempted to sell themselves into slavery because it was the only way they could reach a remote slave colony with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Think about it: they were willing to sacrifice their freedom in order to reach the ends of the earth, considering it an honor to be able to serve Christ freely as His slave.

There is an apocryphal story about a man who had two visions, a vision of hell followed by a vision of heaven.

In the first vision, that of hell, he saw a large ornate banquet table with all kinds of lavish food and drink. It was a beautiful scene. But all those sitting around the table were emaciated with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks.. The food had not been eaten for their arms were like long forks – too long for them to bend their elbows to reach their mouths. They were frustrated and angry in their eternal attempt to satisfy their craving for that which was in front of them, but was impossible to consume. Satan sat at the head of the table laughing hysterically.

In the second vision, that of heaven, he saw a similar scene. There again was the banquet table with all kinds of food and drink. At the head of the table was the Lord, Jesus Christ. He was smiling. Around the table were the saints. They were robust and healthy, filled with joy. But how could this be? They, too, had arms like long forks, arms which were too long to feed themselves. But then, the man looked again. They were not feeding themselves. They were happily extending their arms across the table to feed one another.

The story is told of a man during the years of slavery in England who went to an auction where slaves were sold like cattle. One particular slave caught his eye and for some reason the man felt sorry for him. When that particular slave went up for bid the price went higher than usual. The man waited until the time that it looked like no one else cared to raise the ante. Then he stepped forward and, to the shock of the audience, with one bid raised the price beyond reach of his peers. Afterward, the slave said to him, "Why would you pay such a price for me?" The man replied, "I paid that price to purchase your freedom. You are free." In response the slave fell to his knees and declared, "I will serve you wherever you go." That is a picture of what it means to be a "bondservant" of Jesus Christ. He paid a price for us that no one else could match. He purchased our freedom. And in response we willingly live—and even die—to serve Him.

There is a story of a certain corporal and a general two centuries ago. The general as he rode along saw group of men endeavoring to lift some timber. They were shorthanded, and the work was not going well. Their corporal stood by and repeatedly yelled orders at them. The general passed and said, "Why don't you lend them help and put your shoulder into it?" "Why sir," said the lofty corporal, "How can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!" The general got off his horse, pulled off his coat, and helped move the timber, and by his efforts the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and

mighty corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you want a man to do such work as this you can send for me: I am General George Washington."

"From someone or another I heard in conversation of a plan adopted by Matthew Wilks, for examining a young man who wanted to be a missionary; the drift, if not the detail of the test, commends itself to my judgement though not to my taste. The young man desired to go to India as a missionary in connection with the London Missionary Society. Mr. Wilks was appointed to consider his fitness for such a post. He wrote to the young man, and told him to call upon him at 6:00 a.m. the next morning. The brother lived many miles off, but he was at the house at 6:00 punctually. Mr. Wilks did not, however, enter the room till hours after. The brother waited wonderingly, but patiently. At last, Mr Wilks arrived, and addressed the candidate thus, in his usual nasal tones, 'Well young man, so you want to be a missionary?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' 'Yes, Sir, I hope I do.' 'And have you had any education?' 'Yes, Sir, a little.' 'Well, now, we'll try you; can you spell "cat?"' The young man looked confused, and hardly knew how to answer so preposterous a question. His mind evidently halted between indignation and submission, but in a moment he replied steadily, 'c-a-t, cat.' 'Very good,' said Mr. Wilks; 'now can you spell "dog?"' Our young martyr hesitated, but Mr. Wilks said in his coolest manner, 'Oh, never mind; don't be bashful; you spelt the other word so well that I should think you will be able to spell this: high as the attainment is, it is not so elevated but what you might do it without blushing.' The youthful Job replied, 'd-o-g, dog.' 'Well, that is right; I see you will do in your spelling, and now for your arithmetic; how many are two plus two?' It is a wonder that Mr. Wilks did not receive 'two plus two' after the fashion of muscular Christianity, but the patient youth gave the right reply and was dismissed.

Matthew Wilks at the committee meeting said, 'I cordially recommend that young man; his testimonials and character I have duly examined, and besides that, I have given him a rare personal trial such as few could bear. I tried his self-denial, he was up in the morning early; I tried his temper, and I tried his humility; he can spell "cat" and "dog" and can tell that "two plus two makes four," and he will do for a missionary exceedingly well.'" [C.H. Spurgeon, Lectures to my Students, 38]

If two angels were to receive at the same moment a commission from God, one to go down and rule earth's greatest empire, the other to go and sweep the streets of its meanest village, it would be a matter of entire indifference to each which service fell to his lot, the post of ruler or the post of scavenger; for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God's will. [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 112]

"To be laughed at is not great hardship to me. I can delight in scoffs and jeers. Caricatures, lampoons, and slanders are my glory. But that you should turn away from your mercy, this is my sorrow. Spit on me, but, oh, repent! Laugh at me, but, oh, believe in my Master! Make my body as the dirt of the streets, but damn not your own souls!" [C.H. Spurgeon]

A.E. Whitham gives an interesting allegorical story about a preacher's first visit to heaven. The preacher states of his visit:

"In my wandering, I came upon the museum in the city of our dreams. I went in, and an attendant conducted me round. There was some old armor there, much bruised with

battle. Many things were conspicuous by their absence. I saw nothing of Alexander's or of Napoleon's. There was no pope's ring, nor even the ink bottle that Luther is said to have thrown at the devil. I saw a widow's mite and the feather of a little bird. I saw some swaddling clothes, a hammer and three nails and a few thorns. I saw a sponge that had once been dipped in vinegar and a small piece of silver.

Whilst I was turning over a simple drinking cup which had a very honorable place, I whispered to the attendant: 'Have you got a towel and basin among your collection?' 'No,' he said, 'not here. You see, they are in constant use.'

There is an apocryphal story of a man who visited heaven and hell. In hell he saw a huge banquet table filled with all kinds of delicious food. Satan sat at the head of the table, and sitting around the table with him were thousands of lost souls. They appeared hideous and emaciated, scowls on their faces, fighting against each other. He wondered why they looked so pathetic when they had this beautiful feast at their disposal. Then, upon a closer look, he saw that their arms and hands appeared as long forks and spoons. But they were so long that none of the souls could feed themselves. They could only be tortured with the prospect of placing the food on their forks with no hope of reaching their mouths.

But when the man visited heaven he saw a similar banquet table with Christ sitting at the head of it. And around the table sat thousands of redeemed saints filled with joy. The man noticed that they too had arms and hands that appeared as long forks and spoons. But why were they so filled with joy, the man wondered? Certainly they must have the same problem feeding themselves as the others. But then he saw that instead of trying to feed themselves, these saints were feeding one another across the table.

Feeding and serving yourself will result in frustration and ruin. Feeding and serving others will result in boundless joy.

"Self-righteous service requires rewards. It needs to know that people see and appreciate the effort. It seeks human applause--with proper religious modesty, of course. *Self-righteous service is highly concerned about results.*" [Richard Foster]

“What is required is the renunciation of the ego and this is expressed perfectly in the phrase of Pascal: ‘Entire and sweet renunciation; absolute submission to Jesus Christ and to my Spiritual Director.’ People may laugh and scoff at you for being worthy of the title of ‘free man’ and for having to submit yourself to a Master. But this enslavement is really miraculous liberation. When you were ‘free’ you spent your whole time forging chains for yourself and putting them on, riveting them tighter and tighter each moment. During the years when you thought you were free you submitted like an ox to the yoke of your countless hereditary ills. From the hour of your birth not one of your crimes has failed to go on living, has failed to imprison you more and more every day, has failed to beget other crimes. The Man you submit yourself to does not want you to be free to be a slave. He breaks the circle of your fetters and against your half-extinguished and still smouldering desires He kindles and rekindles the fire of grace.” [Philip Yancey, What’s So Amazing About Grace? Audio book, tape 2 side 3, 1997]

SIN:

File under: “Your Sin Will Find You Out / Judgement

The Nazi Next Door—94-Year-Old Nazi Concentration Camp Guard Found Living in Tennessee. The Briefing by Albert Mohler, Wednesday, March 11, 2020

But finally today as we're thinking about evil, moral evil and natural evil, when it comes to moral evil, at least we would like to think that we would know it when we see it. But tell that to neighbors in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who knew their neighbor living in a ranch house as nothing but a kindly old man until he was just ordered deported by the United States government because of his complicity in the Holocaust. Rick Rojas and Richard Fausset writing for the New York Times tell us, "It is perhaps fitting that the decades long search for Nazi collaborators living on United States soil may have reached its conclusion or something close to it in a small city, in an unremarkable ranch house on an equally unremarkable cul-de-sac. By many accounts, the man living inside that house was also seemingly unremarkable, not unlike the dozens of other under-the-radar Nazi collaborators who've been found and prosecuted over the last half century."

This man is 94 years old and that is why the United States Department of Justice believes that it is now winding down its efforts to try to locate and then to deport and bring to justice those who were actively involved in collaborators in the Nazi regime and in particular the killing regime of the Third Reich in the Holocaust, the intentional killing of 6 million Jews and others as well. The arrest of this 94-year-old man living for so many decades in the United States in this ranch house on a quiet street in Oak Ridge, Tennessee was a wakeup call for the man's neighbors who said they could not have imagined that he was, as the United States has now declared, an active collaborator in one of the worst instances of the second World War.

The federal prosecutors convinced the court that Mr. Berger was part of the SS machinery of oppression that kept concentration camp prisoners in atrocious conditions of confinement and the prosecutors went on to point out that this led not only to the injury and emaciation of many of those prisoners, but to their elimination, to their deaths. The prosecutors also pointed out that Mr. Berger had volunteered to wear the Nazi uniform at this point. Many of those who have been arrested or charged with similar kinds of crimes, war crimes defended themselves by saying that they had been coerced into the uniform, but that appears not to have been the case with Mr. Berger.

Remember that the Bible warns us that our sins will find us out. This man at age 94 must have imagined that he had gotten away with it, that he had placed himself in the United States and that he would die in peace in that ranch house in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. But something happened that he could not have envisioned. That was the fact that SS cards identifying him along with other prison camp guards, which had been on a boat that was sunk by the Allies, these cards were discovered in 1950 but they had disintegrated. But modern technology meant that these cards could be reassembled, and thus the names and all the identifying information on those SS cards could now be fully understood, leading to the fact that most of those cards represented human beings long since dead, but not in this case, a 94-year-old man living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The federal judge in this case found Mr. Berger guilty of "willing service as an armed guard of prisoners at a concentration camp where persecution took place," and then ordered his deportation to Germany. But Devora Fish, identified as the director of education for the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, said this: "Every time that somebody is brought to justice, even from 50 years ago or longer, that is a message to the world because we're not going to stop until everybody is brought to justice. Even if it's something you did years ago, it will catch up to you."

Now, sadly, that is not always the case when it comes to a human court of justice, but here's where Christians understand that the Bible makes clear that it will always be the case when it comes to the court and to the justice of Almighty God. On that day before that Judge, all things will be revealed and everything will be made known and there will be the execution of perfect justice to the glory of God alone. It is deeply humbling to us to recognize how little we sometimes see. The neighbors of this man did not see a Nazi war criminal. They just saw an elderly man living in the United States who had come from Germany. But what we cannot see, God sees. On that, we can absolutely depend.

"Everybody is a moon, with a dark side never to be seen by others." [Mark Twain]

"Christian, beware how thou thinkest lightly of sin. Take heed lest thou fall by little and little. Sin, a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin, a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doth not the tiny coral insect build a rock which wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin, a little thing? It girded the Redeemer's head with thorns, and pierced His heart! It made Him suffer anguish, bitterness and woe. Could you weigh the least sin in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent, and abhor the least appearance of evil. Look upon all sin as that which crucified the Saviour, and you will see it to be "exceeding sinful." [Spurgeon]

"[As] Calvin points out, when [God] had finished creating, he declared everything 'very good.' . . . Evil was not part of creation. . . . That means evil is not a substance or a created thing. Evil is a state of imperfection into which creation fell by its own fault. . . . Sin is not a created thing, sin is neither substance, nor being, nor spirit, nor matter. . . . It's a lack of moral perfection in a fallen creature. Those who sin bear the moral responsibility for their sin, and yet God is sovereign even over sin." [Phil Johnson, CD *Calvinism on Trial*, 2004 Shepherd's Conference]

An example of the inaccurate 'all sin is the equal' view held by most Evangelicals:

Robert Fry, a death row inmate who claims to have come to faith in Christ, asks a journalist during a jailhouse interview: "Let me ask you a question: is it a greater sin to steal a cracker or to kill someone?" (journalist answers) "Kill someone." Fry responds: "God doesn't see it that way. You break one sin you break all sin. So what does it matter what sin you perpetrate?" [Robert Fry, death row inmate at the Penitentiary of New Mexico on MSNBC Lockup New Mexico]

"Sin to the Christian is like Kryptonite to Superman: It sucks the joy and strength out of the believer's soul." [TAB]

"There is enough sin in my best prayer to send the whole world to Hell." [John Bunyan]

"Sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, and the contempt of His love." [John Bunyan]

"A broken heart and a broken Christ do well agree. The more bitterness we taste in sin, the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 27]

"Sin is the Trojan horse out of which comes a whole army of troubles." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 51]

"You who are guilty of open sins know not how many have been infected by you. There may be many, for ought you know, now in hell, crying out that they would never have come thither if it had not been for your bad example." [Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 111]

See Thomas Watson's "The Doctrine of Repentance" chapter 11 for a 20 point descriptive outline of the dangers of sin.

Sinful indulgences are akin to mythical zombies, the walking dead, that presume to feast upon the flesh but in reality devour the soul. [TAB]

Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*:

To look on sin with that eye [with] which within a few hours we shall see it. Ah, souls! when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat, sin shall be unmasked, and its dress and robes shall then be taken off. and then it shall appear more vile, filthy, and terrible than hell itself; then, that which formerly appeared most sweet will appear most bitter, and that which appeared most beautiful will appear most ugly, and that which appeared most delightful will then appear most dreadful to the soul." Ah. the shame, the pain, the gall, the bitterness, the horror, the hell that the sight of sin. when its dress is taken off. will raise in poor souls! Sin will surely prove evil and bitter to the soul when its robes are taken off. [Thomas Brooks. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 35]

Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not, but rend and consume the belly, the soul that receives them. Many eat that on earth that they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those that devour them. [Thomas Brooks. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 32]

" Sin so bewitches the soul, that it makes the soul call evil good, and good evil; bitter sweet and sweet bitter, light darkness and darkness light; and a soul thus bewitched with sin will stand it out to the death, at the sword's point with God; let God strike and wound, and cut to the very bone, yet the be-witched soul cares not, fears not. but will still hold on in a course of wickedness, as you may see in Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas. Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill when it is not killed, that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally, yet the bewitched soul cannot, and will not, cease from sin. When the physicians told Theotimus that except he did abstain from drunkenness and uncleanness he

would lose his eyes, his heart was so bewitched to his sins, that he answered. 'Then farewell, sweet light'; he had rather lose his eyes than leave his sin. So a man bewitched with sin had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul than part with his sin. Oh, therefore, forever take heed of playing with or nibbling at Satan's golden baits. [Thomas Brooks. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 33-34]

They fell once or twice, and rose by repentance, that they might keep the closer to Christ for ever. They fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctance; and thou sinnest presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. Thou hast, by thy making a trade of sin. contracted upon thy soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, that thou canst as well cease to be. or cease to live, as thou canst cease to sin. Sin is, by custom, become as another nature to thee, which thou canst not, which thou wilt not lay aside, though thou knowest that if thou dost not lay sin aside, God will lay thy soul aside for ever; though thou knowest that if sin and thy soul do not part, Christ and thy soul can never meet. If thou wilt make a trade of sin, and cry out. Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus? No! their hearts turned aside to folly one day, but thy heart turns aside to folly every day (2 Peter 2. 14, Prov. 4. 16); and when they were fallen, they rise by repentance, and by the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ; but thou fallest, and hast no strength nor will to rise, but wallowest in sin, and wilt eternally die in thy sins, unless the Lord be the more merciful to thy soul. Dost thou think, O soul, this is good reasoning? Such a one tasted poison but once, and yet narrowly escaped; but I do daily drink poison, yet I shall escape. Yet such is the mad reasoning of vain souls. David and Peter sinned once foully and fearfully; they tasted poison but once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet shall not taste of eternal death. Remember, O souls! that the day is at hand when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yea, self-murderers. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 47]

So that [Satan] can no sooner cast out his golden bait, but we are ready to play with it. and to nibble at it; he can no sooner throw out his golden ball, but men are apt to run after it. though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit. Ah! how many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God. Christ, and ordinances, till the devil hath set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which hath so bewitched their souls that they have grown to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections. . . . Ah! the time, the thoughts, the spirits, the hearts, the souls, the duties, the services, that the inordinate love of this wicked world doth eat up and destroy, and hath ate up and destroyed. Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings us and sinks us; it kisses us, and betrays us, like Judas; it kisses us and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honours, splendour, and all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have surfeited of these sweet baits and died for ever. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 102-103]

Seriously to consider that the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater. He that, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. If we commit one sin to avoid another, it is just we should avoid neither, we having not law nor power in our own hands to keep off sin as we please; and we, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, till it

hath the soul to the very height of sin. David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 39]

Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honour, pleasure, profit, but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 30

Jonathan Edwards put together a series of statements which he called his personal resolutions (not altogether unlike our practice during the new year). One of those is as follows: "Resolved, never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life." [cited in Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 96]

"Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." [cited in Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 106]

Putting Sin to Death (Hacking Agag to Pieces)

1 Samuel 15:1-3 1 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the Lord." 2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.' 3 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

God's command was clear: Saul was to utterly destroy the Amalekites (even killing their children/animals). They were to be wiped from the face of the earth! The entire tribe mercilessly leveled--take no hostages! Why would a loving God command such a seemingly barbaric act? It was part of God's holy and perfectly righteous judgment.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12), an ancient nomadic race that inhabited the southern part of Canaan. They were perennial enemies of Israel. They were the same tribe that attacked Israel at Rephidim after the Exodus (the battle where Aaron & Hur supported the arms of Moses). In Deut. 25, the Amalekites ruthlessly ambushed Israel from behind, massacring those in the rear who were most weary. This attack was a cowardly act by the regions most powerful people; yet God supernaturally delivered Israel that day and the Amalekites fled in defeat. At the conclusion of that fateful event, God swore to Moses: "I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

God actually made this prophetic statement (promise) part of Mosaic Law:

Deut. 25:17-19 - "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. "Therefore it shall come about when the Lord your God has given you rest from

all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

The Amalekites were arrogant; they were fearless warriors. Their intimidating presence was one reason Israel balked at entering the promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 13:29). The Amalekites harassed Israel by coming into the land after the crops had been sown, moving thru the farmland with their tents and livestock, destroying everything in their path. They were among the most wicked and sinful people on the face of earth. They hated God, they detested Israel; they delighted in their wickedness. They were a people completely given over to Satan (Satan's greatest desire was to destroy Israel, to thwart the coming of Messiah). The Amalekites were a real threat to the people of God.

God's command to Saul was, therefore, a command to fulfill His promise; a command to obey the Law; a comm. to guard the purity of Israel and the lineage of Jesus Christ.

What did Saul do?

1 Samuel 15:4-9 4 Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.5 And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and set an ambush in the valley.6 And Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.7 So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt.8 And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

We see here Saul's partial obedience (and partial obedience is disobedience). Note again verse 9:

But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly;

In other words, driven by greed, Saul decided on his own that he knew best and spared King Agag while he kept the spoils of war for himself.

Saul's sin was so serious that it resulted in God's immediate judgment.

1 Samuel 15:10-23 10 Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying,11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.12 And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for

himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord."14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!" 17 And Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you king over Israel,18 and the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?" 20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.21 "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal."22 And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king."

The ramifications? Saul was deposed as King of Israel. What about Agag? In verses 32-33 we read:

Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal.

What about the Amalekites? Scripture records that only a few years later, the rebuilt tribe raided the southern territory of Judah and took all the women and children captive, including David's family. According to 1 Samuel 30:16-18, when David came upon the Amalekites in battle, they were:

. . . spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. And David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives.

There are many lessons to be learned from this event. One of those lessons is that the Amalekites make an apt illustration of the sin that remains in the Christians's life. That sin, already defeated in the mind and purpose of God, must be dealt with in same

ruthless fashion that Israel was to treat the Amalekites. As Samuel hacked King Agag to pieces, we must hack sin to death in our lives. You can't be merciful with Agag (sin); you can't tolerate Agag; you can't be greedy with all that Agag offers. If you don't put Agag to death, he will turn and devour you.

Sin is a short word and it often makes short work of its subjects. That's why the great Puritan Pastor John Owen once wrote (to paraphrase):

"Put sin to death; make it your daily work; be always at it while you are alive . . . be killing sin or it will be killing you."

"[As] Calvin points out, when [God] had finished creating, he declared everything 'very good.' . . . Evil was not part of creation. . . . That means evil is not a substance or a created thing. Evil is a state of imperfection into which creation fell by its own fault. . . . Sin is not a created thing, sin is neither substance, nor being, nor spirit, nor matter. . . . It's a lack of moral perfection in a fallen creature. Those who sin bear the moral responsibility for their sin, and yet God is sovereign even over sin." [Phil Johnson, CD Calvinism on Trial, 2004 Shepherd's Conference]

"The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard." [Steven Wright]

"It is a remarkable fact that, while those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit and who are actually overcoming their sins see more and more of the evil of their hearts and lives, those who are the slaves of sin see less and less of the evil, and often deny that they are sinners at all." [19th c. theologian, Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, 576]

John MacArthur tells the true story:

"When I was flying down to El Paso TX (to speak at a conference there) . . . I was going through my Bible preparing some thoughts and I was sitting right next to a guy who was obviously an Arab. And He kept looking over, and looking at my Bible, and finally he got up his courage and he said to me, "Excuse me, Sir, may I ask you a question. I said, "Sure." He said, "I see you have a Bible. I am new in America," and, he said, "I am very confused about American religion. Now, I'm from Iraq where everybody in my country is Muslim. But you have so many religions." And, he said, "I just really have one question" (this is exactly what he said), "Could you tell me the difference between a Catholic, a Protestant and a Baptist?" That was his question! So, I told him--a little bit about Catholicism and salvation by works mingled with faith and grace, and why there was a Reformation and how Protestantism came into existence and that Baptists fitted into that latter category. And I said, "Now that you have asked me a question, can I ask you a question?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You're a Muslim?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You're committed to that?" "Yes." I said, "Well, do Muslims have sins?" "Oh many, many sins. We have so many sins I don't even know all the sins." I said, "Well, let me ask you another question. Do you do those sins? Do you commit those sins?" "All the time," he said. "I commit the sins all the time." I said, "Well, does it bother you?" "It bothers me. In fact, I'm flying to El Paso to do some sins." I said, "You are?!" He said, "Yes. I met this girl and we will do some sins." I said, "How does God feel about this?" "Oh, it's very bad," he said. "Very bad." I said, "Do you have a hell

in Islam?" "Yes." I said, "Aren't you a little afraid?" He said, "I hope the God will forgive me." I said, "On the basis of what? Why should He do that? Are you special? You are willfully sinning. You're telling me you're going there to sin. Why would He forgive you?" He said, "Well, no reason, I just hope." I said, "Well" (and I didn't think of how he would hear this, but I said it in familiar language), "Well, I know Him personally, and He won't." This is true! You know, I was emphasizing the back half of that statement and he couldn't get past the front half! He looked at me and he said, "You know the God personally?!" (You know, what are you doing in coach? On Southwest--without even assigned seats!) "What do you mean you know God personally? Who are you?" I said, "I do know Him personally. And He will not forgive your sins; He is too holy to overlook your iniquities." And I said, "You have reason to be concerned. I would like to explain to you about Christianity." And I launched into the gospel. And his mind just opened up to grasp the essence of what it is Christians believe. . . . Well, our conversation went on a little longer (it's a fairly long flight down there). And I got him plugged into a church when he came back and when I got his address I was able to send him some tapes. I haven't heard from him, but I know I messed up his week in El Paso." [cited in cassette message "The Theology of Faith" (part 3) delivered at Scottsdale Bible Church on 4/13/97]

The most serious, deadly virus on the face of the earth is not the HIV virus, it's the SIN virus. But like the HIV virus, the SIN virus kills everybody it infects. Not just temporally, but eternally; and not just physically, but spiritually. There is no cure for the HIV virus, but there is a cure for the SIN virus.

"It is true there is difficulty in entering into godliness. But his difficulty does not arise from the religion which begins in us, but only from the irreligion which is still there." [Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, cited in Leadership Journal, *An Anatomy of Lust*, Fall Quarter, 1982, 37]

"C.K. Chesterton once likened this world to the desert island site of a shipwreck. A sailor awakes from the deep sleep and discovers treasure strewn about, relics from a civilization had can barely remember. One by one he picks up the relics--gold coins, a compass, fine clothing--and tries to discern their meaning. According to Chesterton, fallen humanity is in such a state. Good things on earth still bear traces of their original purpose, but each is also subject to misinterpretation or abuse because of fallen, 'amnesiac' human nature." [cited in Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society, Terry C. Muck, Ed. (Dallas: Word, 63)]

"It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin."

There is a principle within the devout believer that Spurgeon referred to as "Happy Self-Loathing" (Ezek. 36:31). Spurgeon declared: "Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 171]

"Where Christ does not rule, sin does." [J.I. Packer]

"The fault lies not in the stars, but in ourselves" [Shakespeare]

"Lack of a due sense of the sinfulness of our best works lead to dreams of self-perfection, self-righteousness and self-justification. Such dreams lead to contempt of Christ and his righteousness. Who would look for another righteousness when he is convinced that he can justify himself before God by his own righteousness?"

Before people will come to Christ and stay with Christ, they need to know that they are lost, condemned sinners, standing accursed in God's sight. They need to see that Christ alone has made perfect satisfaction for the pardon of their sins and for their deliverance from eternal punishment.

People also need to know that without Christ they have no righteousness with which to stand before God and that only Christ can clothe them with that perfect righteousness which is acceptable to God, having met all the demands of his holy law.

This is the faith of God's elect against which all the works and deceits of Satan cannot prevail. The marriage of divine revelation with true experience is invincible. But those who have never seen their desperate need of Christ for these things will never persevere in believing in him, nor remain in him by faith in times of persecution and strong temptations." [John Owen, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

This doctrine [sinfulness of man] is in serious decline these days, to the detriment of the church. We change the words of great hymns so that they don't refer to us as "wretches" or "worms." We buy into the self-esteem lie. We want to minimize our sin, eliminate our sense of shame, boost our ego, and feel good about ourselves. We want, in other words, all those things which deaden the conscience. We abhor shame, however justified. We abhor repentance because it is too hard. We avoid guilt. We want the easy street. [John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 201-202]

"Since the time of the French Revolution, the idea has gained wide acceptance that human nature is basically good. The 'evil' that crops out from time to time is due to a lack of education and understanding, or perhaps from psychological patterns inflicted by one's background and environment. What is needed, we are told, is education and perhaps some adjustment in one's environment--economic, social, political, psychological. Once a person 'understands,' and once artificial restrictions have been removed, the innate goodness of human nature will burst into flower." [Larry Christianson, The Christian Family, 95]

It is a very evil choice for any soul under heaven to choose the least sin rather than the greatest affliction. Better be under the greatest affliction than be under the guilt or power of any sin. . . . There is more evil in sin than in outward trouble in the world; more evil in sin than in all the miseries and torments of hell itself. . . . Suppose that God should bring any of you to the brink of that bottomless gulf [hell] and open it to you, and there you should see those damned creatures sweltering under the wrath of an infinite God, and there you should hear the dreadful and hideous cries and shrieks of those who are under such soul-amazing and soul sinking torments through the wrath of the Almighty. Yet, I say, there is more evil in on sinful thought than there is in all these everlasting burnings. . . . The truth is, that if it should come into competition whether we would endure all the torments that there are in hell to all eternity rather than to commit one sin, I say, if our spirits were as they should be, we

would rather be willing to endure all these torments than commit the least sin. [Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs, The Evil of Evils, 2-3]

Maurice Roberts has written,

The wheel of history has come full-circle. We are, as a civilization, rotating back to the state of affairs depicted by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. . . .

The time was when Bible commentators expounded Romans chapter 1 more or less from the standpoint of the first century of the Roman world only. But that day has gone forever,. The modern Christian in the West can now see himself as much in the arena of a reprobate society as did the apostles. The state of modern religion and morals exactly parallels that of the apostolic age and it is summed up in the one word: *decadence*. Pagan Rome could teach modern man very little that he does not know already about sophisticated wickedness. Pagan Greece, pagan Egypt, and pagan Babylon might even learn a thing or two from this generation about how to shun gospel-light and add to the mountains of man's provocation.

What makes the Bible-reader saddest of all is to see that society today has learnt nothing from the past or from two thousand years of Bible production and printing, but is repeating the very vices which always provoke God to give the world over to its own sensuality and self-destruction. [Maurice Roberts, "God Gave Then Up," *The Banner of Truth* (October, 1993), 3-4]

Some Christians . . . have concluded that the gospel message needs updating. They have removed the idea of sin altogether from the message. They offer Christ as a Savior from meaninglessness, as a means to personal fulfillment, as a solution to self-image problems, or as an answer to emotional needs. The gospel they extend to unbelievers makes no appeal to the conscience, no mention of sin. It is therefore an impotent and spurious message. Others, instead of eliminated sin from the message completely, treat the subject as briefly or as mildly as possible. They might stress the universality of sin but never explain the seriousness of it: "Of course you've sinned. We all have" -- as if it were sufficient to concede the notion of universal sinfulness without really feeling any personal guilt in one's own conscience. But how can anyone genuinely repent who has no sense of personal responsibility for sin? [MacArthur concludes} Thus the contemporary tendency to devalue the conscience actually undermines the gospel itself. [John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 51-52]

The Christian. . . knows that he cannot embrace that cross, or more important, embrace the Christ who died on it and now lives for ever in the service of God, without renouncing all known sin. We cannot serve two masters--a crucified Christ who died for our sin, and sin for which he died. The more we rejoice in the way of salvation, therefore, the more we will mortify sin. That will not make us perfect, because there is no complete mortification in this life. But it will bring us joy in walking in the power of Christ and being delivered from the power of sin. This, in part, is the answer to our common perplexity: How can we keep our way pure? [Sinclair Ferguson, Taking the Christian Life Seriously: A Study on Christian Maturity (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 84-85]

I recently read about a young African who came to Christ through missionaries there. While he was still new to the faith he violated a trust and stole some property. When the missionaries confronted him as to his sin, the young man replied, "It was not I who stole, it was grandfather in the bones." "Grandfather in the bones" was a figure of speech he used to refer to the old sin nature. In time he matured in his walk with Christ. And later when people would ask him, "How is grandfather in the bones?" He would reply, "Well, grandfather isn't dead yet, but he doesn't get around like he used to." [adapted from Walter B. Knight, Knight's Illustrations, 359]

"Mortification abates [sin's] force, but does not change its nature. Grace changes the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin. . . . Destroyed it may be, it shall be, but cured it cannot be. . . . If it is not overcome and destroyed, it will overcome and destroy. . . . And here lies its power. . . . It is never quiet, [whether it is] conquering [or] conquered. . . . Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work. Be killing sin or it will be killing you. [John Owen, cited in MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 145]

How do you deal with sin? See a counselor? Have an experience? Bind a demon? You stop doing it! As the late British Expositor, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said,

"I do not know of a single Scripture--and I speak advisedly--which tells me to take my sin, the particular thing that gets me down, to God in prayer and ask him to deliver me from it and then trust in faith that he will.

Now this teaching is also often put like this: you must say to a man who is constantly defeated by a particular sin, 'I think your only hope is to take it to Christ and Christ will take it from you.' But what does Scripture say in Ephesians 4:28 to the man who finds himself constantly guilty of stealing, to a man who sees something he likes and takes it? What am I to tell such a man? Am I to say, 'Take that sin to Christ and ask him to deliver you?' No, what the apostle Paul tells him is this: 'Let him that stole steal no more.' Just that. Stop doing it. And if it is fornication or adultery or lustful thoughts, again: Stop doing it, says Paul. He does not say, 'Go and pray to Christ to deliver you.' No. You stop doing that, he says, as becomes children of God." [cited in MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 158]

Evil deeds are the offspring and children of evil thoughts, the branches and fruit which grow out of this root. Thoughts are the first-born of the soul; words and actions are only younger brothers. They are the oil that feeds and maintains the wick, which would otherwise go out; life-sins receive their juice and nourishment from thought-sins. St. James speaks as if our thoughts were the belly and womb where sin is conceived . . . As Job [cursed] the day and place of his birth, the womb that bore [him]; so should you curse sin even in the very womb that bore it, laying the axe to the root of this tree. The wickedness of men's lives is charged upon their thoughts, that it has its root and rise there: murders, adulteries, etc., all come out of the heart, as out of the belly of a Trojan horse. . . . One would wonder from what corner of the world they all come. Why they all come out of the heart, the rendezvous of wickedness, the inn where lodge all the thieves and traveling lusts that are in the world and that do so much mischief in it. All the unclean streams flow from this unclean fountain, this ocean and sea of sin." [cited in MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 192]

As the Puritan John Owen wrote:

"Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could . . . it proceeds toward its [end] by degrees, [gaining] ground by [our hardness of heart]. . . . Now nothing can prevent this but mortification (putting sin to death); that [is what] withers the root and strikes at the head of sin every hour . . . There is not the best saint in the world but, if he should give over to this duty, would fall into as many cursed sins as ever did any of his kind." [Mac. 164]

"In all of the laments and reproaches made by our seers and prophets, one misses any mention of 'sin,' a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once in everyone's mind, but now rarely if ever heard. Does that mean that no sin is involved in all our troubles--sin with an 'I' in the middle? Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick or criminal--or asleep? Wrong things are being done, we know; tares are being sown in the wheat field at night. But is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sins? Where, indeed, did sin go? What became of it?" [Whatever Became of Sin?, 13]

I once heard a popular Christian psychologist on the radio discussing why Christian men and women have adulterous affairs. His reasons centered on lack of self-esteem; a desire to feel "worthy" and "worthwhile;" the need to fill some inner need. The solution: realize that you have inherent value and worth; build your self-esteem. Never once did he mention sin. Never once did he mention biblical obedience. Never once did he mention growth and maturity in Christ. Never once did he mention the possibility that the professed Christian may not be regenerate in the first place. [TAB]

"The blind man can see no difference between a masterpiece [of art] and the queen's head on a village signboard. The deaf man cannot distinguish between a penny whistle and a cathedral organ. The very animals whose smell is most offensive to us have no idea that they are offensive and are not offensive to one another. And man, fallen man, I believe, can have no just idea what a vile thing sin is in the sight of that God whose handiwork is absolutely perfect." [J.C. Ryle, Holiness, 6]

"Centuries ago in England, if a pickpocket was convicted, his right hand was cut off. If he was convicted a second time, his left hand was amputated. One pickpocket lost both hand, and continued his 'trade' by using his teeth! Physical surgery can never change the heart." [Wiersbe, Colossians, 103]

"Use sin as it will use you; spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murder of the world; use it, therefore, as a murder should be used. Kill it before it kills you; and though it brings you to the grave, as it did your Head, it shall not be able to keep you there." [Richard Baxter, cited in MacArthur, Colossians, 136]

A century and a half ago, the Scottish professor "Rabbi" Duncan sent his students off to read John Owen, the Puritan, on indwelling sin with the admonition, "But gentlemen, prepare for the knife."

Years ago Calvin Coolidge returned home from services one Sunday and was asked by his wife what the minister had talked about. "Sin," Coolidge replied. When his wife pressed him as to what the preacher had said about sin, Coolidge responded "I think he was against it."

Back in history there was a horrible and diabolical invention called "The Virgin's Kiss." It was used by the Fathers of the Inquisition to punish those who had "denied the faith." The offender was pushed forward to kiss an image. Suddenly, as the victim approached to kiss the image, the arms of the image would embrace the victim pulling him towards itself and a hundred hidden knives would appear bringing about instant death. Such is the "kiss" of sin. [cited by J. MacArthur, GC 80-29]

After a woman in her 60's died a medical examination discovered a large mass in her abdomen. During the ensuing autopsy they found a baby in her womb, a calcified embryo hidden there for 30 years. Medical science calls it a "stone baby." Such is the hidden death of sin.

A pagan artisan who crafted goblets made one such goblet in which he crafted an image of a serpent. It was actually sculpted into the bottom of the cup, coiled for its cruel spring, a pair of burning eyes in its head, its fangs ready to strike -- but innocently hidden beneath the ruby wine. The cup itself was beautiful, made of fine gold; but never did the thirsty man who lifted the cup to quench his thirst suspect that beneath the drink, was the terrifying head that reached upward with gleaming eyes and bared fangs. [cited by J. MacArthur GC 80-29]

Adam Duran tells the story of a man in the open country of Scotland. One day the man was looking into the sky and he saw an eagle soaring around. The eagle would soar into the sky with its powerful wings. It was a magnificent sight. As he continued to watch the eagle, he became amazed because he saw that something was wrong. The King of birds didn't continue to rise into the sky with the same power and speed, and at first its flight appeared to be somewhat hampered and then it came to a stop and then it helplessly began to flutter. The great bird fell like a rock out of the sky and crashed to the ground right in front of the wanderer's feet.

Looking closely, the man saw that the eagle was dead. And searching still closer he observed that tightly clenched within the eagle's claws was a small weasel, which the eagle had taken for its food. The man now could see what had happened. As the eagle had ascended with the weasel in its claws, the weasel had dug its own claws into the soft abdomen of the great bird; and as it tried to escape, the eagle was having its own life-blood drained away.

What a telling picture of the sinner, who thinks that he soars when in fact sin is bleeding him to death. [cited by J. MacArthur, GC 80-29]

Several years ago, MTV aired a special program titled, "The Seven Deadly Sins." According to MTV the seven deadly sins are pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony, and sloth. Apparently, MTV borrowed this list from medieval theology where some of the monastic theologians categorized what they thought to be the "root" sins--sins that serve as the

foundational springboard for all sin. MTV portrayed these 7 deadly sins as anything but lethal. The show featured sound bites from celebrities, cartoon characters, movie clips, interviews with musicians that were all edited together to describe a commentary on pop-culture's relaxed attitude toward sin.

According to the program's narrator: "The seven deadly sins are not evil acts but, rather, universal human compulsions that can be troubling and highly enjoyable."

"Pride is a sin?" asked rap singer Queen Latifah. "I wasn't aware of that." Actress Kirstie Alley agreed: "I don't think pride is a sin, and I think some idiot made that up. What made all these up?"

According to a member of the rock group Aerosmith: "Lust is what I live for. It's what I got into the band for--little girls in the front row."

Rapper Ice-T said of anger, "It's necessary. You have to release this tension because life brings tension. We release our anger when we do records. When we did 'Cop Killer,' we were angry--and the cops got angry back.

Actor Michael Douglas declared: "Greed is good." [taken from John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 168-169]

The late British Expositor, Martyn Lloyd Jones suggested years ago that the doctrine of sin was fast disappearing from evang. churches.

"When we are dealing with the unconverted, we tend to say: 'Ah, you need not worry about sin now, that will come later. All you need to do is to come to Christ, to give yourself to Christ. Do not worry your head about sin--of course you cannot understand that now. Do not worry either whether or not you have got a sense of sin or deep conviction, or whether you know these things. All you need to do is to come to Christ, to give yourself to Christ, and then you will be happy.'"

"Then when we are dealing with those who have so come, our tendency, again, is to say to them, 'Of course, you must not look at yourself, you must look to Christ. You must not be for every analyzing yourself. That is wrong, that is what you did before you were converted. You were thinking in terms of yourself and of what you had got to do. The only thing you must do is to keep looking to Christ and away from yourself.'" Lloyd-Jones concludes: "We imagine, therefore, that all that is needed by Christians is a certain amount of comfort and encouragement, of preaching about the love of God and about his general providence and perhaps a certain amount of moral and ethical exhortation. And so, you see, the doctrine of sin is, as it were, crowded out. We fail to emphasize it both before and after conversion, and the result is that we hear very little about it." [Sanctified Through the Truth: The Assurance of Our Salvation, 96-97]

Quote by Oscar Wilde (his confession):

The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease . . . Tired of being on the heights, I deliberately went to the

depths in search for a new sensation. What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion. I grew careless of the lives of others. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber, one has some day to cry aloud from the house-top. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace." [cited in MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 15]

If sin will be the ruin of men--and surely it will--yet our Lord Christ Jesus knows how to take the ruined sinners and build them up to be temples for His indwelling. Christ will take the very castaways of the devil and use them for Himself. He delights to stop over the dunghill and pick up a broken vessel that is thrown away, and make it into a vessel fit for the Master's use. [C.H. Spurgeon]

For 8 years Sally had been the Romero family pet. When they got her, she was only one foot long. But Sally grew until eventually she reached 11.5 feet and weighed 80 pounds. Then on July 20, 1993, Sally, a Burmese python, turned on 15 year old Derek, strangling the teenager until he died of suffocation. Associated Press Online (7/22/93) quoted the police as saying that the snake was "quite aggressive, hissing, and reacting" when they arrived to investigate.

Sins that seem little and harmless will grow. Tolerate or ignore sin, and it will eventually lead to death (James 1:5).

There were two seriously ill men who shared a single room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed happened to be by the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by the activity and color of the outside world.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his

head: Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It didn't seem fair.

As the thought fermented the man felt ashamed at first. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window--that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit rooms the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room, he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence--deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take it away--no words, no fuss. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. [From a short story by G.W. Target, cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 50]

Sin is not some benign irritation. Sin is a deadly malignancy. [TAB]

"This is not to say that man is not free. Man has options, but those options are all sinful in nature. He is free to choose, but merely to engage in one sin rather than another. God's grace restores complete freedom; it returns to us the option of not sinning and of doing good. This grace, while irresistible, does not work against, but in concert with our wills." [Millard Erickson in elucidating the position of Augustine, Christian Theology, 910]

There was a clock tower atop Thomas K. Beecher's church and the clock never had the correct time. Thomas Beecher hated deception in any form, so he had a sign mounted beneath the clock that read, "Don't blame my hands, the trouble lies deeper." [cited in Roy Laurin, Colossians, 89]

One of the saints of past ages, Jerome, tells of how he led a grossly sinful life in his youth. After he came to Christ he literally fled from all the sinful situations that he once embraced. He then thought that the answer to overcoming the temptation of the flesh was to leave Rome. He then found his way to a wilderness and found refuge in a cave where he sought to subdue his fleshly desires by fasting to the point of near-starvation. Then one night he had a dream. He dreamt that he was rioting and carousing with his friends of his godless days. Jerome then realized that the flesh cannot be starved, beaten, or regulated into submission. Only by walking in the power of the Spirit can a believer control the flesh. [cited in H.A. Ironside, Colossians, 112]

The story is told of a hermit who made a long journey through the desert to visit a supposed wise man. The hermit made the long trek through the wilderness with only his walking stick. When he came to the place where the wise-man lived he asked him how he might find peace with God. The old sage told him to bury his walking stick in the desert sand and water it daily. When it bloomed with flowers he would have peace with God.

The man was ecstatic and planted the stick as he was told. He watered it day after day after day. Months passed by; no blooms. Finally he gave up saying, "This is of no value. I'm no better off today than I was before I planted this worthless dead stick.

The stick is lifeless; it has no inherent power to produce anything. So is a life lived in its own self-effort.

Dead sticks? What did Jesus say? "I am the vine, you are the branches. Unless you abide in me you can do nothing."

"Nothing not only includes saving yourself from your sin; it also includes living a life pleasing to God. [taken in part from H.A. Ironside, Colossians, 112]

"While many people know the historical importance of December 7 in American history, far fewer are familiar with the significance of December 6 and the mark it made on Canadian history back in 1917. Unless, of course, you are a resident of the city of Halifax in eastern Canada.

By 1917, World War I had been raging for more than three years. And while the war never reached Canadian soil, the war effort had reached the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia and the Mont Blanc. The Mont Blanc, an unimpressive French cargo ship, was doing its part for the war effort by hauling supplies to Allied forces in Europe. On the morning of December 6, the Mont Blanc, loaded with more than 5 million pounds of high explosives, lumbered toward the cold harbor of Halifax to await escort ships for the long trip across the Atlantic.

As it traveled up the narrow channel leading to Halifax, the Mont Blanc met an ally ship headed for open sea. Poor communication and shoddy guesswork by crewmen allowed the unthinkable. The ships collided and the Mont Blanc caught fire. The crew fled to lifeboats and abandoned the drifting time bomb to the harbor.

But as the Mont Blanc began to burn, it was dangerously close to Halifax and well within view of town. The crew had neglected to hoist the ship's red flag indicating explosives on board, and so residents crowded to the shore to watch the burning hulk, unaware of its deadly cargo. Others peered out their windows to see the spectacle, equally oblivious to its contents. The ship drew curious townspeople like a beacon, setting the stage for a tragedy of Goliath proportions.

In one white, thunderous flash, the ship exploded. Nearly 2,000 people died instantly and 9,000 more were injured, including two hundred spectators blinded by airborne window glass. The north end of Halifax was destroyed by fire, and windows in buildings fifty miles away bust from the explosion's shockwave. Railway cars were blown two miles off their tracks, and the telegraph office was destroyed, cutting the city off from requesting help. Five

days later, a London newspaper reported that 'of the 500 boys and girls who entered certain schools in Halifax on the day of the disaster, only eleven are known to have escaped with their lives.' [Grace to You Newsletter, March 19, 1996]

Puritan missionary, David Brainerd, wrote in his diary:

Lord's day, December 16, 1744. Was so overwhelmed with dejection that I knew not how to live. I longed for death exceedingly; my soul was sunk into deep waters and the floods were ready to drown me. I was so much oppressed that my soul was in a kind of horror. I could not keep my thoughts fixed in prayer for the space of one minute, without fluttering and distraction. It made me exceedingly ashamed that I did not live to God. I had no distressing doubt about my own state, but I would have cheerfully ventured (as far as I could possibly know) into eternity. While I was going to preach to the Indians, my soul was in anguish. I was so overborne with discouragement that I despaired of doing any good, and was driven to my wits end. I knew nothing what to say, nor what course to take. [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 199]

"We have lost our capacity to think morally . . . the God who gives reality to sin has disappeared off the scene." [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

Quoting another author, David Wells states that "By 1900 it was impossible to reattach the word 'sin' to its original sense because the target of the violation, God, was gone." [from David Wells, The Gospel Alternative, Cassette Message from Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/98]

We all struggle with sin—even repeated "besetting sins." Do we not know what it's like to cower to the counterfeit master of temptation? To crawl back to sin like a dog with its tail between its legs? [TAB]

You put sin to death, yet one by one these vanquished foes awake, like the felled villain in a horror movie. They sniff around, looking for the passions which are the object of their appetites. Like the felled villain they must be put to death again and again and again. [TAB]

"The believer is a new creature, he belongs to a holy generation and a peculiar people — the Spirit of God is in him, and in all respects he is far removed from the natural man; but for all that the Christian is a sinner still. He is so from the imperfection of his nature, and will continue so to the end of his earthly life. The black fingers of sin leave smuts upon our fairest robes. Sin mars our repentance, ere the great Potter has finished it, upon the wheel. Selfishness defiles our tears, and unbelief tampers with our faith. . . . The song which thrills to heaven, and seeks to emulate seraphic strains, hath human discords in it. The prayer which moves the arm of God is still a bruised and battered prayer, and only moves that arm because the sinless One, the great Mediator, has stepped in to take away the sin of our supplication. The most golden faith or the purest degree of sanctification to which a Christian ever attained on earth, has still so much alloy in it as to be only worthy of the flames, in itself considered. Every night we look in the glass we see a sinner, and had need confess, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Oh, how precious the blood of Christ to such hearts as ours! How priceless a gift is His perfect righteousness! And

how bright the hope of perfect holiness hereafter! Even now, though sin dwells in us, its power is broken. It has no dominion; it is a broken-backed snake; we are in bitter conflict with it, but it is with a vanquished foe that we have to deal. Yet a little while and we shall enter victoriously into the city where nothing defileth." [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, October 27, PM]

"In every believer's heart there is a constant struggle between the old nature and the new. The old nature is very active, and loses no opportunity of plying all the weapons of its deadly armoury against newborn grace; while on the other hand, the new nature is ever on the watch to resist and destroy its enemy. Grace within us will employ prayer, and faith, and hope, and love, to cast out the evil; it takes unto it the "whole armour of God," and wrestles earnestly. These two opposing natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The battle of "Christian" with "Apollyon" lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate in the river Jordan. The enemy is so securely entrenched within us that he can never be driven out while we are in this body: but although we are closely beset, and often in sore conflict, we have an Almighty helper, even Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who is ever with us, and who assures us that we shall eventually come off more than conquerors through Him. With such assistance the new-born nature is more than a match for its foes. Are you fighting with the adversary to-day? Are Satan, the world, and the flesh, all against you? Be not discouraged nor dismayed. Fight on! For God Himself is with you; Jehovah Nissi is your banner, and Jehovah Rophi is the healer of your wounds. Fear not, you shall overcome, for who can defeat Omnipotence? Fight on, "looking unto Jesus"; and though long and stern be the conflict, sweet will be the victory, and glorious the promised reward." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"It is a remarkable fact that, while those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit and who are actually overcoming their sins see more and more of the evil of their hearts and lives, those who are the slaves of sin see less and less of the evil, and often deny that they are sinners at all." [19th c. theologian, Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, 576]

"The sins of the wicked pierce Christ's side. The sins of the godly go to his heart." [Thomas Watson]

"The hearts of the best are like Peter's sheet, on which there were a number of unclean, creeping things. Paul shook the viper which was on his hand into the fire, but we cannot shake off original corruption in this life. . . . let us lament the corruption of our will and our affections." [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 73]

"Can we look upon a suffering Savior with dry eyes? Shall we not be sorry for those sins which made Christ a man of sorrow? Shall not our enormities, which drew blood from Christ, draw tears from us? Shall we sport any more with sin and so rake in Christ's wounds? Oh that by repentance we could crucify our sins afresh!" [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 81]

"Godly sorrow shows itself to be ingenious because when a Christian knows that he is out of the gun-shot of hell and shall never be damned, yet still he grieves for sinning against his free grace which has pardoned him. . . . Spiritual sorrow will sink the heart if the pulley of faith does not raise it. As our sin is ever before us, so God's promise must be ever before us.

As we much feel our sting, so we must look up to Christ our brazen serpent. Some have faces so swollen with worldly grief that they can hardly look out of their eyes. That weeping is not good which blinds the eyes of faith." [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 22]

"Acts of sin may be restrained out of fear or design, but a true penitent turns from sin out of a religious principles, namely, love to God. . . . Three men, asking one another what made them leave sin: one says, I think of the joys of heaven; another, I think of the torments of hell; but the third, I think of the love of God, and that makes me forsake it. How shall I offend the God of love?" [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 55]

SLAVERY:

The story is told of a man during the years of slavery in England who went to an auction where slaves were sold like cattle. One particular slave caught his eye and for some reason the man felt sorry for him. When that particular slave went up for bid the price went higher than usual. The man waited until the time that it looked like no one else cared to raise the ante. Then he stepped forward and, to the shock of the audience, with one bid raised the price beyond reach of his peers. Afterward, the slave said to him, "Why would you pay such a price for me?" The man replied, "I paid that price to purchase your freedom. You are free." In response the slave fell to his knees and declared, "I will serve you wherever you go." That is a picture of what it means to be a "bondservant" of Jesus Christ. He paid a price for us that no one else could match. He purchased our freedom. And in response we willingly live—and even die—to serve Him.

"Slavery is only the result of sin. Only avarice, envy, and insatiability have produced it. Why do you need such a swarm of slaves? Give them their freedom! But in any case, know that it is inhuman to strike a slave or to put him in chains." [John Chrysostom, 4th c.] - cited in Christian History, Issue 44.

"Many people with only superficial or secondhand familiarity with the Bible's contents wrongly believe, for example, that the Bible promotes slavery. It is true that some Christians in later centuries supported their defense of slavery from Scripture, but the Bible has been twisted and distorted to support countless bizarre beliefs throughout history. The most important matter is what it actually says, and there is not a single text anywhere in the Bible that commands slavery. God allowed it in Old Testament times, as it was universal among the people groups of the ancient Near East. He enacted legislation, however, to make it more humane than in any other ancient context, often more akin to what might better be called indentured servanthood. In Israel it was primarily an institution for enabling individuals to work themselves out of debt and return to free status. In the New Testament even more countercultural teaching appears, with numerous seeds that would eventually germinate into its abolition altogether—abolition that was disproportionately spearheaded by Christians." [Craig L. Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe The Bible*, 2]

SOCIAL ISSUES:

When Piers or Larry or Tavis or Rosie or Ellen or The View or whoever tried probing me about homosexuality, or wifely submission, or any other area where God has spoken (to the

world's consternation), I think I'd decline the worm altogether. I think instead, I'd say something like,

"You know, when you ask me about X, you're obviously picking a topic that is deeply offensive to non-Christians — but it's far from the most offensive thing I believe. You're just nibbling at the edge of one of the relatively minor leaves on the Tree of Offense. Let me do you a favor, and just take you right down to the root. Let me take you to the most offensive thing I believe. The most offensive thing I believe is Genesis 1: 1 and everything it implies. That is, I believe in a sovereign Creator who is Lord and Definer of all. Everything in the universe — the planet, the laws of physics, the laws of morality, you, me — everything was created by Another, was designed by Another, was given value and definition by Another. God is Creator and Lord, and so He is ultimate. That means we are created and subjects, and therefore derivative and dependent. Therefore, we are not free to create meaning or value. We have only two options. We can discover the true value assigned by the Creator and revealed in His Word, the Bible; or we can rebel against that meaning."Any time you bring up questions about any of these issues, you do so from one of two stances. You either do it as someone advocating and enabling rebellion against the Creator's design, or as someone seeking submissive understanding of that design. You do it as servant or rebel. There is no third option. So yeah, insofar as I'm consistent with my core beliefs, everything I think about sexuality, relationships, morals, the whole nine yards, all of it is derived from what the Creator says. If I deviate from that, I'm wrong. To anyone involved in the doomed, damned you-shall-be-as-God project, that is the most offensive truth in the world, and it is the most offensive belief I hold. But if I can say one more thing, the first noun in that verse —beginning — immediately points us forward. It points to the end. And the end is all about Jesus Christ. That takes us to the topic of God's world-tilting Gospel, and that's what we really need to talk about."

I mean, why quibble about minor offenses, when we know how to take them right to the mother lode of all offense — that God is God, and we are not? [Dan Phillips, teampyro.blogspot.com]

SODOM AND GOMORRAH:

The story of Centralia, PA. There is a ghost town in our neighboring state of PA. Ghost towns are nothing new to me from my years of living in AZ – a state that has it's share of 19th c. mining towns that lived and died w/the mines. Empty reminders of what once was – sort of like the east side of Buffalo. But this borough in central PA is unique. It lies beyond a detour where Rt. 61 has been rerouted to avoid this once active town that now lies in ruins. I'm told (I would love to see this for myself one day) that if you avoid the detour to venture along the original route 61 you will come to a place where the road is closed. Closed w/o explanation. Beyond that closure lies what once was Centralia, a coal mining town that once was home to nearly 3k people. Today the cemeteries are more populated than t/town.

Back in 1962, workers set fire to the landfill. Burning garbage was a common practice and not dangerous in itself. However, this landfill was located over an abandoned mine. Within the mine was an exposed vein of anthracite coal which was set ablaze by t/burning trash. The fire was extinguished. At least that's what the workers thought. What they couldn't see

was the fire that continued to burn underground. A coal fire that metastasized to the cells of the coal mines that lay underneath.

The PA Dept of Environmental Resources began monitoring the fire by drilling holes to determine the extent and temperature of the fire. However, by doing so they were adding fuel (air) to the fire only making things worse.

Residents complained of symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

All efforts over the next 2 decades to still the fire failed. Roads cracked under the heat and steam drifted out of the fissures.

In 1981 the ground caved in under the feet of a 12 year old boy resulting in a sinkhole 150' deep. Fortunately, the boy's cousin was able to pull him to safety.

Engineers determined that their only option left was a massive trenching operation with an estimated cost of \$660 million dollars.

The state chose to condemn the town and relocated its residents.

Fire that was started in 1962 still burns today. And it's still growing. There is enough coal in the eight-mile vein to feed the fire for 250 more years.

A dozen or so residents remain, living among empty buildings, overgrown, weed-infested roadways; smoke and steam still ascending from breaks in the earth.

An illustration in miniature of the smouldering remains that once were the 5 cities on the plain.

SORROW:

"Godly sorrow shows itself to be ingenious because when a Christian knows that he is out of the gun-shot of hell and shall never be damned, yet still he grieves for sinning against he free grace which has pardoned him. . . Spiritual sorrow will sink the heart if the pulley of faith does not raise it. As our sin is ever before us, so God's promise must be ever before us. As we much feel our sting, so we must look up to Christ our brazen serpent. Some have faces so swollen with worldly grief that they can hardly look out of their eyes. That weeping is not good which blinds the eyes of faith." [Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 22]

GUWAHATI, India (Reuters, Tuesday January 2 10:15 AM ET) Elephant Tramples Man And Keeps the Corpse - A wild elephant pulled a man down from a tree, trampled him to death and for two weeks has refused to part with the corpse, police in northeast India say. The man climbed the tree to escape a herd of wild elephants rampaging through his village about 80 miles from Guwahati, the largest city in Assam. One elephant grabbed him, pulled him to the ground and broke his legs. ``The elephant must have got even more irritated as the villagers were trying to free the man," a forest ranger said Sunday. ``It trampled him to

death and took the body along with him." That was two weeks ago and it has been carrying the body around ever since, police said."

And another version: Saturday, December 30 4:41 P.M. SGT Wild elephant bathes, guards corpse of man it killed in India's Assam GUWAHATI, India, Dec 30 (AFP) -

A wild elephant has bathed and sat guard for more than a fortnight over the corpse of a man it trampled to death in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, forest officials said Saturday. P.K Barua from the Mazigoan forest range in Assam said he was "absolutely baffled" at the behaviour of the Asian elephant. "We just cannot get the corpse away from the elephant," said Barua. "We think the elephant might be feeling some remorse for having killed the villager Kotia Bora by shaking a tree on which he was perched. Now he bathes the corpse and sits guard in front of it." Meanwhile, villagers in Mazigoan demanded forest officials "rescue the corpse" as they were waiting to cremate it according to Hindu rites.

SOTERIOLOGY: [General; Justification; Imputation; Assurance of Salvation; Election and Predestination; False; Regeneration; Repentance & Lordship;] - See also "Calvinism;" "Faith;" "Atonement"

General

In the classic eighteenth-century work *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*, Thomas Boston described the eleventh (!) stage in the conversion process in the following terms:

"The man being thus far humbled ... looks on himself as unworthy of Christ, and unworthy of the favour of God If you now tell him he is welcome to Christ, if he will come to him, he is apt to say, "Can such a vile and unworthy wretch as I be welcome to the holy Jesus."

C.H. Spurgeon was converted through the ungifted preaching of a Methodist lay-minister who haltingly expanded upon Isaiah 45:22. Through the weakness of the messenger the power of the Gospel rang in the young Spurgeon's heart:

"There and then, the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; I could have risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him."

"[Christ] has not merely paid the penalty [for our sins, but] also he has positively merited for us eternal life . . . merited for [us] the reward by his perfect obedience to God's law." Therefore, we can run to our heavenly Father without fear. [J. Gresham Machen, cited in Keller, *Prayer*, 69]

Augustus Toplady, the author of "Rock of Ages," wrote in his private diary under Dec. 31, 1767: "Upon a review of the past year, I desire to confess that my unfaithfulness has been exceeding great; my sins still greater; God's mercies greater than both. . . . My shortcomings and my mis-doings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the lowest hell, was not Jesus my righteousness and my Redeemer."

Many of you are familiar with Steve Brown and his *Key Life* radio broadcast. He was a pastor for 25 years and now serves as Professor Emeritus of Preaching and Pastoral Ministry at Reformed Theological Seminary.

Dr. Brown tells the story about his daughter who was enrolled to take an honors course in High School. She didn't want to take the class; she knew it would be very difficult and she was concerned that she would do poorly and ruin her GPA. She was so anxious about taking the class that Dr. Brown made an appointment with the teacher in order to have his daughter excused. The teacher said: "Look, I know she is far more capable than she knows. Here's the deal I want to make. I'll give her an A for the course right now, if she just shows up and tries. This will take all the pressure off her so all she has to do is jump in and enjoy taking the class."

Dr. Brown says that's the way it is with the imputed righteousness of Christ: God has guaranteed you an A. The pressure is off. Jesus says "walk with me."

"I cannot pray," wrote Bishop Berkeley, "but I sin; I cannot preach, but I sin; I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of: and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ."

"There was never a soul yet, that sincerely sought the Savior, who perished before He (God) found him. No, the gates of death shall never shut on you until the gates of grace have opened for you; until Christ has washed your sins away you shall never be baptized in Jordan's flood. Your life is secure, for this is God's constant plan: He keeps His own elect alive till the day of His grace, and then He takes them to Himself. And in as much as you know your need of a Savior, you are one of His, and you will never die until you have found Him." [C.H. Spurgeon]

I am sure the poorest saint that breathes will not exchange, were it in his power, that which he hath in hope and in reversion, for the possession of as many worlds as there be stars in heaven, or sands in the sea. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 128]

Limited Atonement, Perseverance, and Double Predestination before the Reformation:

The medieval martyr Gottshalk: Speaking of the Jews, he says, "Our Lord perceived that they were predestined to everlasting destruction, and were not purchased with the price of his blood." After 21 years of imprisonment and torture at the hands of Bishop Hincmar for his belief in double predestination, he died in A.D. 870. Remigus, Archbishop of Lyons and a contemporary of Gottshalk wrote: "Nor is it possible for any one elect person to perish, or that any of the reprobate should be saved, because of their hardness and impenitency of heart. . . . Almighty God did, from the beginning, prior to the formation of the world, and before he had made any thing, predestinate . . . some certain persons to glory, of his own gratuitous favor. . . . Other certain persons he has predestinated to perdition . . . and of these, none can be saved."

In the 1930s, Stalin ordered a purge of all Bibles and all believers in the former Soviet Union. Millions of Bibles were confiscated and multitudes of believers were sent to the

gulags (prison camps), where most died for being "enemies of the state." In Stavropol, Russia, this order was carried out with a vengeance.

Recently, the CoMission ministry, which Campus Crusade for Christ sponsored, sent a team to Stavropol. The city's history was not known at that time. But when our team was having difficulties getting Bibles shipped from Moscow, someone mentioned the existence of a warehouse outside of town where these confiscated Bibles had been stored ever since Stalin's day.

After much prayer by the team, one member finally got up the courage to go to the warehouse and ask the officials if the Bibles were still there. Sure enough, they were. Then the Commission asked if the Bibles could be removed and distributed again to the people of Stavropol. The answer was "yes"! The next day the CoMission team returned with a truck and several Russian people to help load the Bibles. One helper was a young man, who was a skeptical, hostile, and agnostic collegian who had come only for the day's wages.

As they were loading the Bibles, one team member noticed that the young man had disappeared. Eventually, they found him in a corner of the warehouse weeping. He had slipped away hoping to quietly take a Bible. What he found shook him to the core. The inside page of the Bible he picked up had the handwritten signature of his own grandmother! It had been her Bible! Out of the many thousands of Bibles still left in that warehouse, he stole the one belonging to his grandmother -- a woman persecuted for her faith all her life. No wonder he was weeping -- God had just dramatically revealed Himself to this young man. His grandmother had no doubt prayed for him and for her city. Her prayers had followed him, and now this young man's life has been transformed by the very Bible that his grandmother found so dear. [Dr. Bill Bright, Founder and Chairman of Campus Crusade for Christ International, 2002]

"The word 'salvation' is for us a worn coin; for Paul and his readers, fresh from their Old Testament, it still had a sharp image and a clear superscription. It meant radical deliverance out of a desperate situation. What Israel experienced at the Red Sea, when all help was cut off before and behind and only a vertical miracle from on high could save, that was salvation." [Martin H. Franzmann, Concordia Commentary: Romans, 33]

After a few of the usual Friday evening hymns, the church's pastor slowly stood up, walked over to the pulpit and, before he gave his sermon for the evening, he briefly introduced a guest minister who was at the service that evening. In the introduction, the pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends and that he wanted him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service. With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak, "A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific Coast," he began, "when a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright, and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized." The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story. The aged minister continued with his story. "Grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life...to which boy he would throw the other end of the life line.

He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of the waves. As the father yelled out, "I love you son!" he threw out the life line to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body was never recovered." By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth. "The father," he continued, "knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus, and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without Jesus. Therefore, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend. How great is the love of God that he should do the same for us. Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only begotten Son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept His offer to rescue you and take hold of the lifeline He is throwing out to you in this service." With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room. The pastor again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief sermon with an invitation at the end. However, no one responded to the appeal. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side. "That was a nice story," politely started one of the boys, "but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian." "Well, you've got a point there," the old man replied, glancing down at his worn Bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face, and he once again looked up at the boys and said, "It sure isn't very realistic, is it? But I'm standing here today to tell you THAT story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up His Son for me. You see, I was that father---and your pastor is my son's friend."

One of the old Saxon kings set out with an army to put down a rebellion in a distant province of his kingdom. When the insurrection had been quelled and the army of the rebels defeated, the king placed a candle over the archway of his castle where he had his headquarters and, lighting the candle, announced through a herald to all those who had been in rebellion against him that all who surrendered and took the oath of loyalty while the candle was burning would be spared. The king offered them his clemency and mercy, but the offer was limited to the life of that candle. [Clarence E. Macartney, cited in Pulpit Helps, June, 1998]

Hortatio Bonar, a great saint of God, wrote these majestic words:

Thy works, not mine, O Christ
Speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done;
They bid my fear depart.

To whom save Thee,
Who can alone
For sin atone,
Lord, shall I flee!

Thy pains, not mine, O Christ,
Upon the shameful tree
Have paid the law's full price
And purchased peace for me.

Thy tears, non mine, O Christ,
Have wept my guilt away;
Into a blessed day.

Thy bonds, not mine, O Christ,
Unbind me of my chain.
And break my prison doors,
Ne'er to be barred again.

Thy wounds, not mine, O Christ,
Can heal my bruised soul;
Thy stripes, not mine, contain
The balm that makes me whole.

Thy blood, not mine, O Christ,
Thy blood so freely spilt
Can blanch my blackest stains,
And purge away my guilt.

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ.
Has borne the awful load
Of sins that none in heaven
Or earth could bear, but God.

Thy death, not mine, O Christ,
Has paid the ransom due;
Ten thousand deaths like mine,
Would have been all too few.

Thy righteousness, O Christ,
Alone can cover me;
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee.

Thy righteousness alone
Can clothe and beautify;
I wrap it round my soul;
It this I'll live and die.

Some years ago an English pastor by the name of Caesar Milan was invited to a very large and prominent home where an evening musical recital was to be presented. On the program that night was a young women who thrilled the audience with her singing. When she was finished the young pastor threaded his way through the crowd which had gathered around her. When he had come to her and had her attention, he said, "Young lady, when you were singing, I sat there and thought how tremendously the cause of Christ would be benefitted if you would dedicate yourself and your talents to the Lord." But," he added, "you are just as much a sinner as the worst drunkard in the street, or any harlot on Scarlet Street. But I am glad to tell you that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse you from all sin if you

will come to Him." In a very haughty manner, she turned her head aside and side to him, "You are very insulting, sir;" and she started to walk away. As she did, the young man replied, "Lady, I did not mean any offense, but I pray that the Spirit of God will convict you."

During that night at home the young woman could not sleep. At 2:00 o'clock in the morning she knelt at the side of her bed and asked Christ to be her Savior and Lord. And then she, Charlotte Elliott, sat down, and while sitting there wrote these words:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am--Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

"To be laughed at is not great hardship to me. I can delight in scoffs and jeers. Caricatures, lampoons, and slanders are my glory. But that you should turn away from your mercy, this is my sorrow. Spit on me, but, oh, repent! Laugh at me, but, oh, believe in my Master! Make my body as the dirt of the streets, but damn not your own souls!" [C.H. Spurgeon]

In 1830, George Wilson was convicted of robbing the United States' Mail and was sentenced to hang. President Andrew Johnson issued a pardon for Wilson, but Wilson refused to accept it! The matter finally ended up on the desk of Chief Justice Marshall, who was asked to give his opinion. Marshall concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon." Soon afterward, George Wilson was hanged to death.

An old hymn contains the following words:

Holy, Holy, is what the angels sing,
And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring;
But when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their wings,
For angels never felt the joys that our salvation brings.
[cited in Swindoll, Laugh Again, 87-88]

A poem by Martha Snell Nicholson:

"I sinned. And straightway, posthaste, Satan flew

before the presence of the Most High God.
And made a railing accusation there.
He said, 'This soul, this thing of clay and sod,
Has sinned. Tis true that he has named Thy Name,
But I demand his death, for Thou hast said,
'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Shall not
Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead?
Send now this wretched sinner to his doom.
What other thing can a righteous Ruler do?

And thus he did accuse me day and night,
And every word he spoke, O God, was true!

Then quickly One rose up from God's right hand,
Before whose glory angels veiled their eyes,
He spoke, 'Each jot and tittle of the Law
Must be fulfilled; the guilty sinner dies!
But wait--suppose his guilt were all transferred
To Me, and that I paid his penalty!

Behold My hands, My side, My feet! One day
I was made sin for him, and died that he
Might be presented faultless, at Thy throne!
And Satan fled away. Full well he knew
That he could not prevail against such love,
For every word my dear Lord spoke was true!"

John Selden (1584-1654) was a leading historian and legal authority in England. He had a library of 8000 volumes and was recognized for his learning. When he was dying, he said to Archbishop Ussher: "I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, and my study is filled with books and manuscripts on various subjects. But at present, I cannot recollect any passage out of all my books and papers whereon I can rest my soul, save this from the sacred Scriptures: 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men' (Titus 2:11)." [cited in Wiersbe, Colossians, 22]

John Bunyan, in reflecting on the reconciliation made through the blood of the cross, wrote:

"I was made to see, again and again, that God and my soul were friends by His blood; yea, I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other through His blood. This was a good day for me; I hope I shall never forget it." [cited in Ogilvie, Colossians, 36]

When we come to God, we must bring nothing but Christ with us. Any ingredients, or any previous qualifications of our own, will poison and corrupt faith. He that builds upon duties, graces, etc. knows not the merits of Christ. . . . [You] must everyday denounce as dung and dross your privileges, your obedience, your baptism, your sanctification, your duties, your graces, your tears, your meltings, your humblings . . . your workings; your self-sufficiency must be destroyed. You must take all from God's hand. Christ is the gift of God. . . . Ah, how

nature storms, frets, rages at this, that all is a gift, and it can purchase nothing with its actings and tears and duties, that all workings are excluded, and of no value in heaven. [Thomas Wilcox (1621-1687)]

"The Matchless Pearl"

A heavy splash was followed by many ripples and then the water below the pier was still. An American crouched on the low Indian pier. As his eyes riveted on the place where the stream of little bubbles rose to the surface from deep under the water. In a moment a black head appeared and a pair of bright eyes looked up. Then the old Indian pearl diver was clambering onto the dock, grinning and shaking the water from his shining oiled body. "As nice a dive as I've ever seen, Rambhau!" cried David Morse, the American missionary. "Look at this one, sahib," said Rambhau, taking a big oyster from between his teeth. "I think it'll be good." Morse took it and while he was prying it open with his pocketknife Rambhau was pulling other smaller oysters from his loincloth. "Rambhau! Look!" exclaimed Morse, "Why it's a treasure!" "Yes, a good one," shrugged the diver. "Good? Have you ever seen a better pearl? It's perfect, isn't it?" Morse had been turning the big pearl over and over and then handed it to the Indian. "Oh yes, there are better pearls, much better. Why, I have one--" His voice trailed off. "See this one--the imperfections--the black speck here, this tiny dent, even in shape it is a bit oblong, but good enough as pearls go." "Your eye is too sharp for your own good, friend," lamented Morse. "I would never ask for a more perfect pearl!" "It is just as you say of your God. To themselves people look perfect, but God sees them as they actually are." The two men started down the dusty road to the town. "You're right, Rambhau. And God offers perfect righteousness to all who will simply believe and accept His free offer of salvation. Can't you see that, my friend?" "No, sahib. As so many times before I have told you, it's too easy. That is where your good religion breaks down. I cannot accept that. Perhaps I am too proud. I must work for my place in Heaven, or I would always be uncomfortable."

"Oh, Rambhau!" Behind the missionary's words were years of prayer for this man. "Don't you see, you'll never get to Heaven that way. There's only one way to Heaven. And see, Rambhau, you are getting older now. Perhaps this is your last season of diving for pearls. If you ever want to see Heaven's gates of pearl you must accept the new life God offers you in His Son."

"My last season! Yes, you are right," Rambhau replied. "Today was my last day of diving. This is the last month of the year, and I have preparations to make." But Rambhau, "You should be making preparations for the life to come." "That's what I'm going to do. Do you see that man over there? He is a pilgrim, perhaps to Bombay or Calcutta. He walks barefooted and picks the sharpest stones--and see--every few rods he kneels down and kisses the road. That is good. The first day of the New Year I also begin my pilgrimage. All my life I have planned it. I shall make sure of Heaven this time. I am going to Delhi on my knees." "Man you're crazy! It's 900 miles to Delhi! The skin will break on your knees, and you'll have blood poisoning or leprosy before you get to Bombay." "No, I must get to Delhi. And then the immortals will reward me. The suffering will be sweet, for it will purchase Heaven for me." "Rambhau! My friend! You can't! How can I let you do this when Jesus Christ has died to purchase Heaven for you?" But the old man could not be moved.

"You are my dearest friend on earth, sahib Morse. Through all these years you have stood beside me. In sickness and want you have been sometimes my only friend. But even you cannot turn me from this great desire to purchase eternal bliss. I must go to Delhi." It was useless. The old pearl diver could not understand, could not accept the free salvation of Christ.

One afternoon Morse answered a knock at the door to find Rambhau there. "My good friend!" cried Morse. "Come in, Rambhau." "No," said the pearl diver, "I want you to come with me to my house, sahib, for a short time. I have something to show you. Please do not say no." The heart of the missionary leaped. Perhaps God was answering prayer at last. "Of course I'll come," he said. "I leave for Delhi just one week from tomorrow, you know," said Rambhau as they neared his house ten minutes later. The missionary's heart sank. Inside, Morse was seated on the chair his friend had built especially for him, where many times he had sat explaining to the diver God's way to Heaven. Rambhau left the room, only to return with a small but heavy English strongbox. "I have had this box for years," he said. "I keep only one thing in it and now I will tell you about it. Sahib Morse, I once had a son." "A son! Why Rambhau you never said a word about him." "No sahib, I couldn't."

Even as he spoke the diver's eyes were moistened. "Now I must tell you, for soon I will leave and who knows whether I shall ever return? My son was a diver, too. He was the best pearl diver on the coasts of India. He had the swiftest dive, the keenest eye, the strongest arm, the longest breath of any man who sought for pearls. What joy he brought to me. He always dreamt of finding a pearl beyond all that had ever been found; and one day he found it! But when he saw it, he had already been under water far too long. He lost his life soon after." The old pearl diver bowed his head and for a moment and his whole body shook, but there was no sound. "All these years I have kept the pearl," he continued, "but now I am going, not to return, and to you, my best friend, I am giving my pearl."

The old man worked the combination on the strongbox and drew from it a carefully wrapped package. Gently opening the cotton, he picked up a mammoth pearl and placed it in the hand of the missionary. It was one of the largest pearls ever found off the coast of India, and it glowed with a luster and brilliance never seen in cultured pearls. I would have brought a fabulous sum in any market. For a moment the missionary was speechless and gazed with awe. "Rambhau! What a pearl!" "That pearl, sahib, is perfect," replied the Indian quietly.

The missionary looked up quickly with a new thought. "Rambhau," he said, "this is a wonderful pearl, an amazing pearl. Let me buy it. I would give you 10,000 dollars for it." "Sahib! What do you mean?" "Well, I will give 15,000 dollars for it, or if it takes more I will work for it." "Sahib," said Rambhau, stiffening his whole body, "this pearl is beyond all price. No man in all the world has money enough to pay what this pearl is worth to me. On the market a million dollars could not buy it. I will not sell it to you. You may only have it as a gift."

"No, Rambhau, I cannot accept that. As much as I want the pearl, I cannot accept it that way. Perhaps I am proud, but that is too easy. I must pay for it, or work for it." The old pearl diver was stunned. "You don't understand at all, sahib. Don't you see? My only son gave his life to get this pearl, and I wouldn't sell it for any money. Its worth is in the life blood of my son. I cannot sell this, but I can give it to you. Just accept it in token of the love I bear you."

The missionary was choked and for a moment could not speak. Then he gripped the hand of the old man. "Rambhau," he said in a low voice, "don't you see? That is just what you have been saying to God." The diver looked long and searchingly at the missionary and slowly, slowly, he began to understand. "God is offering to you salvation as a free gift. It is so great and priceless that no man on earth could buy it. Millions of dollars are too little. Not a man on earth could earn it. His life would be millions of years too short. No man is good enough to deserve it. It cost God the life blood of His only Son to make the entrance for you into Heaven. In a million years, in a hundred pilgrimages, you could not earn that entrance. All you can do is to accept it as a token of God's love for you, a sinner. Rambhau, of course I will accept the pearl in deep humility, praying God I may be worthy of your love. Rambhau, won't you accept God's great gift of Heaven, too, in deep humility, knowing it cost Him the death of His Son to offer it to you?"

Great tears were falling down the cheeks of the old man. The great veil was lifting. He understood at last. "Sahib, I see it now. I have believed in the doctrine of Jesus for two years, but I could not believe that His salvation was free. Now I understand. Some things are too priceless to be bought or earned. Sahib, I will accept His salvation." [from a tract by GOOD NEWS PUBLISHERS, Westchester, IL]

Justification

Justification by faith alone "is the hinge upon which everything turns."— Calvin

Justification by faith alone is the Atlas upon whose shoulders every other doctrine of the Christian faith rests. If Atlas shrugs, everything crashes into ruin. – J.I. Packer

"Justification is the gracious act of God in which, by uniting us to Christ through faith alone, God counts us perfectly righteous solely by imputing to us his own righteousness accomplished by Christ, thus satisfying all the law's demands for our punishment and perfection through Christ's own suffering and obedience on our behalf.

Sanctification is the gracious act of God, distinct from justification, and not part of it, by which God progressively frees us from sinning and conforms us to the character of Christ. Historic Protestant faith has always believed that anyone who is truly justified will be truly sanctified. One of the main points of this book is that the reason this is so is that the same faith that unites us to Christ for justification is also the conduit for the power of God's Spirit for sanctification. And that faith is profoundly and pervasively future-oriented." [John Piper]

There is a past, present, and future aspect to our justification. The past stretches back to God's electing purpose when he chose us in Christ (Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:1,2; Eph. 1:5). The plan of God for the salvation of sinners includes his purpose to call, justify, and glorify (Rom. 8:30). Christ was chosen before the creation of the world as the Lamb of God, whose precious blood would atone for sin (1 Pet. 1:19,20). God could withhold punishment for sin in the ages before Christ's coming because of his justifying purpose in Christ (Rom. 3:25). God's purpose was accomplished when Jesus Christ finished his work of obedience and atonement on the cross (Gal. 4:4,5; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25; 4:9; 6:6,7; 2 Cor. 5:19; Isa. 53:11). The present is the moment when the Holy Spirit applies to us the benefits of Christ's

redemption (Col. 1:21,22; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:4-7). The future, for which we are guarded by faith, is the salvation ready to be revealed at the last time (1 Pet. 1:5). At the last judgment God's justifying verdict will be publicly declared; God's saints will be vindicated, and God's judgment will bring them joy and salvation (1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 6:10,16). [Edmund P. Clowney. "The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith," Right With God, 47-48]

Calvin on "faith and works" (justification and sanctification):

"Christ saves no one whom He does not sanctify at the same time. . . . Thus it is clear how true it is that we are justified not without works, yet not through works, since our sharing in Christ, which justifies us, sanctification is just as much included as righteousness . . . the Lord freely justifies His own in order that He may at the same time restore them to true righteousness by sanctification of His Spirit." [John Calvin, Institutes, III:16:1; III:3:19]

"But although works tend in no way to the cause of justification, yet when the elect sons of God were justified freely by faith, at the same time their works are esteemed righteous by the same gratuitous liberality. Thus, it will still remain true, that faith without works justifies, although this needs prudence and a sound interpretation; for this proposition, that faith without works justifies is true and yet false, according to the different senses which it bears. The proposition that faith without works justifies by itself is false, because faith without works is void." [John Calvin, Commentaries on Ezekiel 18:14-17]

Luther spoke in 1537 of justification by grace through faith as "the first and chief article" which cannot be "given up or compromised," for in it "rests in it all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil and the world." [cited on the internet: www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=155]

"The truth of justification has suffered at the hands of human perversion as much as any doctrine of Scripture. One of the ways in which it has been perverted is the failure to reckon with the meaning of the term. Justification does not mean to make righteous, or good or holy, or upright. It is perfectly true that in the application of redemption God makes people holy and upright. He renews them after His own image. He begins to do this in regeneration and He carries it on in the work of sanctification. He will perfect it in glorification. But justification does not refer to this renewing and sanctifying grace of God. It is one of the primary errors of the Romish Church that it regards justification as the infusion of grace, as renewal and sanctification whereby we are made holy. And the seriousness of the Romish error is not so much that it has confused those two distinct acts of God's grace [but that it has] eliminated from the message of the gospel the great truth of free and full justification by grace. That is why Luther endured such travail of soul as long as he was governed by Romish distortion, and the reason why he came to enjoy such exulting joy and confident assurance was that he had been emancipated from the chains by which Rome had bound him; he found the great truth that justification is something entirely different from what Rome taught." [John Murray, cited in "quotations past and current" newsletter, January, 1998, #3]

"The Greek words for 'righteousness' and 'justification' were translated into the Latin Vulgate by the word 'justificari.' If you take that word and try to figure out its meaning from its parts, you get something like this: the first part is 'justice' (it has to do with just or righteous before God), the second part is the verb 'facio' / 'facari' which means 'make or do.' We have it in English, words like 'factory' (where things are made), manufacture (to make something by hand, 'mano' means 'hand'). So, if you study the Latin Bible, 'justification' / 'justificari' seems to mean 'make righteous.' What could be more reasonable than that? God is in the business of making people righteous. And Luther understood that; it was a necessity. People had to be right and righteous in order to stand before a holy God. Luther was not righteous. So he entered the monastery to save his soul, but the harder he worked at it the more impossible it became. He confessed his sins so much that they sent him home saying, 'Luther, for heaven's sake go back until you have something worth confessing!' He said, 'I was a model monk and if I would have kept it up I would have killed myself by my monkly devotions.' The harder he tried (he had a reputation of being the most pious of all the monks)--the harder he tried the more impossible it became. And he said that he didn't love God in those days, he hated God. He hated God not only for His Law, he hated Him for the Gospel, because if the gospel meant you had to be made righteous that was impossible, you could never be made righteous. How could God do something like that? Fortunately, he had a great spiritual father whose name was John Staupitz. Staupitz wasn't the great intellect that Luther was, but he had the right idea. He said to him, 'Luther, you're never going to get anywhere that way. What you need to do is study the Bible.' And so he sent him to work studying the Bible. Luther studied Romans and the Psalms--he preached on them, he was teaching on them in those days. As he did, and especially as he began to look into the Greek text, he realized that when the Bible talks about justification, it's not talking about our being 'made righteous,' it's talking about our being 'declared righteous.' It's a legal term, it's the opposite of condemnation. When a judge pronounces condemnation on a criminal, he doesn't make him guilty of the offense of which he is condemned, he simply recognizes that he is guilty and pronounces the judgment. And in the same way, when the judge pronounces somebody just, he doesn't make him just (justificari), rather he declares him to be just before the bar of the law. And if you say, 'Well, but how can that be, because we are not 'just' before the bar of God's justice,' the answer is God justifies us on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ. And that's the gospel. . . . The gospel isn't what happened in you, now, it's what happened 2000 years ago when Jesus Christ paid the price for your sin. And it's on the basis of that: that God declares you 'just' imputing His righteousness to you, just as He imputes your sin to Christ who died in your place. When Luther saw that, he said it was 'as if the gates of paradise were opened and I passed through into heaven.' And he was never the same and went on to be the father of the Reformation." [James M. Boice, "Preaching Doctrine: Here We Stand, But Do We?" cassette message from the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/1/99, side A]

Justification by Faith No "Legal Fiction":

Christ died in my place. I was indeed a dead man but for Christ. He died my death. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24). I must be either "dead in sins" or "dead to sin." If I am lost in Adam, I am "dead in sins." If I am saved through union with Christ, I am "dead to sin." When I accepted Christ's death for my sin, I could not avoid accepting my own death to sin. Christ died, not only for sin, but unto sin. I am

committed to the cross. To attempt any other position is to involve myself in an infamous moral contradiction. My only logical standing is one of death. I have been "born crucified." It is a first principle of the Christian life.

This is no mere mechanical thing, no mere legal fiction. I am actually and vitally joined to Christ. But, like every other Bible truth, it calls for my hearty consent. That Christ indeed "liveth in me" is a glorious truth. If I am saved, that is no mere cold, lifeless imputation. It is a fact. But it is a truth that calls for my most cordial "Amen." That I may realize His indwelling, I am commanded to reckon myself dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Such reckoning is not make-believe or, as someone said, "Trying to make yourself believe what isn't so." However, the reckoning of a lively faith implies more than is usually realized. [L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 27-28]

"It is in chapter 6 we learn that our justification is no mere formal or legal transaction, (although it is essentially a legal matter), but that it is also in essential union with Christ. When God declares the ungodly sinner just, He makes no mere legal and lifeless imputation of righteousness apart from a real and deep life-union of the believer with Christ. God has indeed declared the righteous 'the ungodly,' but not apart from Christ, not outside of Christ." [L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 16]

"Because we are united by faith to [Jesus Christ] who is perfectly righteous, God accepts us as perfectly righteous. God does not resort to some kind of legal fiction, calling something righteous that is not. Rather, He declares us righteous on the basis of the real accomplished righteousness of Christ, imputed to us because of our union with Him." [Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life*, 2002, 103]

Imputation

Without the righteousness of Christ you and I are finished. Without imputation there is no justification, and without justification by faith alone there is no gospel. [R.C. Sproul, *Romans*, 509]

"As we . . . when we have been engrafted in Christ, are righteous in God's sight because our iniquities are covered by Christ's sinlessness, so our works are righteous because whatever fault is otherwise in them is buried in Christ's purity, and is not charged to our account." J. Calvin, Institutes, III.17.10

Assurance of Salvation

Martin Luther, whose entire early life and ministry was one long and weary pilgrimage seeking salvation by every trick the medieval church had to offer, reached this very conclusion. He notes in the preface to his commentary on Romans:

"And here we must set a boundary for those audacious and high-climbing spirits, who first bring their own thinking to this matter and begin at the top to search the abyss of divine predestination, and worry in vain about whether they are predestinate. They must have a fall; either they will despair, or else they will take long risks. But do you follow the order of this epistle? Worry first about Christ and the Gospel, that you may

recognize your sin and His grace; then fight your sin, as the first eight chapters here have taught; then, when you have reached the eighth chapter, and are under the cross and suffering, that will teach you the right doctrine of predestination, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, and how comforting it is. [Martin Luther, Commentary on Romans (translated by J.T. Mueller), Kregel Publications, 1954, pg. xxiv.]

Another great preacher who dealt with this sensitive matter is Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher and evangelist of the 19th century. His words are some of the best I have read on the matter. They were of enormous comfort to me, and I quote them here in depth:

"Leaving controversy, however, I will now answer a question. Tell me then, sir, who did Christ die for? Will you answer me a question or two and I will tell you whether he died for you. Do you want a Savior? Do you feel that you need a Savior? Are you this morning conscious of sin? Has the Holy Spirit taught you that you are lost? Then Christ died for you, and you will be saved. Are you this morning conscious that you have no hope in the world but Christ? Do you feel that you of yourself cannot offer an atonement that can satisfy God's justice? Have you given up all confidence in yourselves? And can you say upon your bended knees "Lord, save, or I perish?" Christ died for you. If this morning you feel guilty, wretched, conscious of your guilt, and are ready to take Christ to be your only Savior, I can not only say to you that you may be saved, but what is better still, that you will be saved. Your only question is, "Did Christ die for me?" And the only answer we can give is - "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save sinners." Can you write your name down among the sinners - not among the complimentary sinners, but among those that feel it, bemoan it, lament it, seek mercy on account of it? Are you a sinner? That felt, that known, that professed, you are now invited to believe that Jesus Christ died for you, because you are a sinner; and you are bidden to cast yourself upon this great immovable rock, and find eternal security in the Lord Jesus Christ.[Charles Spurgeon, "Particular Redemption", sermon #181, taken from The New Park Street Pulpit Vol. 4 (copied from The Charles Spurgeon Collection CD Rom [AGES Software]).

"A gospel that proclaims an uncertain salvation is a miserable deception. Away with such a gospel; it is a dishonor to Christ, and it is a discredit to God's people. It neither came from the Scriptures of truth, nor does it bring glory to God." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 79]

"Only self-delusion can lead Christians to believe that, in their own weakness and imperfection, they can preserve the great gift of spiritual life that could only be bought by the precious, sinless blood of God's own Son. For believers to doubt their security is to question God's integrity and power. It is to add the merit of human works to the gracious, unmerited work of God. And it is to add self-trust to trust in our Lord, because if salvation can be lost by anything that we can or cannot do, our ultimate trust must obviously be in ourselves rather than in God." [John MacArthur, Saved Without a Doubt, 46]

"Many persons want to know their election before they look to Christ, but they cannot learn it thus, it is only to be discovered by "looking unto Jesus." If you desire to ascertain your own election;-after the following manner, shall you assure your heart before God. Do you

feel yourself to be a lost, guilty sinner? Go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Jesus so, and tell him that you have read in the Bible, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Tell him that he has said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Look to Jesus and believe on him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as thou believest, thou art elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust him, then you are one of God's chosen ones; but if you stop and say, "I want to know first whether I am elect," you ask you know not what. Go to Jesus, be you never so guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about election alone. Go straight to Christ and hide in his wounds, and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." Christ was at the everlasting council: he can tell you whether you were chosen or not; but you cannot find it out in any other way. Go and put your trust in him, and his answer will be-"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." There will be no doubt about his having chosen you, when you have chosen him." [C.H. Spurgeon, Evening and Morning, July 17, Morning "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." 1 Thessalonians 1:4]

Election and Predestination

R.C. Sproul once noted that in all of the years he has taught theology and the doctrine of election, he's had lots of people ask him, "Why are some people not chosen," but he's never had someone ask, "Why was I?" That's the real issue; "Why is anyone chosen?"

J.I. Packer observed: "The Arminians say, "I owe election to my faith" whereas the truth is that "I owe my faith to my election."

In fact, the Arminian position is not election, it's ratification. It likens salvation to a ballot box whereby the final choice is man's not God's.

Election having once pitched upon a man, it will find him out and call him home, wherever he be. It called Zaccheus out of accursed Jericho; Abraham out of idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees; Nicodemus and Paul, from the College of the Pharisees, Christ's sworn enemies; Dionysius and Damaris, out of superstitious Athens. In whatsoever dunghills God's elect are hid, election will find them out and bring them home." [John Arrowsmith, cited in Quotations Past and Current (Newsletter by Tony M. Montano) dated March/April, 1998, Number 4.]

"Election puts no one in hell, but a vast amount of people in heaven." [D. James Kennedy]

"That men believe the gospel is solely due to the sovereign grace of God. The glory is His alone. That men reject the gospel is solely due to their sin. The fault is theirs alone." [TAB]

"The word 'foreknowledge' itself is never used in reference to events or actions—that is, as advance knowledge of what one would or might do—but always of person, whose lives are affected by that foreknowledge rather than the other way around." [James Boice, cited by Ken Talbot in *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, 49]

"Why did God choose us? . . . Not because we did anything that impressed Him. It wasn't the size of our faith . . . or the sincerity. It wasn't the goodness of our heart . . . or the greatness of our intellect. It certainly wasn't because we first chose Him. It was entirely by grace. Grace prompted by love. The Lord chooses us because He chooses to choose us. Period. He sets His love upon us because out of the goodness and grace of His own heart He declares, 'I want you to be Mine.' I love that! Not only because it exalts the grace of God, but because God gets all the glory in it. We won't walk around heaven with our thumbs under our suspenders outbragging one another. Instead, we'll be absolutely amazed that we are privileged to be there. . . . We didn't hunt Him down. He hunted us down. He is the eternal Hound of Heaven. We didn't work half our lives to find Him; He gave His life to find us. Being chosen by God says a lot more about Him than it does about us! He is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. When you find yourself slumping in shame or giving way to guilt, remind yourself of this: You have been chosen by the Good Shepherd. He wants you in His flock." [Chuck Swindoll, *Hope Again*, 69-70]

In 1854 A Briton by name of Holmon Hunt painted a famous piece of Christian art called "Light of the World." I'm sure most of you have seen it; some of you may have it somewhere in your home. It's a picture of Christ at night, holding a lantern standing outside of a home, knocking at the old wooden door. It's said that Hunt showed his picture to a friend one day and asked him, "What do you think?" "It is a beautiful picture, but I think you have forgotten something," said the friend. "There is no latch on the door." Mr. Hunt replied, "Ah, my friend, you have missed the point of the picture. The man at the door is the Lord Jesus Christ. The door is the entrance to the human heart and the latch is on the inside. Unless the one on the inside opens the door, Jesus will never come in." There's a theological problem with Holmon's viewpoint. The problem is related to total depravity. You see, to use Holmon's painting as an example, the guy on the other side of the door from Jesus is dead! He's not opening any door until, as it says in Ephesians 2, God gives him spiritually life!" [TAB]

In his book "Written in Stone" Philip Graham Ryken quotes Martin Luther's response to a student who heard Luther's discussion of free grace and asked, "Then we may live as we want?" Luther replied, "Yes. Now what do you want?"

"Our belief in God's wisdom supposes and necessitates that he has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would creation have been without his design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in grace? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at Providence! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance? No; he knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which he has laid in fair colours, in the blood of his dear Son, but he beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by his grace; he sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to

roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in his mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace! Grace! unto it." At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as he willed with his own; and that in every part of the work of grace he accomplished his purpose, and glorified his own name." [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning/Ephesians 1:11]

"Well can I remember the manner in which I learned the doctrines of grace in a single instant. Born, as all of us are by nature, an Arminian, I still believed the old things I had heard continually from the pulpit, and did not see the grace of God. When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when first I received those truths in my own soul-when they were, as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron, and I can recollect how I felt that I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a man-that I had made progress in Scriptural knowledge, through having found, once for all, the clue to the truth of God. One week-night, when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, How did you come to be a Christian? I sought the Lord. But how did you come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across my mind in a moment- I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, How came I to pray? I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. How came I to read the Scriptures? I did read them, but what led me to do so? Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, "I ascribe my change wholly to God."" [Charles Haddon Spurgeon, from "Defence of Calvinism"]

"You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone who believes was purchased by Christ." [Dr. John Piper, "For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death," Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May. 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"Men will never believe with a saving and real faith, unless God inclines the heart; and they will believe as soon as He inclines it." [Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662]

"I ask any saved man to look back upon his own conversion and explain how it came about. You turned to Christ and believed on His name; these were your own acts and deeds. But, what caused you to turn that way? What sacred force was it that turned you from sin to righteousness? Do you attribute this singular renewal to the existence of a something better in you that has been yet discovered in your unconverted neighbor? No, you confess that you

might have been what he now is if it had not been that there was a potent something that touched the spring of your will, enlightened your understanding, and guided you to the foot of the cross. Gratefully we confess the fact; it must be so. Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 109]

"You ask me what it is that thus binds a man to God. My answer is that he feels he is henceforth joined unto the Lord for many reasons, among them being that the Lord has chosen him to be His own. He is old-fashioned enough to believe that God has a choice in the salvation of men, and he perceives that the Lord has evidently chosen him for salvation, for faith has been granted to him. He often cries, 'Why me? Why me?' Yet he knows that those whom the Lord calls by grace He first predestined to that end (Romans 8:30), and he is not ashamed to believe in his election. The man who believes that God has chosen him is the man who enters into covenant with God and keeps that covenant. He who is chosen of God chooses God; he chooses God because he has been chosen. The vows of God are upon him. Such amazing grace compels him to a consecrated life." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 125-126]

"Other doctrine is slippery ground, like the slope of a mountain composed of loose earth and rolling stones, down which the traveler may slide long before he can even get a transient foothold. However, this [the doctrine of God's sovereign grace] is like a granite step upon the eternal pyramid of truth. Get your feet on this, and there is no fear of slipping so far as doctrinal standing is concerned." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 59]

Speaking of God's Sovereign grace, C.H. Spurgeon declared:

"Moreover, friends, this doctrine overwhelms, as with an avalanche, all the claims of the priesthood. Let it be told to men that they are saved by God, and they say at once, 'Then what is the need of the priest?' If they are told it is of God's grace, they reply, 'Then the priest does not need our money to buy masses and absolutions,' and the priest goes at once.

Beloved, this is the battering ram that God uses with which to shake the gates of hell. How much more forcible this truth is than the pretty essays of many divines, which have not more power than bulrushes, no more light than smoking flax. Why do you suppose people met in the woods during times of persecution, assembled by the thousands outside the town of Antwerp and such places on the Continent in jeopardy of their lives? Do you suppose they would even have come together to hear the poor milk-and-water theology of this age, or to receive the lukewarm, insipid pabulum of our modern anti-Calvinists? Not they, my friends. They needed stronger meat and a more savory diet to attract them thus. Do you imagine that, when it was death to listen to the preacher, men, under the shadows of night and amid the wings of tempest, would then listen to philosophical essays or to mere moral precepts or to diluted, adulterated, soulless, theological suppositions? No, there is no energy in that kind of thing to draw men together when they fear for their lives.

But, what did bring them together in the dead of night amid the glare of lightning and the roll of thunder? What idea brought men together? Why, the doctrine of the grace of

God, the doctrine of Jesus, the doctrine of His servants: Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Something in the doctrine touches the heart of the Christian and gives him the kind of food that his soul loves--savory meat, suitable to his heaven-born appetite. To hear this, men braved death and defied the sword." [Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 59-61]

"Why there are some who preach the doctrine of election as though it were a line of sharp spikes to keep a sinner from coming to Christ, or as though it were a menacing battle-ax to be pushed into the breast of a coming sinner to keep him away from mercy. Now, it is not so." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 63]

"There is no doctrine like it [sovereign grace] for putting a backbone into a man and making him feel that he is made for something better than to be trodden down like straw for the dunghill beneath a despot's heel. Sneer whoever will, the elect of God derive a nobility from the divine choice that no royal lineage can outshine." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 57]

"I pray that free grace would be preached more often, because it gives men something to believe with confidence. The great mass of professing Christians know nothing of doctrine. Their religion consists in going a certain number of times to a place of worship, but they have no care for truth one way or another. I write without any prejudice in this matter; however, in the course of my very extensive pastorate, I have talked with a large number of people who have been members of other churches for years. When I have asked them a few questions about doctrinal matters, it did not seem to me that they were in error. They were perfectly willing to believe almost anything that any earnest man might teach them, but they did not know anything. They had no minds of their own and no definite opinions. Our children who have learned 'The Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith' know more about the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of the Bible than hundreds of grown-up people who attend a ministry that very eloquently teaches nothing." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 57-58]

"Beloved, to say that we save ourselves is to utter a manifest absurdity. In Scripture each of us is called a 'Temple of God' (1 Corinthians 3:16), a holy temple of the Lord. However, will anyone assert that the stones of the edifice in which he now resides were their own architect? Would anyone dare say that the stones of the building in which he now abides cut themselves in to their present shape, spontaneously came together, and then piled themselves up into a spacious edifice? Should someone assert such a foolish thing, we would be disposed to doubt his sanity." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 39]

"Before evening and morning made the first day, your name was in His book. Before the world's foundation was laid, Christ shook hands with the Father in the council chamber of eternity and pledged Himself to redeem you and to bring you and multitudes of others into His eternal glory." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 22]

"Give me the grace to do as you command, and command me to do what you will! . . . O holy God . . . when your commands are obeyed, it is from you that we receive the power to obey them." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, X, 31]

"During all those years [of rebellion], where was my free will? What was the hidden, secret place from which it was summoned in a moment, so that I might bend my neck to your easy yoke . . . ? How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose . . . ! You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood, you who outshine all light, yet are hidden deeper than any secret in our hearts, you who surpass all honor, though not in the eyes of men who see all honor in themselves. . . O Lord my God, my Light, my Wealth, and my Salvation." [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, IX, 1]

"We need to rethink our reformed soteriology so that every limb and every branch in the tree is coursing with the sap of Augustinian delight. We need to make plain that *total depravity* is not just badness, but blindness to beauty and deadness to joy; and *unconditional election* means that the completeness of our joy in Jesus was planned for us before we ever existed; and that . . . *irresistible grace* is the commitment and power of God's love to make sure we don't hold on to suicidal pleasures, but will set us free from by the sovereign power of superior delights; and that the *perseverance of the saints* is the almighty work of God to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of pleasures at God's right hand forever." [John Piper, The Swan is not Silent: Sovereign Joy in the Life and Thought of St. Augustine, 13]

"What would Luther think of the modern heirs of the Reformation? My guess is that he would write on the modern church's captivity to Pelagianism." [R.C. Sproul, Willing to Believe: The Controversy Over Free Will, 21]

George Whitefield once noted, "We are all born Arminians." C.H. Spurgeon quipped, "It is grace that turns us into Calvinists."

"It is not true that some doctrines are only for the initiated; there is nothing in the Bible which is ashamed of the light. The sublimest views of divine sovereignty have a practical bearing, and are not, as some think, mere metaphysical subtleties; the distinctive utterances of Calvinism have their bearing on everyday life and ordinary experience." [C.H. Spurgeon]

There's a quote in the preface to R.K. McGregor Wright's book, No Place for Sovereignty What's wrong with Free-will Theism,

"Evangelicals are clearly being asked to accept an idea of God very different from the God of traditional orthodox theology. Were this an isolated incident, it would not be so alarming. That is being echoed by a growing chorus of evangelical thinkers is quite another matter. Ideas that would have immediately been considered heretical 50 years ago are not promoted without so much as the batting of an eye. It seems, as we enter the 3d millennium, that much of evangelicalism has lost its bearings."

"Apologist" Dave Hunt's opinion on predestination and election:

The major predestination Scriptures do not teach that God has predestined certain men to be saved and certain ones to be lost. Paul declares that God has predestined believers to certain blessings: "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29) and also

to be adopted as children into His family (Ephesians 1:5). Both Paul in Romans 8 and Peter declare that predestination (or election) is on the basis of "the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2). Logically, foreknowledge would not enter into the picture at all if predestination were purely a matter of God's power. As the Romans 8 passage teaches, predestination involves making certain that all those whom God foreknows will respond affirmatively to the gospel, both have it presented to them and are preserved unto the blessings it offers.

Christ's declaration to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16) need not be taken to mean that the disciples had no real choice in the matter. Therefore, it must not be understood in that way because it would render meaningless Christ's call to them to decide whether they would follow Him or not. It would also contradict what many other Scriptures teach about man's responsibility to choose between self and God.

Any employer hiring an employee could declare: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Such a statement does not deny that the employee's choice was a necessary part of the arrangement, but simply defines the relationship by pointing out that without the employer's decision the would-be employee's desire is of no avail. Such passages as "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thessalonians 2:13) can, and therefore must, be interpreted in the same way to maintain consistency in Scripture. While some verses which present predestination could possibly be given a Calvinistic interpretation, to do so would contradict the remainder of Scripture and therefore must not be done.

We have already noted that Scripture testifies that God's love for all men is infinite and that He "desires all men to be saved." Christ came not "to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). God's purpose and desire could not be stated more clearly. Yet in spite of such Scriptures and His command to us to love our enemies and to be Good Samaritans to all who need our help, God Himself, according to Calvinism, has chosen not to save billions from hell even though, through extending His irresistible grace, He could do so. That is both a libel on God's character and such a contradiction of Scripture that it must be rejected vehemently. [Dave Hunt]

Double Predestination:

The medieval martyr Gottshalk: Speaking of the Jews, he says, "Our Lord perceived that they were predestined to everlasting destruction, and were not purchased with the price of his blood."

After 21 years of imprisonment and torture at the hands of Bishop Hincmar for his belief in double predestination, he died in A.D. 870.

Remigus, Archbishop of Lyons and a contemporary of Gottshalk wrote: "Nor is it possible for any one elect person to perish, or that any of the reprobate should be saved, because of their hardness and impenitency of heart. . . . Almighty God did, from the beginning, prior to the formation of the world, and before he had made any thing,

predestinate . . . some certain persons to glory, of his own gratuitous favor. . . . Other certain persons he has predestinated to perdition . . . and of these, none can be saved."

Clement of Rome writes: "It being the will of God that all his beloved ones should be made partakers of repentance, he has established them firmly by his own Almighty purpose. By the word of his Majesty he has established all things. . . . Who shall say unto him, 'What have you done?' Or who shall resist the might of his power? He has done all things at what season he pleased, and in what manner he pleased; and not one of the things which have been decreed by him shall pass away. All things are open to his view, nor has anything absconded from his will and pleasure."

Ignatius writes: "Ignatius . . . predestined ever, before time, unto the glory which is perpetual and unchangeable, united and chosen . . . by the will of the Father." [Opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians]

"Enlightened by the will of him who has willed all things." [Opening to his letter to the Romans]

"The word 'foreknowledge' itself is never used in reference to events or actions—that is, as advance knowledge of what one would or might do—but always of person, whose lives are affected by that foreknowledge rather than the other way around." [James Boice, cited by Ken Talbot in *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, 49]

"Scripture suggests at least five superlatives related to God's sovereign choice to save certain sinners. First, election is absolutely the solitary decision of God, thus it is the most pride-crushing truth in God's Word. It devastates human's pride since nothing in their salvation derives from any merit in them—it is all of God (cf. Jonah 2:9; John 1:12-13; Eph. 2:8-9). Second, because election is totally by divine grace, it is the most God exalting doctrine (cf. Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:6-7, 2:7; 2 Thess. 2:13). Third, election is the most holiness-promoting doctrine. Because God set his love on believers before the world began, they should be consumed with gratitude and a passion to obey Him no matter what (cf. Deut. 11:13; Josh. 24:24; Rom. 6:17, 7:25). Fourth, because God's election is eternal and unchangeable, it is the most strength-producing doctrine in the Bible. Therefore, it affords believers genuine peace no matter what circumstances they face (cf. Ps. 85:8; John 14:7; 1 Cor. 14:33; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 1:20, 3:15; 2 Thess. 3:16). Finally, election is the most joy-producing spiritual privilege because it is the surest hope believers have in the midst of a sinful world." (cf. 1:21; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:5,23; 1 Thess. 5:8; Heb. 7:19). [MacArthur, 124-25]

"Why did God choose us? . . . Not because we did anything that impressed Him. It wasn't the size of our faith . . . or the sincerity. It wasn't the goodness of our heart . . . or the greatness of our intellect. It certainly wasn't because we first chose Him. It was entirely by grace. Grace prompted by love. The Lord chooses us because He chooses to choose us. Period. He sets His love upon us because out of the goodness and grace of His own heart He declares, 'I want you to be Mine.' I love that! Not only because it exalts the grace of God, but because God gets all the glory in it. We won't walk around heaven with our thumbs under our suspenders outbragging one another. Instead, we'll be absolutely amazed that we are privileged to be there. . . . We didn't hunt Him down. He hunted us down. He is the eternal Hound of Heaven. We didn't work half our lives to find Him; He gave His life to find

us. Being chosen by God says a lot more about Him than it does about us! He is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. When you find yourself slumping in shame or giving way to guilt, remind yourself of this: You have been chosen by the Good Shepherd. He wants you in His flock." [Chuck Swindoll, Hope Again, 69-70]

"Many persons want to know their election before they look to Christ, but they cannot learn it thus, it is only to be discovered by "looking unto Jesus." If you desire to ascertain your own election;-after the following manner, shall you assure your heart before God. Do you feel yourself to be a lost, guilty sinner? Go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Jesus so, and tell him that you have read in the Bible, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Tell him that he has said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Look to Jesus and believe on him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as thou believest, thou art elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust him, then you are one of God's chosen ones; but if you stop and say, "I want to know first whether I am elect," you ask you know not what. Go to Jesus, be you never so guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about election alone. Go straight to Christ and hide in his wounds, and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." Christ was at the everlasting council: he can tell you whether you were chosen or not; but you cannot find it out in any other way. Go and put your trust in him, and his answer will be-"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." There will be no doubt about his having chosen you, when you have chosen him." [C.H. Spurgeon, Evening and Morning, July 17, Morning "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." 1 Thessalonians 1:4]

"You did not make the Cross of Christ effective in your life in the atoning of your sins. The cross of Christ has sovereignly become effective in your life by purchasing your faith. You owe your faith to the Cross! Your unbelief is a great sin--was it covered by the Cross, believer, or wasn't it? If you say it wasn't, you atoned for your own sin and you get to heaven on your own strength. If your faith was covered by the blood of Jesus (that is, your unbelief), then everything you are is owed to Christ. And His Cross purchased for you not only the forgiveness for all of your many sins but (also) your unbelief so that you would be a believer. . . . Christ tasted death for everyone who believes because the faith of everyone who believes was purchased by Christ." [Dr. John Piper, "For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death," Cassette Message in Hebrews 2:9 dated May. 26, 1996, © Desiring God Ministries, 720 13th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415]

"While some verses which represent predestination could possibly be given a Calvinistic interpretation, to do so would contradict the remainder of Scripture and therefore must not be done. . . . Yet in spite of such Scriptures and His command to us to love our enemies and to be Good Samaritans to all who need our help, God Himself, according to Calvinism, has chosen not to save billions from hell even though, through extending His irresistible grace, He could do so. This is both a libel on God's character and such a contradiction of Scripture that it must be rejected vehemently. It would be libel upon God's character (as well as a denial of the clear teaching of many Scriptures), to say that He is able, but unwilling, to save all." [Dave Hunt, Whatever Happened to Heaven, 236, 276]

"This is not to say that man is not free. Man has options, but those options are all sinful in nature. He is free to choose, but merely to engage in one sin rather than another. God's grace restores complete freedom; it returns to us the option of not sinning and of doing good. This grace, while irresistible, does not work against, but in concert with our wills." [Millard Erickson in elucidating the position of Augustine, Christian Theology, 910]

"We pursue God because and only because He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit." [A.W. Tozer]

"I am convinced from Scripture that God is absolutely sovereign in the salvation of sinners. Salvation 'does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy' (Rom. 9:16). We are redeemed not because of anything good in us, but because God chose us unto salvation. He chose certain individuals and passed over others, and He made that choice in eternity past, before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Moreover, He chose without regard to anything He foresaw in the elect; simply 'according to the good pleasure of His will [and] to the praise of the glory of His grace' (vv. 5-6). Election arises from the love of God. Those whom He chose, He 'loved . . . with an everlasting love [and drew them to Himself] with loving-kindness' (Jer. 31:3). [John MacArthur, The Love of God, p. 12]

Chuck Swindoll tells the following story:

"I shall never forget [a letter I received] from a young woman who had reached the absolute end of her rope. She had checked into a motel, planning to take her life. Throughout the night she sat on the side of the bed and mentally rehearsed her miserable existence. She had endured numerous failed relationships with men and had several abortions. She was empty, angry, and could see no reason to go on. Finally, just before dawn, she reached in her purse and pulled out a loaded pistol. Trembling, she stuck it in her mouth and closed her eyes. Suddenly the clock radio snapped on. Apparently the previous occupant had set the radio to come on at that precise time on that precise station . . . and the musical theme of "Insight for Living" filled the room. The uplifting sounds startled her. She tried to ignore it, but couldn't. She heard my voice and found herself strangely attracted to the message of new hope and authentic joy that she had never heard in her entire life. Before the 30 minute broadcast ended, she gave her life to Jesus Christ." [cited in Laugh Again, 167-68]

"Before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man." [A.W. Tozer]

If sin will be the ruin of men--and surely it will--yet our Lord Christ Jesus knows how to take the ruined sinners and build them up to be temples for His indwelling. Christ will take the very castaways of the devil and use them for Himself. He delights to stop over the dunghill and pick up a broken vessel that is thrown away, and make it into a vessel fit for the Master's use. [C.H. Spurgeon]

"I hear someone murmur, 'God will not give grace to men who do not repent.' God gives men grace to repent, and no man ever repents till grace first in given him to lead him to repentance. 'But God will not give his grace to those who won't believe,' says another. I

reply, God gives grace to men by which they are moved to believe. It is through the grace of God that they are brought to faith in Christ." [C.H. Spurgeon]

“Our belief in God’s wisdom supposes and necessitates that he has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would creation have been without his design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in grace? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at Providence! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance? No; he knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which he has laid in fair colours, in the blood of his dear Son, but he beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by his grace; he sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in his mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of “Grace! Grace! unto it.” At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as he willed with his own; and that in every part of the work of grace he accomplished his purpose, and glorified his own name.” [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning/Ephesians 1:11]

False

"Bob Dylan late in 1978 encountered what he said was ‘a presence in the room that couldn't have been anybody by Jesus. I truly had a born-again experience, if you want to call it that. . . It was a physical thing. I felt it all over me. I felt my whole body tremble.' His albums Slow Train Coming and Saved reflected a new understanding, and on tour Dylan told audiences, ‘ I told you the times they are a-changin' and they did. I said the answer was blowin' in the wind and it was. I'm telling you now Jesus is coming back, and He is! And there is no other way of salvation.' But in the 1980's Dylan apparently reaffirmed his Judaism." [World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 55]

"I am convinced that for the most part the American church is an unredeemed church because there is a lack of practical holiness. The life of God must be present in the one who claims to know Christ." [MacArthur, Freedom From Sin (study guide to Romans 6-7), 11).

Donald Barnhouse, commenting on this verse, wrote: "Holiness starts where justification finishes; and if holiness doesn't start, we have the right to suspect that justification has never started."

Bishop Handly Moule said:

"We have received the reconciliation that we may now walk, not away from God, as if released from a prison, but with God, as His children in His Son. Because we are

justified, we are to be holy, separated from sin, separated to God; not as a mere indication that our faith is real and that therefore, we are legally safe, but because we were justified for this very purpose, that we might be holy. The grapes upon a vine are not merely a living token that the tree is a vine and is alive; they are the product for which the vine exists. It is a thing not to be thought of that the sinner should accept justification--and live to himself. It is a moral contradiction of the very deepest kind, and cannot be entertained without betraying an initial error in the man's whole spiritual creed." [cited in MacArthur, Freedom From Sin (study guide to Romans 6-7), 24).

"There can be no participation in Christ's life without a participation in his death, and we cannot enjoy the benefits of his death unless we are partakers of the power of his life.. We must be reconciled to God in order to be holy, and we cannot be reconciled without thereby becoming holy." [cited in MacArthur, Freedom From Sin (study guide to Romans 6-7), 22).

When an eagle is happy in an iron cage, when a sheep is happy in the water, when an owl is happy in the blaze of noonday sun, when a fish is happy on the dry land--then, and not till then, will I admit that the unsanctified [unsaved] man could be happy in heaven. [J.C. Ryle (1817-1900)]

I once heard a story of a well-known pastor who was being guided through a major city by the President of a major evangelical seminary located there. As they traveled through the city, the pastor commented about a fancy liquor store with elaborate lighting in the windows. The Seminary President replied, "a man in my Sunday School class owns the chain of these stores." The pastor asked him, "hasn't anyone confronted him about his owning these stores?" "Yes, the president replied, but that isn't what really bothers me. What bothers me is that he is living with a woman who isn't his wife." The Pastor then asked him "have you ever considered the fact that this man may not be a Christian?" "Oh no!" replied the President. I was there when he walked the aisle in church to be saved."

"A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing upon light and vision, discoursing upon and distinguishing to others the nice shades and delicate blendings of the prismatic colors, while he himself is absolutely in the dark! He is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music; a deaf man fluent upon symphonies and harmonies! He is a mole professing to educate eaglets; a limpet elected to preside over angels." [Spurgeon Lectures to my Students, 4]

"I read the other day, that no phase of evil presented so marvelous a power for destruction as the unconverted minister of a parish with [an expensive] organ, a choir of ungodly singers, and an aristocratic congregation. It was the opinion of the writer that there could be no greater instrument for damnation out of hell than that. People go the their place of worship and sit down comfortable and think they must be Christians, when all the time all that their religion consists in, is listening to an orator, having their ears tickled with music, and perhaps their eyes amused with graceful action and fashionable manners; the whole being no better that what they hear and see at the opera--not so good, perhaps in point of aesthetic beauty, and not an atom more spiritual. Thousands are congratulating themselves, and even blessing God that they are devout worshipers, when at the same time they are living in an unregenerate Christless state, having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. He who presides over a system which aims at nothing higher than formalism,

is far more a servant of the devil than a minister of God." [Spurgeon Lectures to my Students, 5-6]

The Swiss reformer, John Calvin, wrote:

"Let us ask those who possess nothing but church membership, and yet want to be called Christians, how they can glory in the sacred name of Christ? For no one has any communion with Christ, but he who has received the true knowledge of Him from the word of the gospel. . . . External knowledge of Christ is found to be only a false and dangerous make-believe, however eloquently and freely his servants may talk about the gospel. The gospel is not a doctrine of the tongue, but of life. It cannot be grasped by reason and memory only, but it is fully understood when it possesses the whole soul, and penetrates to the inner recesses of the heart. . . our doctrine will be unprofitable if it does not change our heart pervade our manners, and transform us into new creatures." [Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life, 16-17]

On May 31, 1995 the Vatican Information Service released these words from Pope John Paul II: "The gift of salvation cannot be limited to those who, in an explicit way, believe in Christ and have entered the church. If salvation is destined for all, it should be in reach of all . . . the divine plan has also predisposed a path of salvation for those who through no fault of their own do not know Christ and do not see themselves as Christians."

In a separate Vatican release the Pope amplified Mary's role in the salvation process when he depicted her as "the spiritual mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."

"Some years ago I was invited to present the gospel to a group of actors and actresses at a Hollywood hotel. That was a different environment for me, but I was thankful for the opportunity to represent Christ to them. I talked for about forty-five minutes, then challenged the people to trust Christ for salvation.

Afterward a young man came up to me and shook my hand. He was a very handsome young actor from India, who had come to Hollywood seeking stardom. He said to me, 'Your speech was fascinating and compelling. I want Jesus Christ in my life.' I was thrilled and suggested we go into a little side room where we would have privacy to talk together and pray.

We made our way to the room and sat down. Then he said, 'I'm a Muslim. I've been a Muslim all my life. Now I want to have Christ.' I was somewhat overwhelmed because I had never led a Muslim to Christ and I didn't expect one to respond so easily to the gospel. I explained in more detail what it meant to open one's heart to Christ, then suggested we pray together.

As we knelt, he invited Jesus into his life. Then I prayed for him and we stood up. I was excited and he was smiling as he shook my hand firmly. But then he made a tragic and revealing statement: 'Isn't it wonderful? Now I have two religions, Christianity and Islam.'" [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 188-89]

Regeneration

C. S. Lewis, describing a time when he was a theist but still not a Christian, makes this fascinating comment: "I was driven to Whipsnade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought. Nor in great emotion. . . . It was more like when a man, after long sleep, still lying motionless in bed, becomes aware that he is now awake."

Roy Clouser recounts a similar experience: "A woman I know had been an outspoken atheist for years. She surprised me one day by speaking about God. When I asked how she came to believe, she said, "Nothing really happened, I just woke up one morning and it all looked true. I have no explanation."

The following true story could be used as an illustration of embracing the shadows rather than the substance which is Christ, or religion without regeneration:

Widow Lives with Corpses of Husband, Twin. By Michael Rubinkam, AP. July 05, 2010 The Buffalo News

The 91-year-old widow lived by herself in a tumbledown house on a desolate country road. But she wasn't alone, not really, not as long as she could visit her husband and twin sister. No matter they were already dead. Jean Stevens simply had their embalmed corpses dug up and stored them at her house - in the case of her late husband, for more than a decade - tending to the remains as best she could until police were finally tipped off last month. Much to her dismay. "Death is very hard for me to take," Stevens told an interviewer.

As state police finish their investigation into a singularly macabre case - no charges have been filed - Stevens wishes she could be reunited with James Stevens, her husband of nearly 60 years who died in 1999, and June Stevens, the twin who died last October. But their bodies are with the Bradford County coroner now, off-limits to the woman who loved them best.

From time to time, stories of exhumed bodies are reported, but rarely do those involved offer an explanation. Jean Stevens, seeming more grandmother than ghoul, holds little back as she describes what happened outside this small town in northern Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains.

She knows what people must think of her. But she has her reasons, and they are complicated, a bit sad, and in their own peculiar way, sweet. Dressed smartly in a light blue shirt and khaki skirt, silver hoops in her ears, her white hair swept back and her brown eyes clear and sharp, she offers a visitor a slice of pie, then casts a knowing look when it's declined. "You're afraid I'll poison you," she says.

On a highboy in the corner of the dining room rests a handsome, black-and-white portrait of Jean, then a stunner in her early 20s, and James, clad in his Army uniform. It was taken after their 1942 marriage but before his service in World War II, in which he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, James worked at a General Electric Corp. plant in Liverpool, N.Y., then as an auto mechanic. He succumbed to Parkinson's

disease on May 21, 1999. Next to that photo there is a smaller color snapshot of Jean and June, taken when they were in their late 80s.

In many ways, Jean shared a closer bond with her twin than her husband. Though June lived more than 200 miles away in West Hartford, Conn., they talked by phone several times a week, and June wrote often. The twins - who, as it happened, married brothers - were honored guests at the 70th reunion of the Camptown High School Class of 1937.

Then, last year, June was diagnosed with cancer. She was in a lot of pain when Jean came to visit. The sisters shared a bed, and Jean rubbed her back. "I'm real glad you're here," June said. On Oct. 3, June died. She was buried in her sister's backyard - but not for long. "I think when you put them in the (ground), that's goodbye, goodbye," Stevens said. "In this way I could touch her and look at her and talk to her."

She kept her sister, who was dressed in her "best housecoat," on an old couch in a spare room off the bedroom. Jean sprayed her with expensive perfume that was June's favorite. "I'd go in, and I'd talk, and I'd forget," Stevens said. "I put glasses on her. When I put the glasses on, it made all the difference in the world. I would fix her up. I'd fix her face up all the time."

She offered a similar rationale for keeping her husband on a couch in the detached garage. James, who had been laid to rest in a nearby cemetery, wore a dark suit, white shirt and blue knitted tie. "I could see him, I could look at him, I could touch him. Now, some people have a terrible feeling, they say, 'Why do you want to look at a dead person? Oh my gracious,'" she said. "Well, I felt differently about death."

Part of her worries that after death, there's ... nothing. "Is that the grand finale?" But then she gets up at night and gazes at the stars in the sky and the deer in the fields, and she thinks, "There must be somebody who created this. It didn't come up like mushrooms." So she is ambivalent about God and the afterlife. "I don't always go to church, but I want to believe," Stevens said.

Dr. Helen Lavretsky, a psychiatry professor at UCLA who researches how the elderly view death and dying, said people who aren't particularly spiritual or religious often have a difficult time with death because they fear that death is truly the end. For them, "death doesn't exist," she said. "They deny death."

Stevens, she said, "came up with a very extreme expression of it. She got her bodies back, and she felt fulfilled by having them at home. She's beating death by bringing them back." There was another reason that Stevens wanted them above ground. She is severely claustrophobic and so was her sister; she was horrified that the bodies of her loved ones would spend eternity in a casket in the ground. "That's suffocation to me, even though you aren't breathing," she said. So she said she had them dug up, both within days of burial.

She managed to escape detection for a long time. The neighbors who mowed her lawn and took her grocery shopping either didn't know or didn't tell. Otherwise forthcoming, Stevens is vague when asked about who exhumed the bodies and who knew of her odd

living arrangement. She blames a relative of her late husband's for calling the authorities about the corpses. "I think that is dirty, rotten," she said.

State police - who haven't yet released the identities of those who retrieved the bodies - will soon present their findings to the Bradford County district attorney. A decision on charges is expected in a few weeks. Stevens has talked extensively with both the police and Bradford County Coroner Tom Carman, who calls it a "very, very bizarre case." But the coroner has nothing but kind things to say about the woman at the center of it. "I got quite an education, to say the least. She's 100 percent cooperative - and a pleasure to talk to," Carman said. "But as far as her psyche, I'll leave that to the experts."

Repentance and Christ's Lordship

"[T]he lordship of Jesus is absolutely fundamental to the preaching of the gospel in the NT. It is inconceivable that anyone could respond appropriately to that gospel without confessing from the heart that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)." [John Frame, System Theology, 16]

St. Augustine (5th c.) stated that the true church consists of those who have believed and repented, those who are spiritually united to Christ. As a result, they live changed lives which evidence their union with Him. Those who do not demonstrate a transformed life, he characterized as Christians in name only. [adapted from Philip Hughes in Tabletalk, p. 14, June 2004, Ligonier Ministries]

Prior to his conversion to Christ, the great saint of ages past, Augustine, lived with a prostitute. One day shortly after his conversion he was walking down the street and was spotted by his former prostitute girl-friend. When she saw him she cried out, "Augustine!" "Augustine!" When he ignored her repeated attempts to get his attention she ran to him and confronted him saying, "Augustine, it is I." "I know, I know," he replied--"But it is no longer I."

They fell once or twice, and rose by repentance, that they might keep the closer to Christ for ever. They fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctance; and thou sinnest presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. Thou hast, by thy making a trade of sin. contracted upon thy soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, that thou canst as well cease to be. or cease to live, as thou canst cease to sin. Sin is, by custom, become as another nature to thee, which thou canst not, which thou wilt not lay aside, though thou knowest that if thou dost not lay sin aside, God will lay thy soul aside for ever; though thou knowest that if sin and thy soul do not part, Christ and thy soul can never meet. If thou wilt make a trade of sin, and cry out. Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus? No! their hearts turned aside to folly one day, but thy heart turns aside to folly every day (2 Peter 2. 14, Prov. 4. 16); and when they were fallen, they rise by repentance, and by the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ; but thou fallest, and hast no strength nor will to rise, but wallowest in sin, and wilt eternally die in thy sins, unless the Lord be the more merciful to thy soul. Dost thou think, O soul, this is good reasoning? Such a one tasted poison but once, and yet narrowly escaped; but I do daily drink poison, yet I shall escape. Yet such is the mad reasoning of vain souls. David and Peter sinned once foully and fearfully; they tasted poison but once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet

shall not taste of eternal death. Remember, O souls! that the day is at hand when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yea, self-murderers. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 47]

A Jewish Rabbi, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, and exhorting them to be sure to repent the day before they died, one of them replied, that the day of any man's death was very uncertain. 'Repent, therefore, every day,' said the Rabbi, 'and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die.' You are wise, and know how to apply it to your own advantage. [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 61]

Again, repentance doth include, not only a loathing of sin. but also a loathing of ourselves for sin. As a man doth not only loathe poison, but he loathes the very dish or vessel that hath the smell of the poison; so a true penitent doth not only loathe his sin. but he loathes himself, the vessel that smells of it; so Ezek. 20. 43: 'And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins, but to loathe yourselves." Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 58

True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. . . . Oh! but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up, and keep up, the world's crown. 'Demas hath forsaken us to embrace this present world' (2 Tim. 4. 10). [Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 158]

"The Bible divides Christians into two categories: spiritual Christians and carnal Christians. The spiritual Christians are those who love Jesus Christ and are motivated by that love to serve Him day by day and implement His will in their lives. Carnal Christians accept Jesus as Savior, but refuse His Lordship." [Harold L. Fickett, Jr. *Peter's Principles: A Bible Commentary for Laymen*. (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1974.), 78.]

"Faith, however, is something that God effects in us. It changes us and we are reborn from God. . . . It never waits to ask whether there is some good work to do, rather, before the question is raised, it has done the deed, and keeps on doing it. A man not active in this way is a man without faith. . . . It is impossible, indeed, to separate works from faith, just as it is impossible to separate heat and light from fire." [Martin Luther]

Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Let us turn to every age that has passed, and learn that, from generation to generation, the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all such as would be converted unto Him." [Clement of Rome, late 2d c.]

"The faith which saves us is that which the Apostle Paul clearly enough describes when he says: 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.' But if it works evil, and not good, then without doubt, as the Apostle James says, 'it is dead, being alone.' The same apostle says again, 'What does it profit, my

brethren, though a man says he has faith, and does not have works? Can that faith save him.'" [Augustine]

"Every true Christian pronounces this phrase, 'Jesus our Lord,' with the emphasis of unreservedness. We desire that Christ Jesus should be our Lord in everything, and Lord over every part of our being. . . . He who truly loves Jesus, and who knows that he is one of those who are redeemed by him, says with all his heart that Jesus is his Lord, his absolute Sovereign, his Despot, if that word be used in the sense of his having unlimited monarchy and supreme sway over the soul." [Spurgeon]

In his book "Written in Stone" Philip Graham Ryken quotes Martin Luther's response to a student who heard Luther's discussion of free grace and asked, "Then we may live as we want?" Luther replied, "Yes. Now what do you want?"

"Repentance," says C.S. Lewis, "is not something God demands of you before He will take you back and which He could let you off if He chose; it is simply a description of what going back is like." [Cited in *Leadership Journal*, *An Anatomy of Lust*, (anonymous author), Fall Quarter, 1982, 45]

"We are saved by faith, yet faith is one
With life, like daylight and the sun.
Unless they flower in our deeds,
Dead, empty husks are all the creeds.
To call Christ Lord, but strive not to obey,
Belies the homage that with words I pay."
[Maud Frazer Jackson, cited in Hiebert, James, 338]

Rich Wager declares that it is a perversion of the gospel to invite an unsaved person to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. To present Christ as Lord to a non-Christian is "to add to scriptural teachings concerning salvation." [cited in MacArthur, The Gospel According to Jesus, 16, fn.]

"It is a tragic error. It is the idea--where did it ever come from?--that one can be a Christian without being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reduces the gospel to the mere fact of Christ's having died for sinners, requires of sinners only that they acknowledge this by the barest intellectual assent, and then assures them of their eternal security when they may very well not be born again. This view bends faith beyond recognition--at least for those who know what the Bible says about faith--and promises a false peace to thousands who have given verbal assent to this reductionist Christianity but are not truly in God's family." [James Montgomery Boice, from the Foreword to The Gospel According to Jesus, by John MacArthur]

"That man should not separate what God has joined is a truth about more than marriage. God has joined the three offices of prophet (teacher), priest, and king in the mediatorial role of Jesus Christ, and directs us in the Bible to relate positively to them all. God has joined faith and repentance as the two facts of response to the Savior and made it clear that turning to Christ means turning from sin and letting ungodliness go. Biblical teaching on faith joins credence, commitment, and communion; it exhibits Christian believing as not only knowing

facts about Christ , but also coming to him in personal trust to worship, love, and serve him. If we fail to keep together these things that God has joined together, our Christianity will be distorted." [J.I. Packer, from the Foreword to The Gospel According to Jesus, by John MacArthur]

The Christian, in other words, is not a man who has taken up something as an interest, he is a man who has been taken up by the interest and he cannot escape it. The Christian, therefore, can never be half-hearted, because he is conscious of this vice-like grip which holds him. I am not going too far when I venture to put it like this, because I sometimes think it is perhaps one of the most delicate tests we can ever give ourselves: Do we know what it is to feel sometimes that we would like to get away from it, but it has got us in a grip, it has mastered us? This is expressed in that well-known hymn: 'O love that wilt not let me go' -- that is it. There may be times in our folly and blindness and sin when we would like to be released, but he will not let us go, we are taken hold of, and grasped firmly.

That is the first thing that is true of this new life in which Paul finds himself. 'It is not,' he says in effect, 'that I have given up Judaism and taken up Christianity; it is not that having heard something about it, I find it rather interesting and I like reading about it and discussing it in a casual, external objective manner. Not at all! That is not the Christian position. The thing that is characteristic of the Christian in the first place is that he is suddenly aware that this thing has taken hold of him and he cannot get away from it; he is taken up, apprehended by it, and then he tries to apprehend.' [D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Philippians, 2:48]

Christianity is never an addition to our lives, it is never something that is added on to that which we have previously had: it is central or it is nowhere. If it is not controlling the whole of your life, then you are just not a Christian. Christians are not people of whom it can be said that their lives are identical with everybody else's, they have an extra something in addition, and in the end they are seen to be Christians. No, to be a Christian, says Paul, means that at the very centre, at the very core of your being and existence, this new something has come in and controls everything. A radical change takes place when you become a Christian, you are suddenly aware of it; it is a change of outlook upon all things. I do not hesitate to use the term which the Apostle uses in [Philippians 3:8]--all things have become 'loss.' [D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Philippians, 2:49]

Christians by definition must have an entirely different view of everything from those who are not Christians: a new vision of themselves, a different view of God and of how God is to be approached, a different view of life. Now I think this is very important at this present time. Because we are governed by new principles, we should be viewing events in a different way--our whole attitude towards everything is essentially different from the non-Christian attitude. Our view of death should be different, and our view of all other people should be different as well. [D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Philippians, 2:51]

To me it seems more and more the one thing that should be of concern to all of us who are Christians; indeed, I think it is the one thing that differentiates the true Christian from every other person in this world. Everybody desires something; everybody is anxious to have something; you and I may have ambitions of all kinds. Now the suggestion is that the Christian is someone who says, 'What I long for, above everything else, is that I may know him better, and when I think of that, everything else becomes relatively unimportant. If by

selling all I have, or forsaking all I have been [up to this point in my life], if by doing that, I could have a deeper knowledge, a truer understanding, a closer communion, I would gladly do it all.' [D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Philippians, 2:72]

"Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man's sinfulness and guilt, calling on 'all men everywhere to repent,' results in shallow conversions; and so we have myriads of glib-tongued professors today who give no evidence of regeneration whatever. Prating of salvation by grace, they manifest no grace in their lives. Loudly declaring they are justified by faith alone, they fail to remember that 'faith without works is dead;' and that justification by works before men is not to be ignored as though it were in contradiction to justification by faith before God." [H.A. Ironside, cited in MacArthur, The Gospel According to Jesus, 160]

"The Gospel, like its blessed Master, is always crucified between two thieves -- legalists of all sorts on the one hand and Antinomians on the other; the former robbing the Saviour of the glory of his work for us, and the other robbing him of the glory of his work within us." [James Henley Thornwell, Antinomianism]

"A Christian is not one who simply buys 'fire insurance,' who signs up just to avoid an unpleasant afterlife. A Christian, as we have seen repeatedly, is one whose faith expresses itself in submission and obedience. A Christian is one who follows Christ, one Who is committed unquestionably to Christ as Lord and Savior, one Who desires to please God. His basic aim is to be in every way a disciple of Jesus Christ. When he fails, he seeks forgiveness and wants to move forward. This is his spirit and his direction." [John MacArthur, The Gospel According to Jesus, 197]

"There is a choice that Christians have to make. We can either decide to allow Christ to be the Lord of our lives . . . or we can decide to be content with the salvation God has given us, having no desire to be involved in serving Him." [Harold L. Fickett, Jr. Peter's Principles: A Bible Commentary for Laymen, 102]

John Stott, reflecting on this passage in Luke 14:27-28, comments:

"The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers--the ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ's warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so-called 'nominal Christianity.' In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved; enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great, soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life, while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience." [cited in MacArthur, The Gospel According to Jesus, 197]

SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

"First, there is evidence that some form of "charismatic" gifts continued sporadically across the centuries of Church history...Second, from the death of Montanism until the turn of the present century, such phenomena were never part of a major movement. In each instance, the group involved was small and generally on the fringe of Christianity... Third, the great movements of piety and reformation that have, in God's mercy, occasionally refreshed and renewed the Church were not demonstrably crippled because their leaders did not, say, speak in tongues...Fourth, very often the groups that did emphasize what today would be called charismatic gifts were either heretical or quickly pushed their "gifts" to such extremes that their praxis proved dangerous for the Church." (D.A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 166-167).

After all, the being famous is a thing that depends greatly on position and opportunity. It is not enough to possess gifts and powers : there must also be the means of exhibiting them. For want of opportunity some of the greatest men perhaps are buried in obscurity. There may be great physicians who could never find a practice, great lawyers who could never get a brief, and great soldiers who never had a chance of distinguishing themselves. [J.C. Ryle, *The Christian Leaders of the Last Century: England 100 Years Ago*, Chapter on William Grimshaw]

Satan hath his devices to ensnare and destroy the learned and the wise: and that, sometimes by working them to pride themselves in their [talents] and abilities; and sometimes by drawing them to rest upon [them] . . . and sometimes by causing them to make light and slight of those that [lack them] . . . , though they [those that lack them] excel them [those who have them] in grace and holiness . . . The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That you have nothing but what you have received, Christ being as well the tountain of common gifts as of saving grace. . . . The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That men's learning and trusting to their own wits, [talents], and abilities, have been their utter overthrow and ruin. . . . The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That you do not transcend others more in [talents] and abilities, than they do you in grace and holiness. There may be, and often is, great [talents] and abilities, where there is but little grace, yea, no grace; and there may be, and often is, a great deal of grace, where there is but weak [talents] and abilities. You may be higher than others in gifts of knowledge, utterance, and learning, and those very souls may be higher than you in their communion with God, in their delighting in God, in their dependence upon God, in their affections to God, and in their humble, holy, and unblameable walking before God. Is it folly and madness in a man, to make light and slight of another, because he is not so rich in lead or iron as he, when he is a thousand thousand times richer in silver and gold, in jewels and in pearls, than he? . . . The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there is no such way for men to have their gifts and [talents] blasted and withered, as to pride themselves in them, as to rest upon them, as to make light and slight of those that want them, as to engage them against those persons, ways, and things, that Jesus Christ hath set his heart upon. . . . (Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 194-97)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

If you would not be taken with any of Satan's snares and devices, then keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted, but will not

easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. . . . Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul, by divine influences, sweetly ascending up to Christ. . . . While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, but he goes on conquering and to conquer; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for 'spiritual wickedness in high places'; but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall, as others, before the face of every temptation. David, so long as he kept up his communion with God, he stands, and triumphs over all his enemies; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, then he falls before the enemies that were in his own bosom, and flies before those that pursued after his life. It will be so with your souls, if you do not keep up your communion with God. . . . Communion with God is a shield upon land, as well as an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, as well as a staff to support you; therefore keep up your communion. [Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 248-49]

"Every square Inch of the universe is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan." (C.S. Lewis)

One prominent "spiritual warfare" teacher says in his course, "Seven Steps to Freedom," that sexual dreams are caused by incubi and succubi. These supposedly male and female spirits jump on you as you sleep and give you sexual fantasies. [cited by Hank Hanegraaff, "Christian Research Institute Newsletter" dated September, 1998]

"What a remarkable picture to behold all the enemies of Christ totally disarmed. Satan has nothing left now with which he may attack us. He may attempt to injure us, but wound us he never can, for his sword and spear are utterly taken away." [C.H. Spurgeon, Spiritual Warfare in a Believer's Life]

"Plutarch tells that when a Spartan won a victory in the games, his reward was that he might stand beside his king in a battle. A Spartan wrestler at the Olympic games was offered a very considerable bribe to abandon the struggle, but he refused. Finally, after a terrific effort, he won his victory. Someone said to him: 'Well, Spartan, what have you got out of this costly victory you have won?' He answered: 'I have won the privilege of standing in front of my king in battle.'" [cited in Barclay, 42-43]

"A local newspaper recently told of a well-known television evangelist who was taking a nap in his home when suddenly, he claimed, Satan himself appeared, grabbed him around the neck with both hands, and tried to strangle him to death. When he cried out, his wife came running into the room and chased the devil away. That same man has reported other bizarre experiences over the years." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 183]

Why I have such a problem with another "detractor" of Christ's sufficiency: Recent obsession with deliverance from demons--From Frank's Peretti's fictional books to Neil Anderson's "Bondage-Breaker" and its "pseudo-truth" to the wealth of seminars now

available for Christians so that they might reach a higher plane of Christian living by being "released" from the power of demons.

C. Peter Wagner, a proponent of these "deliverance" tools has written:

The [Holy] Spirit is saying something to churches through these books [fictional books by Frank Peretti] even though they are fiction. wagner goes on to caution Christians about the danger of demons: If you don't know what you are doing, and few . . . have the necessary expertise, Satan will eat you for breakfast." Someone might object: "What about 1 Peter 5:8?" Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. "See! Satan will eat you for breakfast!" What does Peter suggest in the very next verse? Read a book? Go to a seminar? bind Satan? Say a special prayer? But resist him, firm in your faith, (5:9). Spiritual warfare according to James (4:7): Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [TAB]

"One night several years ago I was called to the church office to deal with an emergency. I arrived to find one of our elders struggling with a girl who was demon possessed. She was evidencing supernatural strength; she had flipped a heavy steel desk over onto its top. The two of us together were unable to restrain her physically. Voices that were not her own were speaking out of her. I was unsure of what to do, having never encountered anything like that before.

When I arrived, I heard a demon scream, 'Not him! Anyone but him! Get him out! Get him out! We don't want him here.' It encouraged me to know they realized I was not on their side.

We tried to speak to the demons. We commanded them to tell us their names, and we ordered them in Jesus' name to go to the pit. We spent two hours trying to send those demons out of her.

When we finally stopped trying to talk to the demons and dealt directly with that young woman, we began to make some headway. We told her she needed to confess her sins, and she began to pour out her heart. She had been involved in unimaginable filth and was living a hypocritical life. She confessed her sins with tears and affirmed the truth of Jesus Christ, then asked the Lord to cleanse her from every sin in her life. Again in her prayer, she articulated every sin she could think of having committed and prayed earnestly with a repentant heart. Afterward she was a changed woman. As far as I know, demons have never troubled her from that day on.

How was she delivered? Not by some spectacular deliverance ceremony. She simply resisted the demons with truth and righteousness, and they fled." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 236-37]

STATISTICS:

More Americans believe in God than in angels, miracles, and even heaven. And while half attend worship services on a regular basis, a majority thinks religion plays too small a role

in people's lives today.

Fully 92 percent of Americans say they believe in God, 85 percent in heaven and 82 percent in miracles, according to the latest FOX News poll. Though belief in God has remained at about the same level, belief in the devil has increased slightly over the last few years - from 63 percent in 1997 to 71 percent today.

The national poll, conducted by Opinion Dynamics Corporation (search), shows that about a third of Americans believe in ghosts (34 percent) and an equal number in UFOs (34 percent), and about a quarter accept things like astrology (search) (29 percent), reincarnation (search) (25 percent) and witches (24 percent).

There is a gender gap on many of these subjects. Women are more likely than men to believe in almost all topics asked about in the poll, including 12 percentage points more likely to believe in miracles and eight points more likely to trust there is a heaven. The one significant exception is UFOs, with 39 percent of men compared to 30 percent of women saying they accept the existence of unidentified flying objects.

Young people are much more likely than older Americans to believe in both hell and the devil. An 86 percent majority of adults between the ages of 18 to 34 believe in hell, but that drops to 68 percent for those over age 70. Similarly, 79 percent of young people believe in the devil compared to 67 percent of the over-70 age group.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say they believe in God (by eight percentage points), in heaven (by 10 points), in hell (by 15 points), and considerably more likely to believe in the devil (by 17 points). Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they believe in reincarnation (by 14 percentage points), in astrology (by 14 points), in ghosts (by eight points) and UFOs (by five points).

Overall, most Americans think religion plays too small a role in people's lives today (69 percent), with only 15 percent saying it plays too large a role and seven percent saying "about right."

The poll finds over a third (37 percent) say they attend church, synagogue or other place of worship at least once a week, 13 percent almost every week, 12 percent about once a month and 19 percent seldom attend. Three percent attend on holidays and 15 percent never attend.

***Polling was conducted by telephone September 23-24, 2003 in the evenings. The sample is 900 registered voters nationwide with a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points. Results are of registered voters, unless otherwise noted. NA = national adult [More Believe In God Than Heaven Tuesday, October 14, 2003, By Dana Blanton]

* Since 1960 population has increased 41%; crime 500%

* The median prison sentence for serious crime was 23 days in 1954 compared to 8 days today.

* In 1965 the juvenile violent crime arrest rate was 137 per 100,000; in 1990 it was 431 per 100,000.

* Teen pregnancy rates and abortion rates have doubled since 1972.

- * Child abuse has gone up over 300% since Roe v. Wade.
- * Since 1960, Illegitimate births have increased over 400%; and teen suicide has more than tripled; and Divorces are up almost 200%; SAT scores are down nearly 80 points while we spend over 100% more per student. (recorded 1993)

STRANGE BUT TRUE:

In December 1976 a Universal Studios camera crew arrived at the Nu-Pike Amusement Park in Long Beach, California, to film an episode of the television action show, the Six Million Dollar Man. In preparing the set in a corner of the funhouse, a worker moved the "hanging man," causing one of this prop's arms to come off. Inside it was human bone. This was no mere prop; this was a dead guy!

The body was that of Elmer McCurdy, a young man who in 1911 robbed a train of \$46 and two jugs of whiskey in Oklahoma. He announced to the posse in pursuit of him that he would not be taken alive. He was proved right -- they killed him in the ensuing shoot-out.

McCurdy began his career as a sideshow attraction right after his embalming. He looked so darned good dressed up in his fancy clothes that the undertaker propped him up in a corner of the funeral home's back room and charged locals a nickel to see "The Bandit Who Wouldn't Give Up." The nickels were dropped into the corpse's open mouth (from where they were later retrieved by the entrepreneurial undertaker).

No next of kin showed up to claim McCurdy, so the corpse kept mouthing nickels for a few years. Carnival promoters wanted to buy the stiff, but the undertaker turned them down. McCurdy was producing a steady income for the funeral parlour -- why tamper with success?

In 1915 two fellas showed up, claiming McCurdy as their brother. They hauled the dead guy away, supposedly to give him a decent burial in the family plot. In reality, McCurdy's "brothers" were carnival promoters and this was a ruse to get the deceased away from that proprietary undertaker. The promoters exhibited McCurdy throughout Texas under the same billing as the undertaker had given him -- "The Bandit Who Wouldn't Give Up."

After that tour, McCurdy popped up everywhere, including an amusement park near Mount Rushmore, lying in an open casket in a Los Angeles wax museum, and in a few low-budget films. Before the Six Million Dollar Man crew discovered this prop to be a corpse, McCurdy had been hanging in that Long Beach funhouse for four years.

In April 1977, the much-traveled Elmer McCurdy was laid to final rest in Summit View Cemetery in Guthrie, Oklahoma. To make sure the corpse would not make its way back to the entertainment world, the state medical examiner ordered two cubic yards of cement poured over the coffin before the grave was closed. McCurdy hasn't been seen hanging around amusement parks since. [Verified as true, Origins: Brian Dewan's "Cowboy Outlaw" (from his 1993 Tells The Story album) is about McCurdy's post-death career]

“A cod caught off the coast of western Norway had a Coke but not a smile. Norwegian Stig Skaar said he ‘could see something wasn’t right’ about the small, skinny, and underweight

cod, and he found inside the fish an intact Coca-Cola can. The can apparently left no room in the cod’s stomach for food. Other items reportedly found in the stomach’s of cod: six frozen hamburger patties, an otter, and, in Australia, a human head.” [World Magazine, March 6, 2004]

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given by the American Assoc. for Forensic Science, AAFS president Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre but true death.

"On March 23, 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr. Opus had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide (in fact, he left a note behind). As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the one who pulled the trigger nor Mr. Opus the jumper was aware that a safety net had been erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers and that Mr. Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide anyway because of this.

Ordinarily, a person who sets out to commit suicide ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended. That Opus was shot on the way to certain death nine stories below probably would not have changed his mode of death from suicide to homicide. But the fact that his suicidal intent would not have been successful caused the medical examiner to feel he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor from which the shotgun blast came was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing and he was threatening her with the shotgun. He was so upset that, when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife and the blast went through the window killing Opus.

When one intends to kill subject A but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the charge, the elderly man and his wife were both adamant that neither knew the shotgun was loaded. The man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded gun. He had no intention to murder her--therefor the killing of Opus was apparently an accident. That is, the gun had been accidentally loaded. However, the continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the elderly couple's son loading the shotgun approximately six weeks prior to the fatal incident. Later investigation uncovered the fact that the mother had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to threaten her with the shotgun, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus, for he was the one who loaded the gun.

There was an exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the elderly couple’s son had become increasingly despondent over his financial struggles, as well as his apparent failure to orchestrate his mother's murder. This lead him to jump off the 10-story building, only to be killed by a shotgun blast through a ninth-story window—a gun that he, Ronald Opus, had loaded himself some six weeks before.. The medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

STEWARDSHIP:

Tempus edax rerum: "Time, the devourer of all things." Roman poet Ovid

Someone once wrote:

"I counted dollars while God counted crosses; I counted gains while He counted losses. I counted my worth by the things gained in store; He sized me up by the scars that I bore. I coveted honors and sought for degrees; He wept as he counted the hours that I had spent on my knees.

I never knew until one day by the grave; how vain are the things that we spend our lives to save."

One writer, in relating the importance of stewardship, uses a personal dream he once had as an illustration:

I recently had an unforgettable dream that soberly reminded me of this reality. Along with some other Christians, I was in a place of persecution. After a trial we were escorted to a room where our persecutors were putting each believer to death by lethal injection. While waiting my turn I was overcome by the awareness that in moments I was about to enter eternity, and all my preparation for that event was now done. I dropped to my knees and began to pray my last prayers of this life, committing my spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ. At this point in the dream I snapped awake with the adrenaline rush of a man about to be executed. My first conscious thought after realizing it was but a dream was that one day it would not be a dream. There is a specific on the calendar when all my preparation for eternity will be over. And since that day could be any day, I should use my time wisely, for it is all the time that I have to prepare for where I will endlessly be beyond the grave. [Donald Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 127]

Puritan Pastor and Theologian Richard Baxter once wrote of those now in Hell: "Doth it not tear their very hearts forever, to think how madly they consumed their lives, and wasted the only time that was given them to prepare for their salvation? Do those in Hell now think them wise that are idling or playing away their time on earth?" [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 133]

"I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion had decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of religion to last long. For religion must necessarily produce both frugality and industry, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so also will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this--this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can, that is in effect to grow rich."

Wesley's advice, then, is for those who gain all they can and save all they can to give all they can, so they will grow in grace and lay up treasure in heaven. [John Wesley, cited in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 139]

Story about a Jewish man who climbed to the top of Mt. Sinai. He looked up into the heavens and cried out, "Lord, what does a million years mean to you?" The reply booms from heaven, "But a second." Then the man asks, "And what does a million dollars mean to you?" The reply comes, "But a penny." The man pauses for a moment and then asks, "May I have a penny?" The Lord replies, "Yes, in a second."

SUCCESS:

"Let us see in this fact a standing pattern to all who try to do good to others, whatever their office may be. Let it be remembered by every minister and every missionary,—by every schoolmaster and every Sunday-school teacher,—by every district visitor and every lay agent,—by every head of a house who has family prayers,—and by every nurse who has the charge of children. Let all such remember Christ's example, and resolve to do likewise. We are not to give up teaching, because we see no good done. We are not to relax our exertions, because we see no fruit of our toil. We are to work on steadily, keeping before us the great principle, that duty is our's and results are God's. There must be ploughmen and sowers, as well as reapers and binders of sheaves. The honest master pays his labourers according to the work they do, and not according to the crops that grow on his land. Our Master in heaven will deal with all His servants at the last day in like manner. He knows that success is not in their hands. He knows that they cannot change hearts. He will reward them according to their labour, and not according to the fruits which have resulted from their labour. It is not "the good and successful servant," but the "good and faithful servant," to whom He will say, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [Ryle, J. C. (1859). *Expository Thoughts on Mark* (pp. 196–197). London: William Hunt]

"Success depends not merely on how well you do the things you enjoy, but how conscientiously you perform those duties you don't." [John Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 177]

The Wall Street Journal presented a series of articles entitled "Executive's Crisis," and one story featured Jerald H. Maxwell, a young entrepreneur who founded a successful hi-tech company. For a while he was considered to be a managerial and financial genius. but just for a while. Then there was a disintegration, a sinkhole collapse:

The day is etched into Jerald H. Maxwell's memory. His family will never forget it, either. To them it is the day he started weeping in his room, the day his exuberant self-confidence ended and his depression began, the day his world--and theirs--came tumbling down.

Maxwell had been fired! Everything fell apart, and he had no ability to handle the situation. The Journal continued:

For the first time in his life, Mr. Maxwell was a failure, and it shattered him. His feeling of defeat led to an emotional breakdown, gnawed away at the bonds between

Mr. Maxwell and his wife and four sons and pushed him to the brink . . . "When things fell apart, they felt so bad I was ashamed," Mr. Maxwell recalls. He pauses and sighs, then goes on: "It says in the Bible that all you have to do is ask and you will receive. Well I asked for death many times." [cited in MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, 21-22]

SUFFERING:

As to Romans 8:28, John R. MacDuff, Scottish Presbyterian minister in the 19th century, wrote the following:

"The apostle here makes the glorious assertion that whatever befalls God's children—their joys, sorrows, comforts, crosses, losses—all are a part of a Divine plan and arrangement, whose issue and result is their good. There is nothing so incredible to unbelief as this. That bitter pang which tore up my hopes by the root! That unexpected poverty! That anguished sickbed! That crushing bereavement! How can I write "good" upon these? How can this broken heart ever endorse such a statement as that of the sacred writer?... Paul would have uttered what no . . . Christian would have asserted, had he said "we see." But observe, his language is the utterance of believing trust.... He says, "we know."... Let us be assured of this: He has our best interests at heart. He has what is here called our GOOD in view. It may not be, it will not be, the world's definition of good—riches, honors, glory, worldly prosperity. But it will be better. It is our soul's good, ripening the immortal part of us for glory."

"How shall our entertaining worship services—with the aim of feeling lighthearted and friendly—help a person prepare to suffer, let alone prepare to die? If we know how to suffer well, and if we feel that "to die is gain" because of Jesus, then we will know how to live well. . . . Therefore, faith-filled suffering is essential in this world for the most intense authentic worship. When we are most satisfied with God in suffering, he will be most glorified in us in worship." [John Piper. *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd* (Swans Are Not Silent). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 168-69]

"There is no attempt in Scripture to whitewash the anguish of God's people when they undergo suffering. They argue with God, they complain to God, they weep before God. Theirs is not a faith that leads to dry-eyed stoicism but a faith so robust it wrestles with God." [D.A. Carson, *How Long O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*, 67]

"Don't doubt for a moment that circumstances of suffering are used of God to shape you and conform you into the image of His Son. Nothing enters your life accidentally—remember that. There is no such thing as 'luck' or 'coincidence' or 'fate' to the child of God. Behind our every experience is our loving sovereign Lord. He is continually working things out according to His infinite plan and purpose. And that includes our suffering. When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible individual . . . and crushes him. Being crushed means being reshaped—to be a vital, compassionate, useful instrument in His hands." C. Swindoll, *For Those Who Hurt*.

Pain plants the flag of reality in the fortress of a rebel heart.

"There is no wrath or vengeance in any part of the process. The discipline of the school may be harsh and stern, but that of the family is love. We are sure of this; and the consolation which it affords is unutterable. Love will not wrong us. There will be no needless suffering. Were this but kept in mind there would be fewer hard thoughts of GOD among men, even when His strokes are most severe. I know not a better illustration of what the feelings of a saint should be, in the hour of bitterness, than the case of Richard Cameron's father. The aged saint was in prison "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The bleeding head of his martyred son was brought to him by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. "I know it, I know it," said the father, as he kissed the mangled forehead of his fair-haired son, "it is my son's; my own dear son's! It is the Lord! Good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine, but who hath made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." Horatius Bonar, *Night of Weeping: Why God's Children Suffer*

In 455 BC, Aeschylus, the great playwright known as the Father of Greek Tragedy, died in a most unexpected way. He was said to have been killed by a tortoise which was dropped by an eagle that had mistaken his head for a rock suitable for shattering the shell of the reptile.

There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief. [Aeschylus]

Wisdom comes alone through suffering. [Aeschylus]

He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God. [Aeschylus]

"If God through a broken heart can bring His own purposes to pass in the world, then thank Him for a broken heart." (Oswald Chambers)

Jonathan Edwards wrote a sermon with the following three points:

1. Our bad things will turn out for good (Rom. 8:28)
2. Our good things can never be taken away from us (Psa. 4:6-7)
3. The best things are yet to come (1 Cor. 2:9)

"It is not so much the suffering as the senselessness of it that is unendurable." —Nietzsche

"All experiences of suffering in the path of Christian obedience, whether from persecution or sickness or accident, have this in common: They all threaten our faith in the goodness of God and tempt us to leave the path of obedience. Therefore, every triumph of faith and all perseverance in obedience are testimonies to the goodness of God and the preciousness of Christ – whether the enemy is sickness, Satan, sin or sabotage. Therefore, all suffering, of every kind, that we endure in the path of our Christian calling is a suffering "with Christ" and "for Christ." With Him in the sense that the suffering comes to us as we are walking with Him by faith, and in the sense that it is endured in the strength that He supplies through His sympathizing high-priestly ministry (Hebrews 4:15). For Him in the sense that the suffering tests and proves our allegiance to His goodness and power, and in the sense that it reveals

His worth as an all-sufficient compensation and prize." [John Piper, *Suffering for the Sake of the Body – The Pursuit of People Through Pain*, A Seminar for The Bethlehem Institute]

"There's a broken heart in every pew. Preach to the sorrowing and you will never lack for a congregation." [Joseph Parker, cited in "Pulpit Helps", July 2003, 25]

In 1463, the authorities of the cathedral of Florence, Italy, purchased a huge, sixteen foot-tall piece of white marble. They commissioned a sculptor from Sienna to carve a figure that would be displayed prominently. The marble was so faulty, though, that the sculptor abandoned the task. Another Florentine artist was commissioned, but he, too, found the task impossible and gave up. The marble was placed in a warehouse, where it remained for almost forty years before a twenty-six-year-old prodigy was asked if he could make the abandoned and mutilated marble into anything significant. He said he could. Four years later, the masterpiece statue "David" was unveiled. Michelangelo had transformed the "worthless" marble into something majestic. The original David, the king of Israel after whom the statue was named, once wrote, "The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me" (Ps. 138:8). In the same way that Michelangelo had worked on a faulty piece of marble until he completed the task others had abandoned, so the Lord looked at the flawed David and knew what he wanted to make of him. David reasoned that his Creator had a purpose in creating him—the divine artist had a vision of what he could be—and, accordingly, was not about to give up on him. This was not just wishful thinking, because the Lord had shown his "faithful love" that "endures forever."

In the dark days of life, it is not unusual to feel abandoned, as though one were left in life's warehouse unheeded, unfulfilled, and unfinished. At times like this, it is appropriate to cry out like David, "Don't abandon me," but we must do so with the assurance that David articulated based on his conviction: "Your promises are backed by all the honor of your name" (138:2). As the statue of David silently testifies to Michelangelo's skill, so the confident, consistent believer speaks loudly of the Master's faithfulness.

On the suffering of pastors as part of their Divine training for office:

May not severe discipline fall to the lot of some to qualify them for their office of under-shepherds? We cannot speak with consoling authority to an experience which we have never known. The suffering know those who have themselves suffered, and their smell is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. The "word to the weary" is not learned except by an ear which has bled while the awl has fastened it to the doorpost. "The complete pastor's" life will be an epitome of the lives of his people, and they will turn to his preaching as men do to David's Psalms, to see themselves and their sorrows, as in a mirror. Their needs will be the reason for his griefs. As to the Lord himself, perfect equipment for his work came only through suffering, so must it be to those who are called to follow him in binding up the broken-hearted, and loosing the prisoners. Souls still remain in our churches to whose deep and dark experience we shall never be able to minister till we also have been plunged in the abyss where all Jehovah's waves roll over our heads. If this be the fact - and we are sure it is - then may we heartily welcome anything which will make us fitter channels of blessing. For the elect's

sake it shall be joy to endure all things.[Charles Spurgeon, "Laid Aside. Why?" Sword and Trowel, May 1876.]

J. Oswald Sanders speak tells the story of an indigenous missionary who walked barefoot from village to village preaching the gospel in India. His hardships were many. After a long day of many miles and much discouragement he came to a certain village and tried to speak the gospel but was driven out of town and rejected. So he went to the edge of the village dejected and lay down under a tree and slept from exhaustion.

When he awoke people were hovering over him, and the whole town was gathered around to hear him speak. The head man of the village explained that they came to look him over while he was sleeping. When they saw his blistered feet they concluded that he must be a holy man, and that they had been evil to reject him. They were sorry and wanted to hear the message that he was willing to suffer so much to bring them. [cited on the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, website: bbcmpls.org/foreignmissions/drivingconvictions.htm]

Hasidic Jews have a mythical story about a "sorrow tree." According to the story, on judgement day God's faithful will be invited to hang their miseries from "the tree of sorrows." Once all have done so they will then be given permission to walk around the tree and survey everyone else's miseries in order to select a set they would rather have. According to Hasidic legend, in the end they all freely choose their own personal set of sorrows once more. [Maxie Dunnam, "Perceptions"]

SUICIDE:

Back in the 80s when I had my first real job, working as a quality control inspector at Redman Homes in Chandler, AZ (a mobile home manufacturing plant). I remember getting a phone call from my fellow QC inspector, a young man named Gary Cooper (no relation to the famous actor). It wasn't long after I had arrived home from my work day when Gary called. The first thing he said was, "Tony, you better sit down." It must be bad news, I thought. He went on to tell me that one of the men who worked in the plant, within the sales department, had just killed himself. "How can that be?" I thought. "I just talked to him and he seemed to be alright." From what I remember Jim was going through marital problems. In an act of desperation he took a gun and fatally shot himself in the stomach.

That always stuck with me. Not only the tragedy of it all, but the fact that we can appear quite normal on the outside when we are inwardly in agony—even suicidal. Never assume that someone going through difficult times is well simply because they act so. [TAB]

A young Manhattan dietitian hanged herself in her West Village apartment after posting a suicide note online in which she apologized to her mom and said she "felt absolutely nothing during what should have been the happiest and darkest times in my life," police sources said Thursday.

San Francisco native Tara Condell, 27, was found dead with a cloth around her neck inside the bedroom of her home on West 10th Street around 4:30 p.m. Wednesday after police were called to the residence for a wellness check, sources said.

Condell — who, according to her website, is a registered dietitian nutritionist specializing in general nutrition, weight management, gastrointestinal disease and diabetes care — apologized to her mother at the end of the note posted to her site, saying, "I'm really sorry mama."

The young woman began the note — which was titled, "I Hate The Word 'Bye,' But See You Later Maybe?" — writing, "I have written this note several times in my head for over a decade, and this one finally feels right. No edits, no overthinking. I have accepted hope is nothing more than delayed disappointment, and I am just plain old-fashioned tired of feeling tired."

"I realize I am undeserving of thinking this way because I truly have a great life on paper. I'm fortunate to eat meals most only imagine. I often travel freely without restriction. I live alone in the second greatest American city (San Francisco, you'll always have my heart). However, all these facets seem trivial to me," Condell wrote.

She continued: "It's the ultimate first world problem, I get it. I often felt detached while in a room full of my favorite people; I also felt absolutely nothing during what should have been the happiest and darkest times in my life. No single conversation or situation has led me to make this decision, so at what point do you metaphorically pull the trigger?" <https://www.foxnews.com/us/new-york-dietitian-27-hangs-herself-after-posting-suicide-note-1/2019>

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given by the American Assoc. for Forensic Science, AAFS prez Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here's the tale:

"On March 23, 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. The decedent had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide (he left a note indicating his despondency). As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers and that Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide anyway because of this. Ordinarily, a person who sets out to commit suicide ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended. That Opus was shot on the way to certain death nine stories below probably would not have changed his mode of death from suicide to homicide. But the fact that his suicidal intent would not have been successful caused the medical examiner to feel he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor whence the shotgun blast emanated was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing and he was threatening her with the shotgun. He was so upset that, when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window striking Opus. When one intends to kill subject A but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant that neither knew the shotgun was loaded. The old man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded gun. He had no intention to murder her- therefor the killing of Opus was apparently an accident. That is, the gun had been

accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun approximately six weeks prior to the fatal incident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to threaten her with the weapon, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. There was an exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son, one Ronald Opus, had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off a 10-story building, only to be killed by a shotgun blast through a ninth-story window. The medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

Noel David Early of Rhode Island, who suffers from Lou Gehrig's disease, plans to kill himself before the disease takes over. "I'll do the things I love most in the world--food and sex--then I'll inject myself with a compound...and I'll go to sleep. Then the fun begins. It's the greatest adventure I'll ever have." [cited in Pulpit Helps, April 1997, p. 22]

According to CNN, 90% of those who ask their doctors to commit physician-assisted suicide don't mean it and later change their minds. It is later discovered that what they really want is help dealing with pain or with the fear of death [CNN Radio News, July 2, 2002]

SURRENDER:

One by one He took them from me All the things I valued most; "Til I was empty handed, Every glittering toy was lost. And I walked earth's highways, grieving, In my rags and poverty. Until I heard his voice inviting, "Lift those empty hands to Me!" Then I turned my hands toward heaven, And he filled them with a store, Of his own transcendent riches, "Til they could contain no more And at last I comprehended With my stupid mind, and dull, That God cannot pour out His riches Into hands already full. -- Source Unknown

"What is required is the renunciation of the ego and this is expressed perfectly in the phrase of Pascal: 'Entire and sweet renunciation; absolute submission to Jesus Christ and to my Spiritual Director.' People may laugh and scoff at you for being worthy of the title of 'free man' and for having to submit yourself to a Master. But this enslavement is really miraculous liberation. When you were 'free' you spent your whole time forging chains for yourself and putting them on, riveting them tighter and tighter each moment. During the years when you thought you were free you submitted like an ox to the yoke of your countless hereditary ills. From the hour of your birth not one of your crimes has failed to go on living, has failed to imprison you more and more every day, has failed to beget other crimes. The Man you submit yourself to does not want you to be free to be a slave. He breaks the circle of your fetters and against your half-extinguished and still smouldering desires He kindles and rekindles the fire of grace." [Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace? Audio book, tape 2 side 3, 1997]

TEMPERANCE:

It is possible to tolerate a little elevation, when a man takes a drink or two too much after working hard and when he is feeling low. This must be called a frolic. But to sit day and night, pouring it in and pouring it out again, is piggish. . . . All food is a matter of

freedom, even a modest drink for one's pleasure. If you do not wish to conduct yourself this way, if you are going to go beyond this and be a born pig and guzzle beer and wine, then, if this cannot be stopped by the rulers, you must know that you cannot be saved. For God will not admit such piggish drinkers into the kingdom of heaven (cf. Galatians 5:19-21). . . . If you are tired and downhearted, take a drink; but this doesn't mean being a pig and doing nothing but gorging and swilling. . . . You should be moderate and sober; this means that we should not be drunken, though we may be exhilarated. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept (cf. Mark 4:26-29) or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses against it. – Martin Luther (in a sermon)

TEMPTATION:

“The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.” [Oscar Wilde]

Picture temptation like a cave, with an opening and then a tunnel that stretches out into darkness for who knows what distance. You and I often trip and fall at the very gate of the passageway. Some, men of valor, might breach the forbidden portal and venture in a few yards with ‘fear and trembling.’ They might wrestle the ‘strong man,’ fight the good fight, and die very step of the way—perhaps prevailing in the end. But only Jesus has ever been down that cave the whole distance and wrestled temptation to the ground. Only He knows what unspeakable terrors lurk that far into the hellish maze, where a man will sweat blood. No other son of Adam knows, for none has traversed that terrain.” [Andree Seu, World Magazine, March, 30, 2002, page 33]

"Do not bite at the bait of pleasure until you know that there is no hook beneath it" [Thomas Jefferson, cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

"Mark Antony was known as the 'silver-throated orator of Rome.' He was a brilliant statesman, magnificent in battle, courageous, and strong. And he was handsome. As far as personal qualities are concerned, he could have become a world ruler. But he had the very vulnerable and fatal flaw of moral weakness, so much so that on one occasion his personal tutor shouted into his face, 'Oh, Marcus, oh colossal child! Able to conquer the world, but unable to resist a temptation.'" [cited in Swindoll, 3 Steps Forward 2 Steps Back, 85]

THANKFULNESS:

Most of you are familiar with the great Bible commentator Matthew Henry who lived at the turn of the 18th century. Matthew Henry had the unfortunate experience of being mugged. But even in that awful experience he was thankful. Reflecting on his robbery, he wrote in his diary:

"Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my wallet, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

"The second century apologist Aristides wrote to the Roman Emperor Antonius Pius a description of Christians that said if any righteous person from among them passed from this world the Christians would rejoice and give thanks to God. When a child was born to Christian parents, they would praise God. If it died in infancy, according to Aristides, the parents thanked God even more because the child would be one who had passed through the world without encountering sin."

"Thanksgiving is the end of all human conduct, whether observed in words or works." [J.B. Lightfoot, cited in Barclay, DSB: Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, 132]

THEODICY:

"In early Christian times, Lactantius reports [the prevalence of the question]. If God is good and wants to eliminate sin, but cannot, he is not omnipotent; but if God is omnipotent and can eliminate sin, but does not, he is not good. God cannot be both omnipotent and good." [Gordon Clark, God and Evil, page 10]

"Let us assume that man's will is free; let us assume that these questions have been answered in the affirmative; it would still remain to be shown that free will solves the problem of evil. This then is the immediate inquiry. Is the theory of free will, even if true, a satisfactory explanation of evil in a world created by God? Reasons, compelling reasons, will now be given for a negative answer. Even if men were as able to choose good as evil, even if a sinner could choose Christ as easily as he could reject him, it would be totally irrelevant to the fundamental problem. Free will was put forward to relieve God of responsibility for sin. But this it does not do."

Clark gives an illustration of a lifeguard on a beach:

"Picture a lifeguard on a beach who watches as a boy is taken under by a strong undercurrent. The boy struggles violently (a picture of man's enslavement to sin). The lifeguard has the ability to rescue the boy and he may shout some words of advice, telling the boy to exercise his free will and swim to shore. But the boy drowns as the guard watches from shore. Would the Arminian conclude that the lifeguard has escaped culpability? This illustration shows that permission of evil does not relieve the lifeguard from responsibility. This is even more evident when we consider that the lifeguard (in this case, God) created the beach and the boy. An omnipotent lifeguard could have prevented the boy from entering the beach, or He could have prevented the undertow from occurring, or he could have made the boy a better swimmer, or He could have simply rescued him directly."

"Therefore, the idea of permission has no intelligible meaning."

"It is quite within the range of possibility for a lifeguard to permit a man to drown. This permission, however, depends on the fact that the ocean's undertow is beyond the guard's

control. If the guard had some giant suction device which he operated so as to engulf the boy, one would call it murder, not permission. The idea of permission is possible only where there is an independent force, either the boy's force or the ocean's force. But this is not the situation in the case of God and the universe. Nothing in the universe can be independent of the omnipotent Creator, for in him we live and move and have our being. Therefore, the idea of permission makes no sense when applied to God." [Gordon Clark, God and Evil, pages 10, 16-17]

TIME:

"Near where I live in central London there used to be a bronze statue of a local man sitting on a bench overlooking the River Thames. A few meters in front of him is a bronze figure of a little girl, his daughter who had died in childhood. As he sits, in old age, his imagination plays tricks with him, and it is as if he sees his little daughter alive and playing there. That pair of statues always moves me to tears." [Christopher Ash, Job: The Wisdom of the Cross, 57]

The Passing of Time

What do you see people, What do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?
A feeble old man, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes?

Who hears you speak yet makes no reply.
His hands tremble, a tear in his eye.
Who seems not to notice the things that you do.
As you wonder yourself "has he even a clue."

A second-class citizen? His life nearly spent.
A drain on the system, unworthy of respect?
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then think again, you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am, as I sit here so still,
Take a closer look, if you dare or you will.
I once was a child with a mom and a dad.
Then a young man with his life to be had.

Dreaming that soon a wife he would meet.
A groom then at twenty, a promise to keep.
At thirty I now have young of my own.
Who need me to guide and secure a good home.

A man of forty my children have grown up so fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At fifty I'm gray, my kids are now gone,

My wife is beside me we're back to square one.

At sixty I have grandchildren to adore and to love.
My life mostly over my hope is above.
Now I'm retired with much time on my own
Mindful of Jesus I'm never alone.

Here I am eighty and my wife is now gone.
I look to eternity with hope and a song.
My children are all busy, their kids are now grown.
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.

Now an old man my life at its end
Hoping you will learn a lesson, my friend.
I may look old and over the hill,
But inside this aged man a young guy still dwells.

I think of the years, gone by oh so fast.
And accept the fact that nothing earthly can last.
So open your eyes, open and see.
Not just an old man, look closer at me.

My hope is in Jesus, He will make all things new.
Do you know Him, have you been born anew?
If you do not my hope from this rhyme,
That you will learn a lesson from the passing of time.

Our lives are a vapor, a puff of smoke here and no more.
An eternal future is what is in store
For those who love Jesus, for those who receive
Eternal life that great hope for we who believe.

"So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom." [Psalm 90:12]

TRADITION:

"If custom is to be taken in proof of what is right, then it is certainly competent for me to put forward on my side the custom which obtains here. If they reject this, we are clearly not bound to follow them. Therefore, let God inspired scripture decide between us; and on whichever side be found doctrines in harmony with the word of God, in favor of that side will be cast the vote of truth." [Basal of Caesarea 330 to 379]

"Tradition is the fruit of the Spirit's teaching activity from the ages as God's people have sought understanding of Scripture. It is not infallible, but neither is it negligible, and we impoverish ourselves if we disregard it." [J.I. Packer, "Upholding the Unity of Scripture Today"]

"Although tradition goes not rule our interpretation, it does guide it. If upon reading a particular passage, you have come up with an interpretation that haws escaped the notice of every other Christian for 2000 years, or has been championed by universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation." [R.C. Sproul, *The Agony of Deceit*, pp. 34-35]

"Custom, though never so ancient, without truth, is but an old error." [Cyprian]

"I am tradition" (Pope Pius IX, Vatican I, 1870, cited in *Sola Scriptura*, 12)

John F. Parker in his book Roll Call tells the story that for more than 20 years, for no apparent reason, an attendant stood at the foot of the stairway leading to the House of Commons in England. At last someone checked and discovered that the job had been held in the attendant's family for 3 generations. It seems it originated when the stairs were painted and the current attendant's grandfather was assigned to the task of warning people not to step on the wet paint. One British newsman, told of the situation, commented, "The paint dried up, but not the job." [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 152]

Life in the 1500's:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and were still smelling pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the b.o.

Baths equaled a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs. Thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the pets ... dogs, cats, and other small animals, mice, rats, bugs lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs,"

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could really mess up your nice clean bed. So, they found if they made beds with big posts and Hung a sheet over the top, it addressed that problem. Hence those beautiful big 4 poster beds with canopies.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, hence, the saying "dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors which would get slippery in the winter when wet. So they spread thresh on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they kept adding more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed at the entryway, hence a "thresh hold."

They cooked in the kitchen in a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They mostly ate vegetables and didn't get much

meat. They would eat the stew for dinner leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes the stew had food in it that had been in there for a month. Hence the rhyme: peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old."

Sometimes they could obtain pork and would feel really special when that happened. When company came over, they would bring out some bacon and hang it to show it off. It was a sign of wealth and that a man "could really bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew the fat."

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with a high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food. This happened most often with tomatoes, so they stopped eating tomatoes ... for 400 years.

Most people didn't have pewter plates, but had trenchers -- a piece of wood with the middle scooped out like a bowl. Trencher were never washed and a lot of times worms got into the wood. After eating off wormy trenchers, they would get "trench mouth."

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the "upper crust."

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination would sometimes knock them out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a "wake."

England is old and small and they started running out of places to bury people. So, they would dig up coffins and would take their bones to a house and reuse the grave. In reopening these coffins, one out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they thought they would tie a string on their wrist and lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night to listen for the bell. Hence on the "graveyard shift" they would know that someone was "saved by the bell" or he was a "dead ringer."

TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS:

"The great folly of man in trials is their leaning to or upon their own understanding and counsels." John Owen

Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl.

One was an optimistic soul.

But the other took the gloomy view.

"We'll drown," he lamented without much ado,

and with a last despairing cry,

he flung up his legs and said "Goodbye."

Quote the other frog with a steadfast grin,
"I can't get out but I won't give in,
I'll just swim around till my strength is spent,
then I'll die the more content."
Bravely he swam to work his scheme,
and his struggles began to churn the cream.

The more he swam, his legs a flutter,
the more the cream turned into butter.
On top of the butter at last he stopped,
and out of the bowl he gaily hopped.

What is the moral? It's easily found...
If you can't hop out, keep swimming around!
[Source: Author Unknown]

If you want a rainbow you have to endure some of the rain.

"Descending into the valley, at the last curve he lost control of the car. As it toppled over the bank at the side of the road, his only thought was: 'Well, at least my job's done.' His one, weary, happy thought. It wasn't so: He was to go on living. But not to go on with this journey. When he came to , and the solid world again took shape around him, he could hardly keep back his tears--tears of self-pity and disappointment because his vacation plans had been ruined. The one reaction was no less genuine than the other. We may be willing to turn our backs on life, but we still complain like children when life does not grant our wishes." [Dag Hammarskjold, cited in Leadership Journal, Fall Quarter, 1982, 48]

"The best lessons are learnt in affliction. A man never learns anything to profit while standing upon a lofty mountain. It is in the valley of humiliation, it is in the season of distress, trouble, anxiety, perplexity, and temptation, that a man learns the secrets of heavenly wisdom, for in them he learns his own folly, and that 'the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.'" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:95-96.]

"I have thought when I was in perplexity of soul, that I never should see what it was for; and I have almost told God so. It was impossible to see the object intended. Such a cloud of pitchy darkness lowered over it, that I felt in my own mind convinced that I never should be brought to see the reason for the dispensation. But I have been brought to see the reason, and to view the merciful kindness of God in bringing me into those straits and difficulties, wherein He caused the sighs and groans of my heart to ascend to His holy ears. But when we are passing under these exercises, we seem as though we could almost dare to tell God to His face, that even He Himself cannot bring good out of them--as though the matter was too crooked even for His arm to make straight. Such poor wretches are we when left to ourselves!" [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:96.]

An ancient refiner, working with silver ore separating the pure silver from the dross, knew that his job was complete when he could look into the cauldron and see his own reflection in the shining silver. It is the same with God's working in us.
THE ROCK - A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room was filled with light and the Saviour appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. This the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Seeing that the man was showing signs of discouragement, Satan decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's mind such as: You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself over this? "You are never going to move it." Thus giving the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure.

These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man even more. Why kill myself over this? he thought I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough." And that he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the Lord. "Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?" To this the Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are calloused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. "I, my friend will move the rock."

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a .small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no further. So the man decided to help the butterfly, he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way

of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly.

I asked for Strength..... And God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.
I asked for Wisdom.....And God gave me Problems to solve.
I asked for Prosperity.....And God gave me Brain and Brawn to work.
I asked for Courage.....And God gave me Danger to overcome.
I asked for Love.....And God gave me Troubled people to help.
I asked for Favors.....And God gave me Opportunities.
I received nothing I wanted.....I received everything I needed

"You can complain because rosebushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses"

Viktor Frankl was terribly mistreated in a Nazi concentration camp. His words have been an inspiration to millions of people. He said, "The one thing you cannot take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance." [cited by John Maxwell, Developing the Leader in You, 104]

If I can't do something about a problem, it's not a problem; it's a fact of life.

"If God sends us on stony paths, He will provide us with strong shoes." [Alexander Maclaren, cited in "Prokope" Newsletter by Warren Wiersbe/Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Oct.-Dec., 1997]

Sadhu Sandar Singh was a Hindu convert to Christianity. Shortly after coming to Christ, Sadhu felt called to become a missionary to India. Late one afternoon Sadhu was traveling on foot through the Himalayan mountains with a Buddhist monk. It was bitter cold and the wind felt like a cold knife cutting through Sadhu's skin. Night was fast approaching when the monk warned Sadhu that they were in danger of freezing to death if they did not reach their destination, a monastery, before dark.

Just as they were traversing a narrow path above a steep precipice, they heard a cry for help. Down the cliff they saw a man who had fallen and was badly injured. The monk looked at Sadhu and said, "Do not stop, God has brought this man to his fate. He must work it out for himself." Then he quickly added while walking on, "Let us hurry on before we die also."

But Sadhu replied, "God has sent me here to help my brother. I cannot leave him."

The monk continued on his way through the swirling snow while the missionary climbed down the steep embankment. The man's leg was broken and he could not walk. So Sadhu took his blanket, made a sling of it, and tied the man onto his own back. Then he began the difficult climb back up the slope. By the time he reached the path he was drenched with

perspiration. Doggedly he made his way through the deepening snow. It was now dark and it was all he could do to follow the path. But he persevered, though faint with fatigue and overheated from exertion.

Finally, he saw in the distance the lights of the monastery. Then, for the first time, Sadhu stumbled and nearly fell--but not from weakness. He had stumbled over some object lying in the snow-covered road. Slowly he bent down on one knee and brushed the snow off the object. It was the frozen lifeless body of the monk.

Years later a student of Sadhu's asked him, "What is life's most difficult task?" Without hesitation Sadhu replied: "To have no burden to carry." [cited by Dennis Rainey in "My Soapbox Newsletter" (Campus Crusade)]

"In the south, when cotton was king, the boll weevil crossed over from Mexico to the United States and destroyed the cotton plants. Farmers were forced to grow a variety of crops, such as soybeans and peanuts. They learned to use their land to raise cattle, hogs, and chickens. As a result many more farmers became prosperous than in the days when the only crop grown was cotton. The people of Enterprise, Alabama, were so grateful for what had occurred that in 1910 they erected a monument to the boll weevil. When they turned from the single-crop system to diversified farming, they became wealthier. The inscription on the monument reads: 'In profound appreciation of the boll weevil and what it has done to herald prosperity.'" [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 78]

A deacon in the church rose up to share his favorite verse of Scripture. "My favorite verse is, 'it came to pass.'" The pastor gave him a puzzled look and asked, "brother, what do you mean your favorite verse is, 'it came to pass?'" The deacon replied, "When I'm going through times of trial and trouble I go to the Lord and praise Him and say, 'I thank you Lord that it came to pass--it didn't come to stay!'"

When Rabbi Mendel's daughter died, he prayed: "Lord of the world, you took my wife from me. But I still had my daughter and could rejoice in her. Now you have taken her from me too. Now I have no one left to rejoice in, except you alone. So I shall rejoice in you." (cited in Archetypes of Wisdom)

A poem that illustrates that the attitude, not the situation, has primary control during times of trial:

One ship sails east
One ship sails west
Regardless of how the winds blow
It is the set of the sail
And not the gale
That determines the way we go.

El Tablazo looked so close. Too close. It happened so fast. Exploding into the jagged 14,000-foot peak, the DC-4 disintegrated with a metallic scream.

What was left of the Avianca Airline flight bound for Quito, Ecuador, flamed crazily down the mountainside into a deep ravine. One awful moment illuminated a cold Colombian mountain in the night, then the darkness returned. And the silence.

Before leaving the airport earlier that day, a young New Yorker named Glenn Chambers hurriedly scribbled a note on a piece of paper he found on the floor of the terminal. The scrap was part of a printed advertisement with the single word, "Why?" sprawled across the center.

Needing stationery in a hurry, Chambers scrawled a note to his mother around the word in the middle. Quickly folding this last-minute thought, he stuffed it in an envelope and dropped it in a box. There would be more to come, or course. More about the budding of a lifelong dream to begin a ministry with the "Voice of the Andes" in Ecuador.

But there was no more to come. Between the mailing and the delivery of Chambers' note, El Tablazo snagged his flight and his dreams from the night sky. The envelope arrived later than the news of his death. When his mother received it, the question burned up at her from the page--"Why?" [\[used in Job sermon, 060720\]](#)

It is the question that hits first and lingers longest. Why? Why me? Why now? Why this? [Charles Swindoll, cited in [Biblical Preaching](#), 162]

"While many people know the historical importance of December 7 in American history, far fewer are familiar with the significance of December 6 and the mark it made on Canadian history back in 1917. Unless, of course, you are a resident of the city of Halifax in eastern Canada.

By 1917, World War I had been raging for more than three years. And while the war never reached Canadian soil, the war effort had reached the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia and the Mont Blanc. The Mont Blanc, an unimpressive French cargo ship, was doing its part for the war effort by hauling supplies to Allied forces in Europe. On the morning of December 6, the Mont Blanc, loaded with more than 5 million pounds of high explosives, lumbered toward the cold harbor of Halifax to await escort ships for the long trip across the Atlantic.

As it traveled up the narrow channel leading to Halifax, the Mont Blanc met an ally ship headed for open sea. Poor communication and shoddy guesswork by crewmen allowed the unthinkable. The ships collided and the Mont Blanc caught fire. The crew fled to lifeboats and abandoned the drifting time-bomb to the harbor.

But as the Mont Blanc began to burn, it was dangerously close to Halifax and well within view of town. The crew had neglected to hoist the ship's red flag indicating explosives on board, and so residents crowded to the shore to watch the burning hulk, unaware of its deadly cargo. Others peered out their windows to see the spectacle, equally oblivious to its contents. The ship drew curious townspeople like a beacon, setting the stage for a tragedy of Goliath proportions.

In one white, thunderous flash, the ship exploded. Nearly 2,000 people died instantly and 9,000 more were injured, including two hundred spectators blinded by airborne window

glass. The north end of Halifax was destroyed by fire, and windows in buildings fifty miles away bust from the explosion's shockwave. Railway cars were blown two miles off their tracks, and the telegraph office was destroyed, cutting the city off from requesting help. Five days later, a London newspaper reported that 'of the 500 boys and girls who entered certain schools in Halifax on the day of the disaster, only eleven are known to have escaped with their lives.'

When you read that account, it seems as if the ship were almost waiting for the spectators to arrive before exploding. The scale of the tragedy grew by the second as the ship smoldered and more onlookers arrived. The events of that day could have taken so many different paths. If only the ships had not collided. If only the Mont Blanc had not been hauling explosives. If only the red flag had been raised to warn people." [\[Grace to You Newsletter, March 19, 1996\]](#)

In the classified ad section of a small-town newspaper the following ad appeared on Monday:

FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

On Tuesday this correction - NOTICE: We regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: One sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7:00 p.m.

On Wednesday this correction - R.D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows - FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him.

Finally on Thursday - NOTICE: I, R.D. Jones have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 958-2020 as the telephone has been disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit.

Warren Wiersbe tells of a leader in his church who was going through a tremendous time of trial. She had a stroke, her husband had gone blind, and then he had to be taken to the hospital where they were sure he would die. He saw her in church one Sunday and assured her that He was praying for her. 'What are you asking God to do?' she asked. 'I'm asking God to help you and strengthen you,' He replied. 'I appreciate that,' she said, 'but pray about one more thing. Pray that I'll have the wisdom not to waste all of this!'" [\[cited by Warren Wiersbe in James commentary\]](#)

A his very first jump, a sky-diver found that his parachute wouldn't open. As he was plummeting toward the ground he saw another man flying upward past him; so he called out to him, "Do you know anything about parachutes?" The man going up replied, "No . . . do you know anything about gas stoves?"

"When you find yourself in the fire, remember, God's hand is on the thermostat."

"Charles Haddon Spurgeon, well-known as the Prince of Preachers, was severely afflicted with gout, a condition which sometimes brings on excruciating pain. In a sermon published in 1881 he wrote, 'Were you ever in the melting pot, dear friends? I have been there, and my sermons with me. . . . The result of melting is that we arrive at a true valuation of things [and] we are poured out into a new and better fashion. And, oh, we may almost wish for the melting-pot if we may but get rid of the dross, if we may but be pure, if we may but be fashioned more completely like unto our Lord!"

Spurgeon did not live a long, robust life. In fact, it may well be said that he had everything except his health. At age 57 he died. Yet while he lived, he made his life count for time and for eternity. Spurgeon today is history's most widely read preacher. His sermon series stand as the largest set of books by a single author in the history of the Christian church." [cited in Hanegraaff, Christianity in Crisis, 266]

The Race

(by D.H. Groberg)

I

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!" They shout at me and plead. "There's just too much against you now. This time you can't succeed!"
And as I start to hang my head, in front of failure's face, My downward fall is broken by The memory of the race.
And hope refills my weakened will As I recall that scene; For just the thought of that short race Rejuvenates my being.

II

A children's race--young boys, young men--How I remember well. Excitement, sure! But also fear; It wasn't hard to tell.
They all lined up so full of hope; Each thought to win that race. Or tie for first, or if not that, At least take second place.
And fathers watched from off the side, Each cheering for his son. And each boy hoped to show his dad That he would be the one.
The whistle blew and off they went! Young hearts and hopes afire. To win and be the hero there Was each young boys's desire.
And one boy in particular Whose dad was in the crowd, Was running near the lead and thought: "My dad will be so proud!"
But as they speeded down the field Across a shallow dip, The little boy who thought to win Lost his step and slipped.
Trying hard to catch himself His hands flew out to brace, And mid the laughter of the crowd He fell flat on his face.
So down he fell and with him hope--He couldn't win it now--Embarrassed, sad, he only wished To disappear somehow.
But as he fell his dad stood up And showed his anxious face, Which to the boy so clearly said: "Get up and wind the race."
He quickly rose, no damage done--Behind a bit, that's all--And ran with all his mind and might To make up for his fall.
So anxious to restore himself--To catch up and to win--His mind went faster than his legs: He slipped and fell again!

He wished then he had quit before with only one disgrace. "I'm hopeless as a runner now; I shouldn't try to race."

But in the laughing crowd he searched And found his father's face; That steady look which said again: "Get up and win the race!"

So up he jumped to try again--Ten yards behind the last--"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought "I've got to move real fast."

Exerting everything he had He regained eight or ten But trying so hard to catch the lead He slipped and fell again!

Defeat! He lay there silently--A tear dropped from his eye--"There's no sense running any more; "Three strikes: I'm out! Why try?"

The will to rise had disappeared All hope had fled away So far behind, so error prone; A loser all the way.

"I've lost, so what's the use," he thought. "I'll live with my disgrace." But then he thought about his dad Who soon he'd have to face.

"Get up," an echo sounded low. "Get up and take your place; You were not meant for failure here. Get up and win the race."

"With borrowed will get up," it said "You haven't lost at all. For winning is no more than this: To rise each time you fall."

So up he rose to run once more, And with a new commit He resolved that win or lose At least he wouldn't quit.

So far behind the others now,--The most he'd ever been--Still he gave it all he had And ran as though to win.

Three times he'd fallen, stumbling; Three times he rose again; Too far behind to hope to win, He still ran to the end.

They cheered the winning runner As he crossed the line first place. Head high, and proud, and happy; No falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster crossed the line last place, The crowd gave him the greater cheer For finishing the race.

And even though he came in last With head bowed low, unproud, You would have thought he'd won the race To listen to the crowd. And to his dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well."

"To me, you won," his father said. "You rose each time you fell."

III

And now when things seem dark and hard And difficult to face, The memory of that little boy Helps me in my race.

For all of life is like that race, With ups and downs and all. And all you have to do to win, Is rise each time you fall.

"Quit! Give up! You're beaten!" They still shout in my face. But another voice within me says: "GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"

TRUTH:

"Many bring God's truth to their own bar, and cavil at it, as an excuse for rejecting it." (Charles Bridges, An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs, 1865)

"What God says is best, is best, though all the men in the world are against it."
John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." George Orwell

"No one should be surprised that the *Logos* - the Logic, the Reason, the Wisdom, the Message, the Language, the Reflection of God - is The Truth. What is surprising and depressing is the fact that the churches called evangelical have almost totally eliminated their intellectualism from their thought. If they have not become ecstatic Pentecostals, speaking charismatic gibberish, and if they have not become Existentialists, who find little or no truth in the Bible, they have nonetheless repudiated theology in favor of a comfortably blank mind. Permit me to ask you, 'When did you last hear a sermon on the Trinity?' I remember one by Clarence Edward Macartney in 1924, and another really excellent one by a Greek Catholic priest in 1979. But even references to the Trinity, let alone complete sermons, have been few in number. References to Christ are frequent but too often meaningless. Many times evangelists have stressed 'a personal relationship to Christ.' This makes no sense. Even Satan has a personal relationship to Christ. He hates him; and hatred is very personal. What people need is a statement of the proper personal relationship to Christ, and that depends on who Christ is. One can sympathize with humble people of low IQ, who cannot understand. But one can only upbraid people of higher intelligence who refuse to understand." [Gordon Clark, cited in *The Trinity Review*, September 2008]

Truth is thy crown, hold fast thy crown, and let no man take thy crown from thee. . . . Ah, souls, have you not found truth sweetening your spirits, and cheering your spirits, and warming your spirits, and raising your spirits, and corroborating your spirits? Have not you found truth a guide to lead you, a staff to uphold you, a cordial to strengthen you, and a plaster to heal you? And will not you hold fast the truth? Hath not truth been your best friend in your worst days? Hath not truth stood by you when friends have forsaken you? Hath not truth done more for you than all the world could do against you, and will you not hold fast the truth? Is not truth your right eye, without which you cannot see for Christ? And your right hand, without which you cannot do for Christ? And your right foot, without which you cannot walk with Christ? And will you not hold truth fast? Oh! hold fast the truth in your judgments and understandings, in your wills and affections, in your profession and conversation. Truth is more precious than gold or rubies, 'and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her' (Prov. 3. 15). Truth is that heavenly glass wherein we may see the luster and glory of divine wisdom, power, greatness, love and mercifulness. In this glass you may see the face of Christ, the favor of Christ, the riches of Christ, and the heart of Christ, beating and working sweetly towards your souls. Oh! let your souls cleave to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi (Ruth i. 15. 16), and say, 'I will not leave truth, nor return from following after truth; but where truth goes I will go, and where truth lodgeth I will lodge; and nothing but death shall part truth and my soul.' . . . You were better let go anything than truth; you were better let go your honors and riches, your friends and pleasures, and the world's favors; yea, your nearest and dearest relations, ay, your very lives, than to let go truth. Oh, keep the truth, and truth will make you safe and happy forever. Blessed are those souls that are kept by truth. – Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, 96-97

"The 'mystic' promotion of the absolutes can not save us. Sustained by our histories and traditions, we must save ourselves at whatever risk of heresy or blasphemy." [Arthur Shlessinger, Jr., Harvard historian, 1989 (from class notes at Phoenix Seminary, Fall, 2000)]

"The least initial deviation from truth is later multiplied a thousand times." [Aristotle]

"The supreme end of Education is the power to tell the genuine from the counterfeit." (Samuel Johnson)

"All the wisdom of this world is but a tiny craft upon which we must set sail when we leave this earth. If only there was a firmer foundation upon which to sail, perhaps a divine word." [Socrates]

"Before you shoot the arrow of truth, dip it in honey."

Truth demands confrontation; loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless. If our reflex action is always accommodation regardless of the centrality of the truth involved, there is something wrong. Just as what we may call holiness without love is not God's kind of holiness, so also what we may call love without holiness is not God's kind of love. God is holy and God is love. . . . [A] false spirit of accommodation is sweeping the world as well as the church, including those who claim the label of evangelical. [Francis Shaeffer, The Great Evangelical Disaster]

Man occasionally stumbles over the truth; but most of the time he is able to pick himself up and move on anyway.

A Pastor friend of mine (Darryl Delhousaye) relates a story from his first pastorate. He was pastor of a Conservative Baptist church in CA and focused his ministry on teaching the truth of the Word. He was frustrated over a few members of his church whose focus was dogmatism over the truth to the neglect of love. One day he was sharing his frustration with another pastor who happened to be a charismatic. He told him: "Do you know what kind of people we tend to draw to our church? We attract the Christian red-necks. Christians whose focus is gaining more and more knowledge so they can mow others down who disagree with them." The charismatic pastor replied: "Well do you know what kind of people we attract? We attract people who have 'breakfast with Jesus.' Or on the way to work in the morning, they see a forlorn Jesus hitch-hiking and they pick Him up and give Him a ride. That's the kind of people we attract!" [TAB]

"Truth is the highest thing a man may experience." [Cicero, cited in MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 320]

"There is nothing as powerful as truth and often nothing as strange." [Daniel Webster, cited in MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 320]

Ancient Rabbis considered lying--along with scoffing, hypocrisy, and slander--to be one of the four great sins that would shut a person out of God's presence. [cited in MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 320]

"The curse of the church has been her apathy to truth, in which she has too often left to her enemies that study of nature and of history and philosophy. . . . She has nothing to fear from truth, but she has everything to fear and she has already suffered nearly everything from ignorance." [B.B. Warfield]

Old Princeton theologian, Charles Hodge, told the story of a commander who swore to citizens of a besieged city that if they surrendered, not a drop of their blood would be shed. After their surrender the commander then had them burned to death!

USEFULNESS:

If you ever visit London, you'll have no trouble spotting St. Paul's cathedral. It's considered to be among the 10 most-beautiful buildings in the world, and it dominates the city's skyline. The venerable structure stands as a monument to its creator--astronomer and architect Sir Christopher Wren. While St. Paul's is his best-known achievement, an interesting story is connected with a lesser-known building of his design.

Wren was given charge of designing the interior of the town hall in Windsor, just west of central London. His plans called for large columns to support the high ceiling. When construction was complete, the city fathers toured the building and expressed concern over one problem: the pillars. It wasn't that they minded the use of pillars--they just wanted them in greater numbers.

Wren's solution was as devilish as it was inspired. He did exactly as he was told and installed four new pillars, thus meeting the demands of his critics. Those extra pillars remain in Windsor town hall to this day, and they aren't difficult to identify. They are the ones that support no weight and, in fact, never even reach the ceiling. They're fakes. Wren installed the pillars to serve only one purpose--to look good. They are an ornamental embellishment built to satisfy the eye. In terms of supporting the building and fortifying the structure, they are as useful as the paintings that hang on the walls." [Grace to You Newsletter, June 17, 1996]

VISION:

They Said it Can't be Done

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons." --Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." -- Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943

"I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year." -- The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957

"But what ... is it good for?" -- Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, 1968, commenting on the microchip.

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." -- Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." -- Western Union internal memo, 1876.

"The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to nobody in particular?" -- David Sarnoff's associates in response to his urgings for investment in the radio in the 1920s.

"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C,' the idea must be feasible." -- A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. (Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.)

"Who (in their right mind) wants to hear actors talk?" -- H.M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927.

"I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not Gary Cooper." -- Gary Cooper on his decision not to take the leading role in "Gone With The Wind."

"A cookie store is a bad idea. Besides, the market research reports say America likes crispy cookies, not soft and chewy cookies like you make." -- Response to Debbi Fields' idea of starting Mrs. Fields' Cookies.

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." -- Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." -- Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895.

"If I had thought about it, I wouldn't have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can't do this." -- Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3-M "Post-It" Notepads.

"So we went to Atari and said, 'Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we'll come work for you.' And they said, 'No.' So then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't got through college yet.'" -- Apple Computer Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and H-P interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

"Professor Goddard does not know the relation between action and reaction and the need to have something better than a vacuum against which to react. He seems to lack the basic knowledge ladled out daily in high schools." -- 1921 New York Times editorial about Robert Goddard's revolutionary rocket work.

"You want to have consistent and uniform muscle development across all of your muscles? It can't be done. It's just a fact of life. You just have to accept inconsistent muscle

development as an unalterable condition of weight training." – Response to Arthur Jones, who solved the "unsolvable" problem by inventing Nautilus.

"Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy." – Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." – Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929.

"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value." – Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented." – Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899.

"Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction". – Pierre Pachet, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse, 1872

"The abdomen, the chest, and the brain will forever be shut from the intrusion of the wise and humane surgeon". – Sir John Eric Ericksen, British surgeon, appointed Surgeon-Extraordinary to Queen Victoria 1873.

"640K ought to be enough for anybody." – Bill Gates, 1981

"The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must step up the stairs." [Vance Havner]

Helen Keller was once asked, "What would be worse than being born blind?" She replied, "To have sight without vision." [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 139-40]

"In A Savior for All Seasons, William Barker relates the story of a bishop from the East Coast who many years ago paid a visit to a small, Midwestern religious college. He stayed at the home of the college president, who also served as professor of physics and chemistry. After dinner the bishop declared that the millennium couldn't be far off, because just about everything about nature had been discovered and all inventions conceived. The young college president politely disagreed and said he felt there would be many more discoveries. When the angered bishop challenged the president to name just one such invention, the president replied he was certain that within fifty years men would be able to fly. 'Nonsense!' sputtered the outraged bishop. 'Only angels are intended to fly.' The bishop's name was Wright, and he had two boys at home who would prove to have a greater vision than their father. Their names were Orville and Wilbur." [cited in Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You, 142-43]

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible." [Jonathan Swift]

"A vision is the dominant factor that governs your life. It determines all the choices you are making. It's what's left after all the layers are peeled away like an onion. Clinging like glue

to the inside of your rib cage. It's what your mind naturally gravitates toward when it is not legitimately concentrating on something else. It's what determines your friendships and your relationships that you are cultivating. It's what your prayers are about--what you dream about and are giving money toward. [Phil Grant]

"Vision is merely hope with a blueprint." [anonymous]

"Vision is the world's most desperate need. There are no hopeless situations, only people who think hopelessly." [Winifred Newman]

"Two men look out through the same bars: One sees the mud, the other the stars." [Frederick Langbridge]

"The only person who likes change is a wet baby." [Mark Twain]

WAR:

"Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan." [attributed to Tacitus and popularized by JFK in his Bay of Pigs speech, 1961]

It is only as we suffer and see our folly, and the utter bankruptcy and helplessness of men, that we shall turn to God and rely upon Him. Indeed, as I contemplate human nature and human life, what astonishes me is not that God allows and permits war, but the patience and the longsuffering of God... The question that needs to be asked is not "Why does God allow war?" but rather, "Why does God not allow the world to destroy itself entirely in its iniquity and its sin? Why does He in His restraining grace set a limit to evil and to sin, and a boundary beyond which they cannot pass?" Oh, the amazing patience of God with this sinful world! How wondrous is His love! He has sent the Son of His love to our world to die for us and to save us; and because men cannot and will not see this, He permits and allows such things as war to chastise and to punish us; to teach us, and to convict us of our sins; and, above all, to call us to repentance and acceptance of His gracious offer. The vital question for us therefore is not to ask, "Why does God allow war?"

The question for us is to make sure that we are learning the lesson, and repenting before God for the sin in our own hearts, and in the entire human race, which leads to such results. [Martyn Lloyd-Jones Why Does God Allow War?]

WEAKNESS:

There is a principle within the devout believer that Spurgeon referred to as "Happy Self-Loathing" (Ezek. 36:31). Spurgeon declared: "Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do." [C.H. Spurgeon, Grace, Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996, 171]

I recently read about a young African who came to Christ through missionaries there. While he was still new to the faith he violated a trust and stole some property. When the missionaries confronted him as to his sin, the young man replied, "It was not I who stole, it was grandfather in the bones." "Grandfather in the bones" was a figure of speech he used to

refer to the old sin nature. In time he matured in his walk with Christ. And later when people would ask him, "How is grandfather in the bones?" He would reply, "Well, grandfather isn't dead yet, but he doesn't get around like he used to." [adapted from Walter B. Knight, Knight's Illustrations, 359]

"Mortification abates [sin's] force, but does not change its nature. Grace changes the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin. . . . Destroyed it may be, it shall be, but cured it cannot be. . . . If it is not overcome and destroyed, it will overcome and destroy. . . . And here lies its power. . . . It is never quiet, [whether it is] conquering [or] conquered. . . . Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work. Be killing sin or it will be killing you. [John Owen, cited in MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 145]

Cracked Pots - A Story from India - A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it.

"I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house." Each of us has our own unique flaws. We are all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father's table.

WEALTH:

"I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion had decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of religion to last long. For religion must necessarily produce both frugality and industry, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so also will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this--this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can, that is in effect to grow rich."

Wesley's advice, then, is for those who gain all they can and save all they can to give all they can, so they will grow in grace and lay up treasure in heaven. [John Wesley, cited in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 139]

“The great-grandchildren of Elinor Majors Carlisle knew that their family valued a pretty hand-me-down dish; they didn’t know that anyone else would. But that was before art experts told them that the dish was Ming dynasty porcelain dating from the late 14th century. Carlisle had picked up the plate during a trip to China in the early 1900s, and selling price at a Nov. 17 auction: \$5.7 million.” [World Magazine, Dec. 4, 2004, 13]

One by one He took them from me
All the things I valued most;
"Til I was empty handed,
Every glittering toy was lost.
And I walked earth's highways, grieving,
In my rags and poverty.
Until I heard his voice inviting,
"Lift those empty hands to Me!"
Then I turned my hands toward heaven,
And he filled them with a store,
Of his own transcendent riches,
"Til they could contain no more
And at last I comprehended
With my stupid mind, and dull,
That God cannot pour out His riches
Into hands already full. -- Source Unknown

A man was taking it easy, lying on the grass and looking up at the clouds. He was identifying shapes when he decided to talk to God. "God", he said, "how long is a million years?" God answered, "In my frame of reference, it's about a minute." The man asked, "God, how much is a million dollars?" God answered, "To Me, it's a penny." The man then asked, "God, can I have a penny?" God answered, "In a minute."

When on the members of the rich Vanderbilt family was dying, the family was waiting in an outer room. When the lawyer and the doctor came out, one of the more outspoken members of the family stepped up to the lawyer and asked, "How much did he leave?" The lawyer replied, "He left it all. He didn't take any of it with him." [cited in McGee, James, 103]

WEARINESS:

“Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” [Vince Lombardi]

WEIRDOS:

I had received a call in my office from a man talking through a voice box replacement device. He introduced himself as "Pastor Charles" and was looking for a ride to the VA hospital, saying that his ride had fallen through. After talking to him for a while I started to sense something wasn't quite right. Then he said something about getting together with me and how thankful I would be to learn about some secrets he was getting first hand from God, as God talked to him. I told him I wasn't interested, but would see if I could get him a ride. He also offered to pay anyone who could give him a ride \$30.00. I forwarded the message to a friend in church, Bruce, and also warned that the guy may be really off the deep end. Bruce tried to call him unsuccessfully. The guy called him back and in the course of the conversation, Bruce, realizing that the guy was basically crazy, told him he needed to repent and believe on Jesus Christ (and also that he couldn't give him a ride). A day or so later, on June 22, 2005, I received the following message on the church answering machine:

"Yeah, I got a question for you. I talked to you a couple a days ago. And then yesterday somebody kept calling and hanging up without leaving a message and then today they did it again. So I went 'star six, six,' and then some guy named Bruce, who says he is a pastor at your church. The guy's a complete and total moron. He doesn't even know the 10 commandments. He doesn't know anything about anything. I hope he's not pastoring to your people there. But at any rate, if you want to give me a call, my name's Pastor Annon and I'm at 395.9137. And I will mail you, for free, the real Bible quotes I mentioned to you that were written by the Lord himself from the real Bible. And if you're interested I'll give it to you for free. I will be selling them soon and I'll be on TV soon. They'll will be \$30.00 a package for them; there's others things that come with the writings in there. But like I say it comes from the real words from the real Bible by the Lord himself. Because he's the one that moved my arm and my hand, not me and when he wants me to write down something that's what he does: he shakes the chair and I do it. And I've died 11 times and gone to heaven all 11 times. And this Bruce guy, he thinks I'm some kind of wacko, when on the other turn, this guy's a wacko. I've never in my life talked to anybody who has been involved in any kind of religion—by the way all religions are lost—but who has the mentality of this idiot. But anyway, if you want to return my call fine, if you don't that's up to you. That's basically it. Thank you."

“God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.”

WISDOM:

The Valley of Vision - LORD, HIGH AND HOLY, MEEK AND LOWLY,

Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision,
where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights;
hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold thy glory.

Let me learn by paradox
that the way down is the way up,
that to be low is to be high,
that the broken heart is the healed heart,
that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,
that to have nothing is to possess all,
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,
that to give is to receive,
that the valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,
and the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine;

Let me find thy light in my darkness,
thy life in my death,
thy joy in my sorrow,
thy grace in my sin,

thy riches in my poverty
thy glory in my valley.

[Taken from Valley of Vision, a Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions, Banner of Truth, pp. xxiv-xxv]

Will Rogers, who died in a plane crash with Wylie Post in 1935, was probably the greatest political sage this country has ever known.

1. Never slap a man who's chewing tobacco.
2. Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.
3. There are 2 theories to arguing with a woman...neither works.
4. Never miss a good chance to shut up.
5. Always drink upstream from the herd.
6. If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
7. The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.
8. Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
9. If you're riding' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.
10. Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier'n puttin' it back.

"There is only one wisdom: to recognize the intelligence who steers all things through all things." [Heraclitus]

"Wisdom in its broadest and commonest sense denotes sound and serene judgement regarding the conduct of life. It may be accompanied by a broad range of knowledge, by intellectual acuteness, and by speculative depth, but it is not to be identified with any of these and may appear in their absence. [Encyclopedia of Philosophy, cited in Archetypes of Wisdom, 26]

Cicero 52 BC "wisdom is the best gift of the gods, the mother of all good things." It is the best and it gives birth to the rest.

Historian Will Durant once stated that "knowledge is power, but wisdom is liberty."

The futility of human wisdom was illustrated in the wisdom of Socrates which was described by his student Plato, as the fact that HE KNEW THAT HE KNEW NOTHING.

"...there is a time to kill not only a man's pride, but also his wisdom; to slaughter it, and, as it were, drain away the life-blood from it. How delusively does this fleshly wisdom of ours act, in endeavoring to substitute the mere knowledge of truth in the letter, for the teaching of God in the soul! And how many are deceived in various ways by leaning to their own wisdom, instead of feeling fools before God, and looking up to Him for His blessed instruction! But the Lord will effectually kill creature-wisdom in the hearts of His people, by bringing them into those straits and difficulties, into those sharp and severe exercises, into those bitter and distressing temptations, where all human reasoning gives up the ghost, where knowledge and understanding are baffled and confounded, and the arm of the creature is so palsy-stricken that it cannot take any one promise out of the Word of God, to administer comfort to the troubled soul." [English preacher J.C. Philpot, in a sermon preached on July 8, 1841, cited in "Spiritual Times and Seasons," Sermons by the late J.C. Philpot (Gospel

Standard Trust Publications, 7 Brackendale Grove, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3EL, England, n.d.). 1:95.]

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given by the American Assoc. for Forensic Science, AAFS prez Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here's the tale:

"On March 23, 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. The decedent had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide (he left a note indicating his despondency). As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers and that Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide anyway because of this. Ordinarily, a person who sets out to commit suicide ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended. That Opus was shot on the way to certain death nine stories below probably would not have changed his mode of death from suicide to homicide. But the fact that his suicidal intent would not have been successful caused the medical examiner to feel he had a homicide on his hands. The room on the ninth floor whence the shotgun blast emanated was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing and he was threatening her with the shotgun. He was so upset that, when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window striking Opus. When one intends to kill subject A but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant that neither knew the shotgun was loaded. The old man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded gun. He had no intention to murder her- therefor the killing of Opus was apparently an accident. That is, the gun had been accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun approximately six weeks prior to the fatal incident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to threaten her with the weapon, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. There was an exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son, one Ronald Opus, had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This lead him to jump off a 10-story building, only to be killed by a shotgun blast through a ninth-story window. The medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

WOMEN/WOMEN'S ISSUES:

Jewish sentiment noted: "Whoever has no wife exists without goodness, without a helpmate, without joy, without blessing, without atonement ... without well-being, without a full life; ... indeed, such a one reduces the representation of the divine image [on earth]." Gen. Rab. 17:2

On the Harmony of Women, Perictione (c. 450-350 BC), thought to be the mother of Plato, writes words on the role and décor of women that reflect, albeit imperfectly, what we read in Scripture (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9):

“One must deem the harmonious woman to be full of wisdom and self control . . . one must also train the body to natural measures concerning nourishment and clothing, baths and anointings, the arrangement of the hair, and ornaments of gold and precious stone. Women who eat and drink every costly thing, who dress extravagantly and wear the things that women wear, are ready for the sin of every vice both with respect to the marriage bed and the rest of wrongdoing. It is necessary merely to appease hunger and thirst, even if this be done by frugal means; in the case of cold, even a goat-skin or rough garment would suffice.

To wear cloaks extravagantly purpled by dye-baths of marine shellfish or of some other lavish color, this is a great foolishness. The body wants not to shiver and—for the sake of decency—not to be naked; it requires no more. But in its ignorance human opinion hastens towards the vain and excessive. So the harmonious woman will not wrap herself in gold or precious stone from India or anywhere else, nor will she braid her hair with artful skills or anoint herself with infusions of Arabian scent, nor will she paint her face, whitening or rouging it, darkening her eye-brows and lashes and treating her gray hair with dye; nor will she be forever bathing. The woman who seeks these things seeks an admirer for feminine weakness. It is the beauty that comes from wisdom not from these, that gratifies women who are well born.” [Holtger Thesleff, “Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period,” *Acta Academiae Aboensis Humaniora*, trans. Vicki Lynn Harper, in *A History of Women Philosophers*, vol 1, 600 BC – 500 AD, ed. Mary Ellen Waithe (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987, pp. 20-21.]

Beauty is only a light switch away.

A woman and a man are involved in a car accident on a snowy, cold Monday morning; it's a bad one. Both of their cars are totally demolished but amazingly neither of them is hurt. God works in mysterious ways. After they crawl out of their cars, the woman says, "So.... you're a man. That's interesting. I'm a woman. Wow, just look at our cars! There's nothing left, but we're unhurt. This must be a sign from God that we should meet and be friends and live together in peace for the rest of our days". Flattered, the man replies, "Oh yes, I agree with you completely, this must be a sign from God." The woman continues, "And look at this, here's another miracle. My car is completely demolished but this bottle of wine didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink this wine and celebrate our good fortune. Then she hands the bottle to the man. The man nods his head in agreement, opens it and drinks half the bottle and then hands it back to the woman. The woman takes the bottle and immediately puts the cap back on, and hands it back to the man. The man asks, "Aren't you having any?" The woman replies, "No. I think I'll just wait for the police...."

Women with implants were, however, 73 percent more likely than those in the general population to commit suicide, while women who had other forms of plastic surgery also had an elevated suicide rate. [CNN Health, Friday, August 18, 2006; Posted: 5:14 p.m. EDT (21:14 GMT)]

"If a woman has to choose between catching a fly ball and saving an infant's life, she will choose to save the infant's life without even considering if there are men on base." [Dave Barry]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon made this tribute to his wife:

She delights in her husband; in his person, his character, his affection. To her he is not only the chief and the foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all. Her heart's love belongs to him, and to him only. He is her little world, her paradise, her choice treasure. She is glad to sink her individuality in him. She seeks no renown for herself. His honor is reflected upon her and she rejoices in it. She will defend his name with her dying breath. Safe enough is he where she can speak for him. His smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks. Even in her dress she thinks of him and considers nothing beautiful which is distasteful to him. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand, but she believes them all and anything she can do to promote them she delights to perform. Such a wife as a true spouse, realizes the model marriage relation and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be.

Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely, so God asked Adam, "What is wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to. God said he was going to give him a companion and it would be a woman. He said this person will cook for you and wash your clothes, she will always agree with every decision you make. She will bear you children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will not nag you, and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will freely give you love and compassion whenever needed. Adam asked God what would a woman like this cost him?? God said, "An arm and a leg." Adam said "What can I get for a just a rib??" The rest is history.

If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around to hear him--is he still wrong?

"Seventh Day Adventism, Christian Science, and Theosophy have one thing in common at least - they all had hysterical, neurotic women as their founders!" [Wm. C. Irvine, Heresies Exposed, 154. Book originally written in 1917]

WORKS:

According to John Frame (Systematic Theology) a good deed before God is one that is in accord with God's law (his nature), seeking the right good (His glory) and that is motivated further by faith and love. It is triperspectival.

Our works do not generate righteousness, rather our righteousness in Christ generates works. ~Martin Luther

There was an important job to be done. Everyone was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job, but Everybody thought Anybody would do it, but Nobody realized

that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

D.L. Moody once said: "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And that which I can do, by the grace of God I will do."

WORLD & WORLDLINESS:

"There is a kind of hate for the sinner (viewed as morally corrupt and hostile to God) that may coexist with pity and even a desire for their salvation... [T]hat there comes a point of such extended, hardened, high-handed lovelessness toward God that it may be appropriate to call down anathema on it." John Piper [Do I Not Hate Those Who Hate You, O Lord?, by John Piper]

The wife of the great missionary, Adoniram Judson: "Oh how I rejoice that I am out of the whirlpool! Too [frivolous], too trifling, for a missionary's wife! That may be, but after all, gaiety is my lightest sin. It is my coldness of heart, my listlessness, my want of faith, my spiritual inefficiency and inertness, my love of self, the inherent and every-day pampered sinfulness of my nature, that makes me such a mere infant in the cause of Christ—not the attractions of the world."

Tell me, you that say all things under the sun are vanity, if you do really believe what you say, why do you spend more thoughts and time on the world, than you do on Christ, heaven and your immortal souls? Why do you then neglect your duty towards God, to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world, and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in, and smiles upon you; and so much dejected, and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah's gourd withers before you? —Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 104-105

True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. . . . Oh! but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up, and keep up, the world's crown. 'Demas hath forsaken us to embrace this present world' (2 Tim. 4. 10). [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 158]

So that [Satan] can no sooner cast out his golden bait, but we are ready to play with it. and to nibble at it; he can no sooner throw out his golden ball, but men are apt to run after it. though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit. Ah! how many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God. Christ, and ordinances, till the devil hath set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which hath so bewitched their souls that they have grown to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections. . . . Ah! the time, the thoughts, the spirits, the hearts, the souls, the duties, the services, that the inordinate love of this wicked world doth eat up and destroy, and hath ate up and destroyed. Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings us and sinks us; it kisses us, and betrays us, like Judas; it kisses us and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honours, splendour, and

all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have surfeited of these sweet baits and died for ever. [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 102-103]

Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honour, pleasure, profit, but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 30]

Someone once shared about a dream they had:

I dreamt last night that I was in Topsy-Turveydom, where vice is virtue and virtue vice. Where nice is nasty and nasty nice. Where right in wrong and wrong right. Where white is black and black white! (cf. Isaiah 5:20).

David Wells defines "worldliness" as "what any particular culture does to make sin look normal and righteousness look strange." [cited in "Our Daily Bread," January 25, 1996]

"I think television is having a detrimental effect on Christians. They are no longer sensitive to sin! Television has brought the night club into the home along with violence and sex, things which Christians looked upon ten years ago with abhorrence. They are gradually becoming desensitized, and I can cite case after case where Christians now watch these things on television without feeling any twinge of conscience." [Bill Graham, around 1960. cited in Walter B. Knight, Knight's Illustrations, 362]

"The happiest state of a Christian is the holiest state. As there is the most heat nearest to the sun, so there is the most happiness nearest to Christ. No Christian enjoys comfort when his eyes are fixed on vanity—he finds no satisfaction unless his soul is quickened in the ways of God. The world may win happiness elsewhere, but he cannot. I do not blame ungodly men for rushing to their pleasures. Why should I? Let them have their fill. That is all they have to enjoy." [Spurgeon]

WORLDVIEW:

Robert Woodberry of Baylor University has documented the impact of "conversionary Protestant" (missionary) Christians. Their labors have led to remarkable democratizing gains throughout the world. These include "the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, volunteer organizations, most major colonial reforms [abolishing slavery, widow-burning, foot binding, female circumcision, pre-pubescent marriage of girls, etc.], and the codification of legal protections for nonwhites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Furthermore, where Protestant missionaries have been, there you will find more printed books and more schools per capita. You'll discover that in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, "most of the early nationalists who led their countries to independence graduated from Protestant mission schools."

Woodberry offers this challenge: Spin the globe, and note the impact of Protestant endeavor! Wherever you see stable democracies and lower corruption rates, look for the stamp of Protestantism. Its Reformation roots emphasized (a) the priesthood of all believers, (b) the importance of placing Scripture into the hands of every Christian, and (c) the dignity of any honest vocation. These emphases propelled missionaries to bring important changes and reforms that reflected these Reformation priorities. (September issue of the Worldview Bulletin, September 2020, <https://worldviewbulletin.substack.com>)

On the importance of taking on the culture with a biblical worldview:

“God usually exerts [regenerative] power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favorable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.” [J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," Princeton Theological Review 11 (1913)]

Theo Hobson describes the three marks of a cultural revolution.

1. What was universally condemned is now celebrated.
2. What was universally celebrated is now condemned.
3. Those who refuse to celebrate are condemned.

"God is Dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. And we - we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." [Friedrich Nietzsche]

"If we believe in nothing, if nothing has any meaning and if we can affirm no values whatsoever, then everything is possible and nothing has any importance." [Albert Camus, *The Rebel*]

"Since Darwin, we know that we do not exist for any purpose." [Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, eds., *Bioethics: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 4]

In one education study that was done, a group of people were each given a new concept to think about. Something they'd never heard of before. And they were asked to believe it. For most of them, this new information was contrary to their pre-conceived notions. The results of the study showed that 50% of the group immediately believed this new concept. 30% disbelieved it—immediately. 15% wanted to wait and think it over without asking for any clarification. 5% carefully considered all the details before making up their minds. What does this tell us? 5% think. 15% think they think. And 80% would seemingly rather die than think!

This is like the man who declared, "When I work, I work hard; when I sit, I sit loose; and when I think I fall asleep." This is often looked at by the world as the nature of Christians—they don't think.

"Every cultural revolution includes the "progressive" elites standing on the sideline, cheering on, abetting, and funding the radicals subverting, looting, firebombing, and smashing "The Establishment." Only in the end do they learn the grim truth they are insufficiently pure, zealous, and radical, and will face at the hands of the nihilistic fanatics Robespierre's guillotine, figuratively or literally.

The revolution always eats its own, who all along hypocritically relied on the evenhanded liberty of the alleged corrupt society that permitted its own subversion — and in the end, they ironically perish along with the society that alone kept them viable." (P. Andrew Sandlin, Founder and President at Center for Cultural Leadership)

Christian, divorce yourself from a godless culture that, rather than think, relies on mass-shaming and ad hominem arguments to support their groundless worldview.

If the Bible is not absolutely true, nothing is absolutely wrong

Three weeks before Christopher Hitchens's death, George Eaton of the *New Statesman* wrote, "Throughout his career, he has retained a commitment to the Enlightenment values of reason, secularism and pluralism. His targets—Mother Teresa, Bill Clinton, Henry Kissinger, God—are chosen not at random, but rather because they have offended one or more of these principles." [Eaton, George (24 November 2011). "Hitch's Rolls-Royce mind is still purring". *The New Statesman*. Retrieved 28 April 2016]

Frank Bruni, columnist for the *New York Times*, said that religious people need to understand that freedom of worship means the freedom to hold whatever position you believe and to teach whatever you want to teach in your homes, in your hearts, and in your pews. A Christian worldview, any worldview for that matter, cannot be so restricted.

In a 1994 debate with Phillip Johnson, a leading figure in the intelligent design movement, the late evolutionary biologist William Provine insisted: "No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth. These are all conclusions to which Darwin came quite clearly."

Coyne has stated that evolution "says that there is no special purpose for your life, because it is a naturalistic philosophy. We have no more extrinsic purpose than a squirrel or an armadillo."

Duke University philosophy professor Alex Rosenberg shows the same inconsistency. He co-authored an article in 2003, "Darwin's Nihilistic Idea: Evolution and the Meaninglessness of Life," in which he dismissed morality as an illusion. However, Rosenberg assured us that we have nothing to fear, because nihilism has no effect on our behavior, since "Most of us just couldn't persistently be mean, even if we tried." Rosenberg needs to take some of my history courses — or just read the news — if he doesn't think many people could be mean to each other.

In a 2013 debate with William Lane Craig, Rosenberg objected to some of Craig's arguments as "morally offensive," because some of his relatives were murdered in the Holocaust. But

if life is meaningless and morality is an illusion, why does it matter if Hitler killed millions? That would be just another meaningless event in the meaningless flow of history. Rosenberg apparently knows better.

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." George Orwell

In the 1970s, Francis Schaeffer wrote that:

"There is a "thinkable" and an "unthinkable" in every era. One era is quite certain intellectually and emotionally about what is acceptable. Yet another era decides that these "certainties" are unacceptable and puts another set of values into practice. On a humanistic base, people drift along from generation to generation, and the morally unthinkable becomes the thinkable as the years move on.

The thinkables of the eighties and nineties will certainly include things which most people today find unthinkable and immoral, even unimaginable and too extreme to suggest. Yet—since they do not have some overriding principle that takes them beyond relativistic thinking—when these become thinkable and acceptable in the eighties and nineties, most people will not even remember that they were unthinkable in the seventies. They will slide into each new thinkable without a jolt." [cited in James W. White, *The Same Sex Controversy*, 12-13]

Francis Schaeffer once said about the early Christians is now looking eerily familiar – and ominous:

"No totalitarian authority nor authoritarian state can tolerate those who have an absolute by which to judge that state and its actions. The Christians had that absolute in God's revelation. Because the Christians had an absolute, universal standard by which to judge not only personal morals but the state, they were counted as enemies of totalitarian Rome and were thrown to the beasts."

In a quote that speaks to cultural circles and worldview issues, New York Times theater critic Pauline Kale famously said back in the 1960s that Richard Nixon couldn't have been elected President because no one she knew voted for him.

"In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch of which the Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, 'That is mine!'" [Abraham Kuyper, Dutch Theologian, Statesman, Journalist and Prime Minister of The Netherlands (1901-05), 1837-1920]

"The label 'extremist' is a well-worn tool in the hands of the social elite who use it as propaganda to dismiss contrary argument." [TAB]

“God is present in all of life with the influence of His omnipresent and Almighty power, and no sphere of human life is conceivable in which religion does not maintain its demands, that God be praised, that God's ordinances shall be observed, and that every labor shall be permeated with fervent and ceaseless prayer. Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand in agriculture, commerce or industry, or his mind in the world of art and science, he is , in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face

of his God; he is employed in the service of his God; he has strictly to obey his God; and over all, he has to aim at the glory of his God.” [Famous quote by Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Stone Lectures given at Princeton Seminary in 1898 at the invitation of B.B. Warfield)]

"Further, in Christian epistemology, there is no dichotomy between faith (revelation) and reason (logic). . . . In the Christian worldview (Christian rationalism), knowledge comes through reason (i.e. logic), not from reasoning (as in pure rationalism). Unlike pure rationalism, Scripturalism stands upon the foundation of Biblical revelation. As stated in Augustine's dictum: 'I believe in order to understand.'" [W. Gary Crampton, "Scripturalism: A Christian Worldview Part 1." *The Trinity Review*, Number 299, March-April, 2011]

A parallel to how the media and cultural elite tell you what they want you to hear:

"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. If we wish to make it louder, we will bring up the volume. If we wish to make it softer, we will tune it to a whisper. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can roll the image, make it flutter. We can change the focus to a soft blur or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear." [Introduction to the classic TV show, "The Outer Limits"]

WORRY:

"The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." [Milton]

There's a trap in worry, and the trap is that – you know they've done research to show that 85% of things that people worry about never come true – by actually following it out of over time. So, it may be that the brain thinks that it didn't come true because you worried enough about it. . . .

The statistic that 85% of what you worry about never happens should be a comfort, and...

Not only is it that 85% of the things people worry about don't come true but that almost 80% of people (when the things do come true) say that they handled it better than they expected to. Online Interview with Dr. Martin Rossman, author of the book *The Worry Solution*

WORSHIP:

"How shall our entertaining worship services-with the aim of feeling lighthearted and friendly-help a person prepare to suffer, let alone prepare to die? If we know how to suffer well, and if we feel that "to die is gain" because of Jesus, then we will know how to live well. . . . Therefore, faith-filled suffering is essential in this world for the most intense authentic worship. When we are most satisfied with God in suffering, he will be most glorified in us in worship." [John Piper. *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction*

in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd (Swans Are Not Silent). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 168-69]

"It amazes me how many Christians watch the same banal, empty, silly, trivial, titillating, suggestive, immodest TV shows that most unbelievers watch - and then wonder why their spiritual lives are weak and their worship experience is shallow with no intensity. If you really want to hear the Word of God the way He means it to be heard, in truth and joy and power, turn off the television on Saturday night and read something true and great and beautiful and pure and honorable and excellent and worthy of praise (see Philippians 4:8). Then watch your heart un-shrivel and begin to hunger for the Word of God." [John Piper, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 106]

"We normally think of worship as something *we* do, and since preaching is done by the preacher (and not by us), many fail to think of preaching as worship. But listening to preaching *is* something you do, and it is an act of worship when you listen with an eager mind and responsive heart. The reason it is an act of *worship* is that you are listening to *God* speak (through His Word)." [Donald Whitney, cited in Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating the Church*, 112]

When I first began to draw near to a belief in God and even for some time after it had been given to me, I found a stumbling block in the demand so clamorously made by all religious people that we should "praise" God; still more in the suggestion that God Himself demanded it. . . . The Psalms were especially troublesome in this way - "Praise the Lord", "O praise the Lord with me," "Praise Him".... Worse still was the statement put into God's own mouth "whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me" (50:23) It was hideously like saying, "What I most want is to be told that I am good and great." . . . Gratitude to God, reverence to Him, obedience to Him, I thought I could understand; not this perpetual eulogy. Nor were matters mended by a modern author who talked of God's "right" to be praised. . . .

I believe I now see what the author meant. . . . The sense in which something "deserves" or "demands" admiration is . . . this; that admiration is the correct, adequate or appropriate response to it: that if paid, admiration will not be "thrown away", and that if we do not admire we shall be stupid, insensible and great losers, we shall have missed something. In that way many objects both in Nature and in Art may be said to deserve, or merit, or demand admiration. It was from this end, which will seem to some irreverent, that I found it best to approach the idea that God "demands" praise. He is that Object to admire which . . . is simply to be awake, to have entered the real world; not to appreciate which is to have lost the greatest experience, and in the end to have lost all. The incomplete and crippled lives of those who are tone deaf, have never been in love, never cared for a good book, never enjoyed the feel of the morning air on their cheeks, never (I am one of these) enjoyed football, are faint images of it. . . .

The most obvious fact about praise - whether of God or anything - strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. . . . The world rings with praise - lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game - praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. I had not noticed how the humblest, and at

the same time most balanced and capacious, minds, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised least. . . . I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating . . . to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in a ditch. . . . This is so even when our expressions are inadequate, as of course they usually are. But how if one could really and fully praise even such things to perfection - utterly "get out" in poetry or music or paint the upsurge of appreciation which almost bursts you? Then indeed the object would be fully appreciated and our delight would have attained perfect development. The worthier the object the more intense this delight would be. If it were possible for a created soul fully (I mean up to the full measure conceivable in a finite being) to "appreciate", that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude. It is along these lines that I find it easiest to understand the Christian doctrine that "Heaven" is a state in which angels now, and men hereafter, are perpetually employed in praising God. . . . To see what the doctrine really means, we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God - drunk with, drowned in, dissolved by that delight which far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable, hence hardly tolerable, bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression, our joy no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever". But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him. C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1958), p. 90-97.

"Once, when I was teaching a day-long seminar on puritanism at a church in London, I mentioned that puritan sermons were sometimes two hours long. At this, one person gasped audibly, and asked, "What time did that leave for worship?" The assumption was that hearing God's word preached did not constitute worship. I replied that many English Protestant Christians would have considered hearing God's word in their own language and responding to it in their lives the essential part of their worship. Whether they had time to sing together would have been of comparatively little concern. Our churches must recover the centrality of the Word to our worship. Hearing God's word and responding to it may include praise and thanks, confession and proclamation, and any of these may be in song, but none of them need be. A church built on music--of whatever style--is a church built on shifting sands. Preaching is the fundamental component of pastoring. [Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, Internet Quotation from The Expositor's Quote of the Week, 2003]

John Piper and his family were watching fireworks on the 4th of July: For fifteen minutes we were impressed and delighted by the bigness, beauty, and power of man-made light. . . . It gave us a sense of wonder. About ten minutes into the display, . . . I suddenly noticed a white light behind the trees to the southwest. What's that? I thought. A second later I could tell it was the moon. It was very large and looked full. It was politely waiting its turn. The moon was in no hurry to be noticed. It had been there before (Adam, Abraham, and Jesus looked on this same moon); and it would be there again when all the glitz was gone. It was quietly rising at its own pace, irresistibly and without human help. Yet hardly anyone was noticing. So it is with the glory of God and the glitz of sin. We are more amazed at sin, and we ignore the glory of God. This is truly amazing. The moon rises about 240,000 miles above the earth, which means it soars about 500,000 times higher than the highest fireworks. . . . The moon is 2160 miles in diameter (from San Francisco to Cleveland). . . . It has mountain ranges with peaks as high as Mount Everest. . . . The power of the moon is unimaginable. Nothing on earth that man has ever made can compare. Every day the moon takes the oceans of the earth and lifts them quietly - millions upon millions upon millions of tons of water quietly and irresistibly lifted into the air. . . . But who sees the moon? Who stands in awe of the moon? Who looks at the moon on Independence Night when there are man-made fireworks to watch? Who notices the really great things in life? No wonder we are oblivious to the glory of God when there are such clear parables of our blindness built into everyday experience. . . . Read your emotional barometer. Do the amazements and delights of your life correspond to God's reality? Or do they rise and fall on the passing waves of human glitz? [John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life*, Multnomah, 1997, p. 235-36.]

Deceptive, False Worship: Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, under a pretense of honouring Him: Luke xxii. 48, 'Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Antichrist is a true adversary of Christ, though he pretend to adore him; as those that murdered the present prophets would by all means beautify the tombs of the prophets deceased, and bear a respect to their memories, Matt. xxiii. 30. He pretendeth to be his servant, yea, a servant of servants, but is really his enemy. The apostle telleth us of some that were 'enemies to the cross of Christ,' Phil. iii. 18. Who to appearances such friends to the cross as the rabble of nominal Christians? But they are opposers of His spiritual kingdom, the virtue and power of the cross. You have crucifixes everywhere, painted, carved, gilded; they are ready to worship the cross with a holy worship; they set it up in their temples, altars, wear it in their bosoms, and wherever they meet it show it reverence, adorn it with gold, silver, and precious stones. Their popes and prelates have it carried before them; and are not these friends of the cross? No; they live a worldly, sensual life, and all their religion tendeth thereunto; therefore enemies of the cross of Christ, because they mind earthly things. This is right antichrist-like, to betray Christ under a colour of adoration. [Thomas Manton (1620-1677), cited in *Quotations Past and Current Newsletter*, 1999]

"Gordon D. Fee, a New Testament scholar whose heritage is Pentecostal, has said about corporate worship, 'You really should have this incredible sense of unworthiness-- "I don't really belong here"--coupled with the opposing sense of total joy-- "It is all of grace, so I do belong here." What bothers me about some withing the Pentecostal and charismatic tradition is the joy without the reverence, without awe.' But in too many mainstream evangelical churches, Fee adds, there is neither 'reverence nor joy.'" [Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 152]

"In his book *The Crisis of the University*, Sir Walter Moberly cites the failure of evangelicals to penetrate university campuses with the gospel. To those who claim to follow Christ he says, 'If one-tenth of what you believe is true, you ought to be ten times as excited as you are.'" [Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives*, 106]

"In the Christian faith, we should be able to use the word 'feel' boldly and without apology. What worse thing could be said of us as the Christian church if it could be said that we are a feelingless people?" [A.W. Tozer]

"This emphasis on the priority of worship has particular importance for us who are called 'evangelical' people. For whenever we fail to take public worship seriously, we are less than the fully biblical Christians we claim to be. We go to church for the preaching, some of us say, not for the praise. Evangelism is our speciality, not worship. In consequence either our worship services are slovenly, perfunctory, mechanical and dull or, in an attempt to remedy this, we go to the opposite extreme and become repetitive, unreflective and even flippant." [John Stott, *Guarding the Truth*, 59]

Noted Existentialist Soren Kierkegaard once stated that, "People have the idea that the Preacher is an actor and they are the critics, blaming and praising him. What they don't realize is that they are the actors; he is the prompter simply standing in the wings reminding them of their lines."

"She carried to the banks of the Ganges river a sick baby while walking beside her was a small healthy child. When she reached the banks of the river she picked up the small healthy child and threw him into the river as an offering to the crocodiles. She then turned toward home tightly holding the sick infant in her arms. When the missionary was able to reach her to question her about what she had done, she replied through her tears, "we always give our gods the best."

"Oh when you get to heaven, you children of God, will you praise any but your Master? Calvinists, today you love John Calvin; will you praise him there? Lutheran, today you love the memory of that stern reformer; will you sing the song of Luther in heaven? Follower of John Wesley, you have a reference for that evangelist; will you in heaven have a note for John Wesley? None, none, none! Giving up all names and all honors of men, the strain shall rise in undivided and unjarring unison "unto Him that loved us, that washed us from our sins in his blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever." [C.H. Spurgeon, cited in *Spurgeon's Gems*, 271]

A.W. Tozer once said:

"When a person, yielding to God and believing the truth of God, is filled with the Spirit of God, even his faintest whisper will be worship."

C.H. Spurgeon, in response to those who claimed that worship is lacking where biblical sermons are given high priority in the church, wrote: "if [their] observation be meant to imply that the hearing of sermons is not worshiping God, it is founded on a gross mistake, for rightly to listen to the gospel is one of the noblest parts of the adoration of the Most High. It is a mental exercise, when rightly performed, in which all the faculties of the

spiritual man are called into devotional action. Reverently hearing the word exercises our humility, instructs our faith, irradiates us with joy, inflames us with love, inspires us with zeal, and lifts us up towards heaven. . . . Hence there isn't the wide distinction to be drawn between preaching and prayer [or other aspects of worship] that some would have us admit. . . the testimony of his gospel, which preeminently glorifies him, and the obedient hearing of revealed truth, are an acceptable form of worship to the Most High, and perhaps one of the most spiritual in which the human mind can be engaged." [Lectures to my Students, 53-54]

"I believe a very large majority of churchgoers are merely unthinking, slumbering, worshippers of an unknown God. [C.H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. 11]

"We are told men out not to preach without preparation. Granted. But, we add, men ought not to hear without preparation. Which do you think, needs the most preparation, the sower or the ground? I would have the sower come with clean hands, but I would have the ground well plowed and harrowed, well turned over, and the clods broken before the seed comes in. It seems to me that there is more preparation needed by the ground than by the sower, more by the hearer than by the preacher." [C.H. Spurgeon]

"Worship services in many churches today are like a merry-go-round. You drop a token in the collection box; it's good for a ride. There's music and lots of motion up and down. The ride is carefully timed and seldom varies in length. Lots of good feelings are generated, and it is the one ride you can be sure will never be the least bit threatening or challenging. But though you spend the whole time feeling as if you're moving forward, you get off exactly where you got on." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 150-151]

A gal in my church had to work one Sunday immediately after the morning worship service. She was feeling particularly encouraged about the day and stopped for a potty break before she was to check in for her shift. As she was sitting there she heard two women enter the restroom. From what she could tell they were sisters. From the time they entered they did nothing but complain (about family members and other issues). Apparently they didn't know she was there and they made their way into two adjacent stalls and continued their griping and complaining. And then the conversation changed subjects. Apparently they were at church that morning and it wasn't good enough either. One of the sisters declared: "And that worship service! Was that lame or what! The songs were difficult to sing and I just didn't get anything out of it." By that time my friend had exited her seat, probably surprising her guests in the process. And having heard enough she stood in front of both stalls and said: "Ladies, worship comes from the heart and isn't about being personally entertained in some way." With that she washed her hands and left to dead silence. [TAB]

"If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. . . . Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness, that the soul still desires. God is a delicious good." [Thomas Watson (1620-1686) "Man's Chief End" in A Body of Divinity]

The majestic character of God needs to be seen week in and week out not in the context of casualness and triviality and Sunday morning slapstick, but in the context of exaltation and awe and solemnity and earnestness and intensity. How will our people ever come to feel in

their bones the awful magnitude of what is at stake in the eternal destiny of the unevangelized if our homiletical maxim is to start with a joke and keep the people entertained with anecdotes along the way? How will the people ever come to know and feel the crags and peaks and snowcapped heights of God's glory if our preaching and worship services are more like picnics in the valley than thunder on the ice face of Mt. Everest? [John Piper, "A Pastor's Role in World Missions," Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, Oct 31, 1984]

WRITING:

"Reading makes a full man, speaking makes a quick man, writing makes an exact man." (Roger Bacon)

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