

## **The New American Standard**

**J. Noel Merideth**

We were surprised, shocked, and saddened to recently note that the *Gospel Advocate* magazine is now going to have all scripture quotations from the New American Standard Version (NASV). This is not the old 1901 American Standard Version but it is the Lockman Foundation New American Standard Version. The *Gospel Advocate* reads, "All scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted." It is a sad day in Israel that the *Gospel Advocate*, long known for its stand against innovations, has now turned to promoting a new unreliable version.

A former editor of the *Gospel Advocate* wrote: "first of all, the original ASV does not need revision...And the NASV is not a revision of it, as it claims to be, but a rewriting of many of its texts with numerous religious errors, fewer than found in other new versions, but nevertheless a multiplicity of these errors—egregious, glaring errors are in it."

The NASV is a version produced by the Lockman Foundation, a non-profit corporation, of La Habra, California, which also produced the Amplified translations. The NASV is to be identified with its parent predecessor—the Amplified Bible, which should diminish its prestige with all informed Bible readers. The NASV New Testament appeared in 1960 and went through several reprintings and the complete Bible was issued in 1971, printed by Creation House, Inc., of Coral Stream, Illinois. The publishers say the work took 9 years and was done by 58 people. The names of these people have not been made public and this immediately presents a problem. We have often seen telling blows to Jehovah's Witness people who have their own version (The New World Translation) and will not give the names of the translators to the public. Now we have some of our own people using a version and we do not know the names of the translators.

The NASV has the same problem with "faith only" that some other modern versions have. Romans 11:20 in the NASV reads: "Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, and you stand only by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear." The word "only" is in italics in the text and means they have supplied the word but they have done so without justification! The NASV is here trying to teach the false doctrine of "faith only." The Bible teaches that we are not saved by faith only (James 2:24). The Bible teaches we must also have "works" (Acts 10:34, 35).

The NASV claims inside the jacket of the book that the Lockman Foundation (which produced the NASV) "is of God's creation and exists because of the claiming of the promises of Malachi 3:10." We deny it is of God's creation; it is of human origin! The Lockman Foundation has put out three Bibles and seven New Testaments and they did not do a good job. They should not try to put it off on God.

The NASV has Jesus saying in Matthew 5:17 that he did not come to "abolish" the law, thus committing the error of some other new versions, for Jesus *did abolish* the law (Ephesians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 13, 14).

When the NASV came to Mark 16:9-20 they put it in brackets thus casting doubt on its authenticity and genuineness. They also print a spurious interpolation at the end of Mark, viz., the so-called "shorter ending of Mark." There have been many excellent defenses of Mark 16:9-20 and among them is the fine job done by Thomas B. Warren in the *Warren-Ballard Debate*. Warren has a whole chart showing the evidence is overwhelming in favor of the passage being a part of the Bible.

One cannot avoid the feeling that premillennial beliefs reflect through certain choices in the NASV as in Revelation 20 the page heading has "The Millennium" and Revelation 20:4 reads "they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The KJV and ASV has "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" which does not support the contrast that premillennialist like to make on the verse.

Amos 6:5 reads in the KJV and ASV "...invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David," but the NASV has "composed songs for themselves" and then has the "invented musical instruments" as a marginal reading. The translation follows the sheer conjectures of the notes of Kittel.

Amos 7:14 in the ASV and KJV has Amos saying "I was no prophet" having Amos to describe his condition before he was called to be a prophet. The NASV has Amos saying "I am not a prophet" which would disassociate him from the prophets. But Amos was prophesying!

A typographical error in the NASV has David buy the threshing floor from "Onan" (page 605) but the text is correct with "Oman." "Magomassabib" mistransliterates "Magormissabib" in Jeremiah 20:3.

We wonder if those who have picked this new version, the NASV, will stay with it all the way. For instance note that the NASV has "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 and "only begotten" in references to

Christ (John 1:14; 3:16, etc.). We suspect the promoters will go to some other version when they

come to these verses.

## **We Have Made A Mistake**

***Max R. Miller***

We all make mistakes. Sometimes we are aware of our mistakes, and sometimes not. It is good to know of our mistakes and to correct them when we can.

We, the church, have made a grievous mistake. It needs to be called to the attention to all and correction should be made. The mistake is great. It has prevented a multitude of souls from being converted to Christ. It is great because for it many of God's children have drifted away from Christ. For it, the church of the living God suffers shame, frustration, and is filled with controversy and discord. Anything of such destructive force and consequence is evil, sinful, and should be overcome.

The mistake? Some several years ago, in the sixties and seventies, we began to hear fervent exhortations that our preachers should attain a greater degree of education; that the day for "cornfield" preachers had come to an end. No longer could preachers of ordinary educational attainments expect to fill the pulpits of the land and have the ear of modern day audiences. To engage the modern educated mind of today's professionals, technicians, brilliant and sophisticated ranks of society, one must be of equal education and possess the same qualities of sophistication and grace. The theory was: the old style of plain, book, chapter and verse preaching must go the way of the flat-top and crew cut hair styles. The modern generation must be challenged! We must stop answering questions people have ceased asking!

There began to be a change in the pulpit. The clamor was for young men who could communicate to young and aggressive minds in a style befitting of the day. The old Jerusalem gospel lost its place in many modern day churches. Testimonials, personal interest stories, current events, promotionals, current religious thought, and such, became the themes of the pulpit. We had moved into a modern day with a church ready to embrace every form of liberalism known to man.

All this was a form of self flattery. We were tickling our own ears. We were snobbishly bragging on our own vain educational attainments. We were telling ourselves, "We are the sophisticates, we have arrived." This subtle and deceitful plea from the pew was welcomed by many in the pulpit. Not a few who stood in the pulpit thrilled to think of themselves more as counsellor and scholar than preacher. They were a cut above ordinary preachers "quoting Scripture like a parrot." Those clergymen (for, in fact, such they are) began to major in minors; it was their joy to "share a thought" more so than to "take a text." And their patrons loved it so!

The theme of preaching has changed in these past years. Now, how to live peaceably with sin, how not to offend denominational friends, how to get along with one's conscience, how to pragmatically solve the problems of the day, all are the themes of our day.

Fewer and fewer Bible Majors came from the Christian colleges. Few of the students who came from those colleges will (or can) preach the simple message of salvation to a world lost in sin. Such, seemingly is beneath their dignity! The denominational seminary awaits their coming from which few go forth to preach, and of those who preach, to preach false doctrine. Of our own Christian colleges many of the Bible faculty would fit as well into denominational seminary and not a few go on to their destiny there. Yes, we have made a mistake in courting the modern mind, appeasing guilt and sin, in compromising the gospel of truth. We bear the cancer and scars of compromise in the body of Christ.

Young modems, middle age modems, and who ever are not above the gospel of Christ. To the vain intellectuals and sophisticated moderns: the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Paul, at Corinth, addressed the same problem we address here, and said, "or the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). Man was never commissioned to preach anything other than the "old Jerusalem gospel" (Mark 16:15; Galatians 1:8,9).

But what about the modem, better educated generation in the church and in the world? What are their needs? The spiritual needs of man from Adam has not changed—today's world notwithstanding. The same needs of our frontier forefathers are our needs today. Man's unchanging needs are met in the gospel. The ways of sin is death, always. Man in sin needs a Savior. That Savior is revealed in Holy Scripture: His plan of salvation is recorded there and there alone. He, in his educated way, may open the book and, as Paul said, "When ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ...as it is now revealed..." (Ephesians 3:1-5). He may also need a preacher who is able to communicate the Savior's message to him. It is well that the preacher be learned, able to communicate in good English, to develop his lessons in a disciplined manner, and make applications of the gospel to the modem times of our century.

There should be no rejection of education; none should seek to stigmatize the educated whether he be the preacher or the hearer. There must be a rejection of vanity and conceit which, in reality, cries out, "prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits"(Isaiah 30:10). Flattery is deceitful and sinful. Education, prosperity, or a modern age never shall bring man past the point where he will no longer need the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Kill the infection, heal the wound, salve the scar. Let us return again to the Book-of-Books, to the gospel of Christ and to our Savior. We are not too good, too well educated, or too rich or wise to hear and obey the gospel of Christ. We made a mistake in "updating" our preaching. Now, let us go back to the preaching of the "Old Jerusalem gospel."

## **An Open Letter To Alan Cloyd**

### ***Rod Rutherford***

I am a gospel preacher who has spent several years overseas in mission work in Africa and Australia. During these years I often encountered and had discussions with members of the Christian Church who ranged in theological thinking from the ultra liberal Disciples to the various degrees of conservatism among the Independent Christian churches.

While working in Zambia we had some difficulties with missionaries of the Independent Christian Church. I wrote to you in 1972 concerning this. You had, as I recall, only recently, at that time, left the Christian Church to take your stand with the churches of Christ. I wanted accurate information from one who "had been there" so that I could fairly and intelligently deal with the missionaries of the Christian Church. You very kindly supplied me with this information. The tape that you sent has been copied and re-copied many times. Listening to it has helped two people that I know of renounce the errors of the Christian Church and take their stand with the Lord's church.

I must admit that I have been not a little surprised and concerned at your actions in recent years. I have listened to all of the tapes of the now famous "Joplin Summit" which you and Don DeWalt organized. I have also read other material that you have written or transcripts of speeches that you have given pertaining to the present effort to unite the Independent Christian Church and the churches of Christ. I am amazed that you could be seeking unity with those you left years ago apparently because of serious doctrinal errors among them. It appears to me that you are not in any way seeking to convert them from their errors but desire to have unity in spite of their false teachings.

Following are some *direct* quotations from your tape made in early 1973 and sent to Zambia: I wonder how you feel about these things now.

*"Appreciate so much your stand."* I still stand today where I did back then. I will not fellowship the Christian Church until they repent of their errors. What about you?

*"There was simply no place for me to go in the Christian Church."* Do you still feel this way? Have they changed or have you changed? Are you willing now to fellowship error you rejected 15 years ago?

*"When you let the flood-gates down all things can come through so we want to be careful not to become as these people have become."* Amen! Is there not a danger in our becoming like the Christian Churches if we meet with them, invite their preachers into our pulpits, allow them to write for our papers and have joint services with them? If they were so far gone in 1973 that we needed to be warned not to become like them, is this still not the case today? Has anything changed?

*"We were just absolutely miserable in the Christian Church."* Why were you miserable in the Christian Church? Do not the same doctrinal weaknesses which made you miserable 15 years ago still exist in the Christian Church? What errors have they renounced that have made them more acceptable to you?

*"I made one mistake in the Conservative Christian Church. I read the Bible!"* Has the Christian Church come any closer to the Bible since you left? If so, in what areas?

*"Premillennialism is rampant and raging among Christian...churches...They have just fellowshipped too much with the Baptists and it has rubbed off."* Do you believe in the premillennial theories? If not, how can you urge brethren to fellowship those who hold such errors? If we fellowship the Christian Church, won't we end up fellowshipping those whom they fellowship? Do you fellowship Baptists? Would you for the sake of unity?

*"If I were in your situation, I would certainly emphasize some meetings together where you study this Biblical authority viewpoint. If you can never get people to study that, then the work of converting them is non-existent!"* Amen! You hit the nail right on the head back in 1973, Brother Alan. Do you still believe that today? Have you given time in the unity meetings from Joplin onwards to the basic fundamental topic of authority and its applications to the things that divide us such as instrumental music in worship? If not, why not?

In your tape you listed for me a number of doctrinal departures in the Independent Christian Church with which you had been associated. Following are some of them:

- Members coming from denominations and being accepted into their fellowship on their denominational baptism.
- Teaching the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
- Using women in unscriptural roles teaching over men, leading singing and public prayers in the assembly, and even preaching.
- Unscriptural organization of the church with a board composed of both elders and deacons jointly making decisions for the church.
- Disregard for the qualifications of elders.
- Emphasis on entertainment in worship and patriotic “God and country” rallies.
- Instrumental music, choirs, and solos.
- Premillennialism widely believed and taught.
- Observing the Lord’s supper on days other than the Lord’s day.
- The “Language of Ashdod,” calling preacher “pastors,” speaking of “witnessing,” etc.
- Some preachers even upholding salvation by faith alone.
- Teaching that preachers are called by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

The above are all doctrinal errors which are practiced among the Independent Christian churches according to your tape of 1973. Are these errors still being practiced today? Do you still believe they are wrong today? If you have changed

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Peter 3:10, 11).

In your thinking, which of the above areas have you changed in? Can we fellowship those holding any or all of the above errors? (Ephesians 5:11)

Brother Alan, the Scriptures teach that “whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).

You enumerated very well the errors of the Independent Christian Church back in 1973. The same things are still being practiced among them today and God’s word still reads the same today as it did then. How could you urge churches of Christ to compromise on these points for the sake of unity? Are you not tearing down that which once you tried to build up?

Brother Alan, it is my prayer that you will acknowledge the error of your ways in seeking unity at the cost of truth and come back to the solid Biblical ground that you stood on back in 1973.

## **A Happy Homemaker**

### ***Cheryl Lambert***

Are you a woman of leisure? Have you quit working? Are you staying home doing nothing? The answer is “no” if you have chosen to be a homemaker. Recently, I have had the opportunity to become a homemaker—full-time! I glow with joy when my husband tells people he has a “happy homemaker” on his hands. I have left my job in the business world for a much more difficult and important position. I’ve received a promotion! One that I am growing to love very much.

The Bible teaches that the older women are to teach the younger women “...to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:4,5). Too many younger women are not being taught this Bible principle or have been taught but are not obeying. What has happened to sewing, cooking, cleaning, and creating a happy home for your family? Home-making is not an easy task. It takes hard work to have the kind of home God requires. One where love abounds. One where children obey and respect their parents. One where the husband and wife love each other. One where the Bible is first and foremost. One where truth and honesty still abide. One where care and concern and comfort are freely given. A homemaker’s job is to strive to accomplish these goals. How can we take this job lightly? How can we shirk our responsibility?

Of course, the job is appealing to me because of my homemaking example. My mother was always home when I was a baby to give me all the love she had. She was always there when I came home from school to listen to my day’s adventures. She was always there and never too busy to listen to my problems and help me work them out. She always had time to make pies for the sick and prepare lessons for teaching Sunday school. These may seem like small things but they were special to me and I’ll

always remember them I want to do the job she did so that I may glorify God by having a happy home.

Full-time “keepers at home” are becoming very scarce. Many women are so wrapped up in themselves and so concerned about their equality with men that they have forsaken the home. They would rather be outside the home working in the evils of the world than content with the role of a homemaker. Babysitters or child care centers cannot possibly replace a mother’s presence. Do you expect your children to take care of you when you are old if you do not care for them when they are young? It is hard to work outside the home and take care of things around the house. It may well be that something is neglected. Children and spouse miss valuable time with you or perhaps they are not provided with neat surroundings. Many women are forced to work outside the home in order to provide for their families; but often it is to have “extra” for themselves or their children. Most of us could do without all the extras of life to enjoy the blessings of our home and the church. Let us examine our homes to see if they meet up to God’s standards.

There are so many rewards to be enjoyed by homemakers. We should not-miss out on any of them. I see accomplishment when my house is clean to entertain guests. I am pleased when my husband returns home from a hard day to find supper waiting for him. When my children get off the school bus, I’ll be glad for them to find me at home waiting to see them. But the best reward of all will be when my heavenly Father says, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21,23).

### **IS HOMEMAKING A HOBBY?**

“Is homemaking a hobby?” Some may ask

Something to be done on the side

Or is it a profession, a way of life

Something to be glorified.

Does God look down on homemakers

As the world often can

Or does the Lord smile from heaven

And extend his loving hand.

“No gain comes from homemaking,”

Is heard from shore to shore

But, in truth, the world can’t hold

The rewards homemaking has in store.

No, homemaking is not a hobby

It is a marvelous, fulfilling thing

And I want to enjoy

The happiness homemaking has to bring!

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands” (Proverbs 14:1).

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband” (Proverbs 12:4).

## **E. R. Harper (1898 — 1986)**



ERNEST R. HARPER

Editor’s Note: E. R. Harper was born in Enola, Ark., he attended Freed-Hardeman College and Union University. He married Ollie Poe who died in 1979. Included in his labors he served as minister of the Highland church in Jackson, TN, the Fourth & State Street church in Little Rock, Ark., and the Highland church of Christ in Abilene, TX. He was a noted author, evangelist, and lecturer. We will all miss him.

# Had There Been No Bethlehem

*E. R. Harper*

Nearly two thousand years ago there took place an event that has changed the course of history; as the result of it, nations have come and gone; monarchs have soared to heights and fallen into the depths of despair and ruin; civilization has reached heights before unknown and human beings have been elevated to a sphere undreamed of by the generations of the long ago. That occasion was the birth of a child, a son, which birth took place in a humble city in Palestine called Bethlehem, the city of David the King. No event in the history of man has been so beautifully unfolded and no plan that was to affect the entire human race was ever so minutely detailed or so meticulously executed as the birth of this Son. The events leading up to it, the perfect timing of its occurrence, the fulfillment of all the promises of the Old Testament as climaxed so completely in this event without one single failure lifts this scene beyond the power of man's wisdom and establishes beyond all possible doubt that it was conceived, developed, and finally perfected by a power and a wisdom not possessed by any mortal man. The power behind it all was that of God. There is no other explanation that satisfies the events of this night and the birth of this particular Son and the events that followed. We challenge any lawyer from any university of law to form a brief that will be more complete, more convincing to a jury in favor of that which he wishes to set forth, than the brief that can be presented in proof of the actual occurrence of this night when to this world was born a "Savior, Christ the Lord." You would be forced to prove that the witnesses were incapable, untrustworthy, or that it was a framed affair on the part of those testifying that they might deceive those whom they wished to influence. This is not possible due to the fact that every recorded testimony of these men, every recorded sermon is of such nature that it elevates man to a higher standard of living than the writings of any other man or set of men in his generation. That these men did not get together and devise some scheme by which we are to be deceived is defeated in its beginning for your Bible was written by various men, covering many centuries, with no possible way of having met, and yet when their writings are brought together, we have the most beautifully connected story leading up to and climaxing the birth of this Son that the world has ever been privileged to read. No dreamer of fiction, no writer of true stories-not even the learned of this world of ours, with their volumes that grace the great libraries of this age-has ever equaled, much less surpassed, the beauty of style, the depths of thought, nor the dreams, hopes, and promises to be found in this one little book, the Bible. There is but one answer to this: The hand that guided them was divine, it was from God the Creator of man and the Possessor of all knowledge, both past and future, and because of this the men who wrote by His direction could write the future as clearly as they could the past, and when they wrote of the birth of this Son they made absolutely no mistakes in their predictions. I challenge you to find one failure in the fulfillment of their prophecies. If there can be found no failures-if all they ever promised came to pass-we must say then with the apostle Peter, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Friends, let the infidels, the skeptics, or the scoffers find a better answer than this as to why they made no mistakes and why not one of their predictions of this birth ever failed! Until they can, let them not laugh us to scorn for we have something solid upon which to stand, something they can't explain, and it lives to curse and mock every generation of infidels; and instead of our looking like uneducated weaklings, they present themselves as spectacles of pity and objects of our charity, for they and their children must, like the animals about them, come to the grave without hope beyond if they be right.

All of us surely understand that no one knows the day of Christ's birth. It is not given in our Bible as a day of religious worship. It is a season of good will which we all enjoy and toward which our children look.

## **THE PROMISED SEED**

Go with me now to the Garden of Eden and let us begin the unfolding of this event that has changed the courses of men and of nations for twenty centuries. God had created man and woman and had placed them in the garden called Eden. To this man and his wife He gave a law. This law was violated and God cursed them by driving them from the Garden of Eden. Having been tempted to sin by the tempter, God, in Genesis 3:15, had this to say: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here is the first mention of the seed that should overcome Satan; it is here called the seed of woman. This is but a veiled insight into the purposes and plans of Jehovah, but that plan is to unfold more and more as the centuries pass. In Genesis 12:1-5 is found the story of Abraham's call to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go into the land that God would show him with this promise: "I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall families of the earth be blessed." Here we find the family through whom the Lord is to bring His blessings upon the world, upon all nations-not just Israel. Now in Genesis 22 and verses 1-19 is the story of Abraham's

offering his son Isaac upon the altar as a sacrifice unto God when God stayed his hand, saved the life of the boy, provided the offering unto Himself, and remade His promise to Abraham. Jehovah said, because “thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son...in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” In 2 Samuel, chapter 7 and verses 12-14, we have Nathan sent of God to David and to David was made this promise: “When thy days are fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom forever. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish his throne forever.” Here we have traced the seed of woman in the Garden of Eden to the seed of David the king. Turn with me now to our New Testament and let us find who this seed is. In Galatians 3:16, Paul says, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Christ, born in Bethlehem of Judea, was the fulfillment of this promise made in the morning of time, in the Garden of Eden. It is positive, specific and unanswerable.

### **THE PROPHET**

Christ of Bethlehem was the prophet of whom Moses spake in Deuteronomy 18:18,19 where God said to Israel, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” That this prophet is this child born in Bethlehem of Judea, Christ the Lord, is as certain as is your Bible the word of the Lord. In Acts 3:19- 26, in speaking of Christ Jesus our Lord, Peter applies this prophecy of Deuteronomy 18 to Him as he says, “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” That this babe of Bethlehem is that prophet of the Old Testament there can be no doubt.

### **THE CITY FORETOLD**

Even the city of His birth was foretold in the Old Testament. In Micah 5:2 the prophet said, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” That this was fulfilled as spoken here we have to but come to Matthew 2:1 and hear the record as it says, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.” In that immortal chapter of Luke 2, we also find the record of the glorious event that brought the Christ to the earth, born as He was in the city of David, Bethlehem of Judea, just as the prophet foretold. Again it came to pass as told by the prophet.

### **HIS MOTHER**

One of the most beautiful of all is the promise of the mother of Jesus. In Isaiah 7:11-14 we have this prophecy: “The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Here is the promise of a virgin to become the mother of our Lord. Will you turn now with me to Matthew Chapter 1 and verses 21-23? You remember the story: Joseph was ready to put Mary away and the angel of the Lord came to him and said, “She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Time forbids that I give in full the story of His birth as found in Luke, chapters 1 and 2, but let us now see the beautiful story of His birth to Mary in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago. Joseph and Mary had gone to the city to register. They asked for lodging in the inns, but there was none. They slept that night in what we, years ago, called “wagon yards,” where they kept both people and animals. It was here in a stable a King was born; it was here a Prince was brought in to the world; it was here our Savior came to earth to live with us poor mortals that He might know and understand our sorrows and our heartaches; that he might shed a tear when our hearts are broken. Little did that city know that night that a King was being born; a King that would change the course of the ages and bring to man hope beyond this vale of tears. That night the angelic chorus swung low in the heavens as it sang that song that has been immortalized and shall be sung all over the world today, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The shepherds were afraid, as the angel spoke to them, but said the angel, “Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” Here were climaxed the promises of the ages past. Here in the city of David, Bethlehem of Judea, was born the seed of woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the prophet of Deuteronomy. Here the virgin of Isaiah, Mary, the wife of Joseph, gave birth to the Son of God who should inherit the throne of His father David, which throne He occupied on the first Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead as He began His rule upon that throne (Acts 2:29-36) to rule there until all His enemies are overcome, even death (Acts 2:34,35; 1 Corinthians 15:24,28). Yes, every prophecy concerning His birth, the city of His birth, and even His mother, all came true exactly as foretold by the prophets. It has to be right!

## THE HOPE OF BETHLEHEM

But the beauty of Bethlehem is seen in the promises of a resurrection of the dead (John 5:28; 1 Corinthians 15:16-47), in the hope of meeting each other in a never ending eternity, of living in heaven with Christ, the Child of Bethlehem (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), and with the saints of all ages to join in singing that great chorus of Revelation 5:12: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing” who “hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” The story of this child of Bethlehem means more to me today than it has ever meant, for today, as we approach the Christmas season, there is a vacant chair in our home—a lovely little girl who has sat with us to enjoy this season for 26 years closed her beautiful eyes in death, as on the operating table she was fighting for life as the doctors tried so hard to repair her heart. The sadness of this season will not be so hard because of this child of Bethlehem, for through Him we shall see Teenie after while. I thank God for Bethlehem of Judea. Will you not today obey His voice when He says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16), and to do just that, trusting Him for the salvation of your soul? Will you not, during this season, honor Him by obeying Him and walking with Him, that you and your children may enjoy the hopes and promises of that night of nearly two thousand years ago when to you was born in Bethlehem, a Savior, Christ the Lord? May the Lord bless you and yours and may there be no vacant chairs in your home as the children begin gathering in to see Father and Mother is my prayer for you and yours in the precious name of the child of Bethlehem, Christ, the Son of God.

“The home has no hurt that heaven cannot heal.”  
“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

## HOW LOVELY THE MORNING

How lovely the morning  
At dawning's first kiss,  
Enwrapped in a treasure  
Of sun's golden bliss.  
Star-spangled diamonds  
Of fresh morning dew  
To gather, but quickly  
While day is still new.  
How pleasant day's memory  
As dusk shades the sand  
When slowly God's curtain  
Drapes over the land.  
How peaceful the stillness,  
How quiet God's night  
To rest till the dawning  
Of His morning light!

## Three Words

### *Allen Ashlock*

There are three great principles that I think best describes the Christian life. They are *conversion*, *conviction*, and *courage*. These are Bible principles and they must be part of our lives if we are to be what God wants us to be. I hope you will study from the Bible more about these great truths. I hope this article will spur you on to greater understanding.

The first word is *conversion*. When we talk about conversion we are talking about a change. People need to change their way of living. Why should people change their way of living? Because mankind is in *sin*. The Bible teaches that all have sinned and that the wages of sin is death (Romans 3:23; 6:23). When we understand the terrible state that we are in before becoming a Christian then we grow to appreciate the gospel as the power of God to save us (Romans 1:16). Men need to be converted to Christ in order to be saved from sin. In addition to this Christians need to be sure that they themselves are genuinely converted to Christ. I am convinced that many who say they are Christians are not really converted to Christ as they should be. They are not living what is described in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

The second word is *conviction*. It seems that many today in our world are losing their conviction. The



idea that nothing is wrong—that we should not condemn anything is very pervasive in our world. This is nothing more than a lack of real conviction. We are not talking about misguided conviction. Rather, we are talking about a conviction grounded in the word of God. We are told to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). This certainly implies real conviction in the truth of God. We need more conviction in the churches today.

Finally, we call your attention to the word *courage*. Courage is the outgrowth of real conversion and conviction. We need to pray for courage (Acts 4:23-31). The term “boldness” is used a great deal in the New Testament. To be bold is to be courageous. Again, we are not talking about being bold in the wrong thing. Rather, to be bold in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. By our boldness or courage men will know that we are with Jesus (Acts 4:13). My brethren, I commend unto you the need for genuine conversion, the importance of real conviction, and the necessity of powerful courage. On these three rests so much of what we are.

## Updates

**Victor Spencer, P.O. Box 2384, Jonesboro, AR 72401.** “**Mission Work In River Falls, Wisconsin.** I am a student at Freed-Hardeman College and I have just completed nine weeks of work with a sound congregation of the Lord’s people in Wisconsin. David and Elaine Dalton along with Mark Spencer are laboring with the church in River Falls on a full time basis. Currently, there are about twenty-two Christians assembling in their newly completed building just outside of River Falls. These are the only Christians who assemble together within fifty miles and the only true church within 170 miles. Wisconsin and surrounding states are predominantly Catholic and Lutheran influenced. There is a great need for Christian workers in communities like River Falls where there are thousands upon thousands of lost souls and not one church of our Lord.

**Rod Rutherford, Dean of Students, East Tenn School of Preaching & Missions, 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931.** On Sunday evening, July 13, 1986, eight men were recognized for having successfully completed two years of intensive Bible training at the East Tennessee School of Preaching & Missions. The 1986 graduating class brings the total number of graduates since the inception of the school in 1971 to 120. These eight men and their families are all already located with congregations. They will be serving the Lord in Alabama, Louisiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia. Another record enrollment is anticipated for the fall quarter of the 1986-87 school year.

**The Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, Texas.** The Pearl Street church will host its fifth major annual lectureship November 9-13, 1986. The FIFTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES will be devoted to a study of the book of Galatians. A wide variety of material will be covered by 34 speakers from all parts of the nation, delivering 35 lectures. The aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental and sound Biblical teaching to edify all who attend. Exhibit space is available for both commercial and non-commercial interests, subject to approval by the elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long as it lasts. For further information contact: Dub McClish, 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201 or phone 817-387-3531.

**Apologetics Press, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117.** We are pleased to announce that Trevor J. Major has joined our staff (as of May 1). He will be the Director of Research. Trevor and his wife Christine have just arrived from New Zealand, where he has recently completed his degree in geology. Those congregations wishing to contact him for possible participation in lectureships and programs may reach him through Apologetics Press.

**Getwell Church of Christ, Memphis, TN.** The Spiritual Sword Lectureship will be held October 19-23. The theme is “The Book of Colossians.” Subjects have already been announced for 1987 and 1988. The Lord permitting “The Book of Joshua” will be discussed in 1987 and “The Book of Philipians” will be the theme in 1988.

**Ernest S. Underwood, P.O. Box 34, Burlison, TN 38015.** “**Report Of Southeast Asia Tour.**” On April 13th my wife and I departed this country for a six-week evangelistic tour of southeast Asia. We were privileged to visit in Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, and mainland China. We also touched the borders of Laos and Burma. Upon arriving in Taiwan we were met at the airport by brethren John Grubb and Roger Campbell who drove us to the city of Taichung where I began a gospel meeting that same night. I found Roger and John busily engaged in the work they came there to do. To my knowledge there is no false teaching being done by any of our brethren in the city of Taichung. Next we took a bus from Taichung to the city of Taipei where we were met by brother Alan Adams. Although there are other evangelists in the city of Taipei, it appears that brother Alan Adams is the only one who is interested in adhering to the truth of God. The church where he preaches is still small, but we saw a commitment to the truth among the members that is seldom seen among members of the church in the United States. From Taipei we boarded a domestic flight to the city of Hualien where we were met by

brother Tommy Alford. Tommy's driving was rather good. I suppose that it was because he had just recently broken his wrist in a motorcycle accident. Again we were impressed by the enthusiasm of the brethren. They were hungry for the gospel. Working all day, rain, or nothing else kept them from the services. One man was baptized during this meeting. After about ten days in

Taiwan we departed for Singapore. We were met at the airport by brother David Chew and by sister Baby Tan. Later on in the night brother Kwan Tai Choom dropped by to visit with us. We were to begin a gospel meeting at the Lim Ah Pin church where brother Kwan serves as the evangelist the next day. I preached in the meeting, taught at Four Seas Bible College and also taught several times in private homes. Shirley taught the ladies in a couple of sessions. The church in Singapore is facing serious trouble. As many readers know, Singapore has been targeted by those who hold the Crossroads heresy as a mission point. Not only that, brother David Hogan, son of brother Gordon Hogan, has disturbed the church in Singapore with his false teaching on worship and baptism. We left Singapore and flew to Bangkok, Thailand where we spent a few hours with a brother Subiji who is faithfully holding up the word of God. After spending a few hours in Bangkok we boarded a plane which took us to Chaing Mai, Thailand where we were met by Dorsey and Olah Traw who have served as faithful missionaries in Thailand for the past twenty-four years. A few years ago the church in Thailand was at peace and growing. Then Satan lifted his ugly head and influenced some men to begin teaching false doctrine, especially concerning the Holy Spirit and marriage, divorce and remarriage. These doctrines came into the country mainly under the influence of the Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, TX. Thanks to all who had a part in helping us to go to Southeast Asia. In all there were nine baptisms and nine restorations on the trip. Not all of these were the results of our\*work but we were thankful to have had a part in helping.

## **WHEN A SPOUSE DIES**

Should you go first and I remain  
To walk the road alone,  
I'll live in memory's garden, dear,  
With happy days we've known.  
In spring Til watch for roses red  
When fades the lilac blue,  
In early fall when brown leaves call  
I'll catch a glimpse of you.  
Should you go first and I remain  
To finish with the scroll,  
No length'ning shadows shall creep in  
To make this life seem droll.  
We've had our cup of joy  
And memory is one gift of God  
That death cannot destroy.  
Should you go first and I remain  
For battles to be fought,  
Each thing you've touched along the way  
Will be a hallowed spot  
I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile,  
Though blindly I may grope,  
The memory of your helping hand  
Will buoy me on with hope.  
Should you go first and I remain,  
One thing I'd have you do;  
Walk slowly down that long, lone path,  
For soon I'll follow you.  
I'll want to know each step you take  
That I may walk the same.  
For someday, down that lonely road,  
You'll hear me call your name.  
—Albert Roswell